



# Military Despatches

Vol 68 February 2023

## Next attraction

Are the Chinese serious about invading Taiwan?

## For Valour

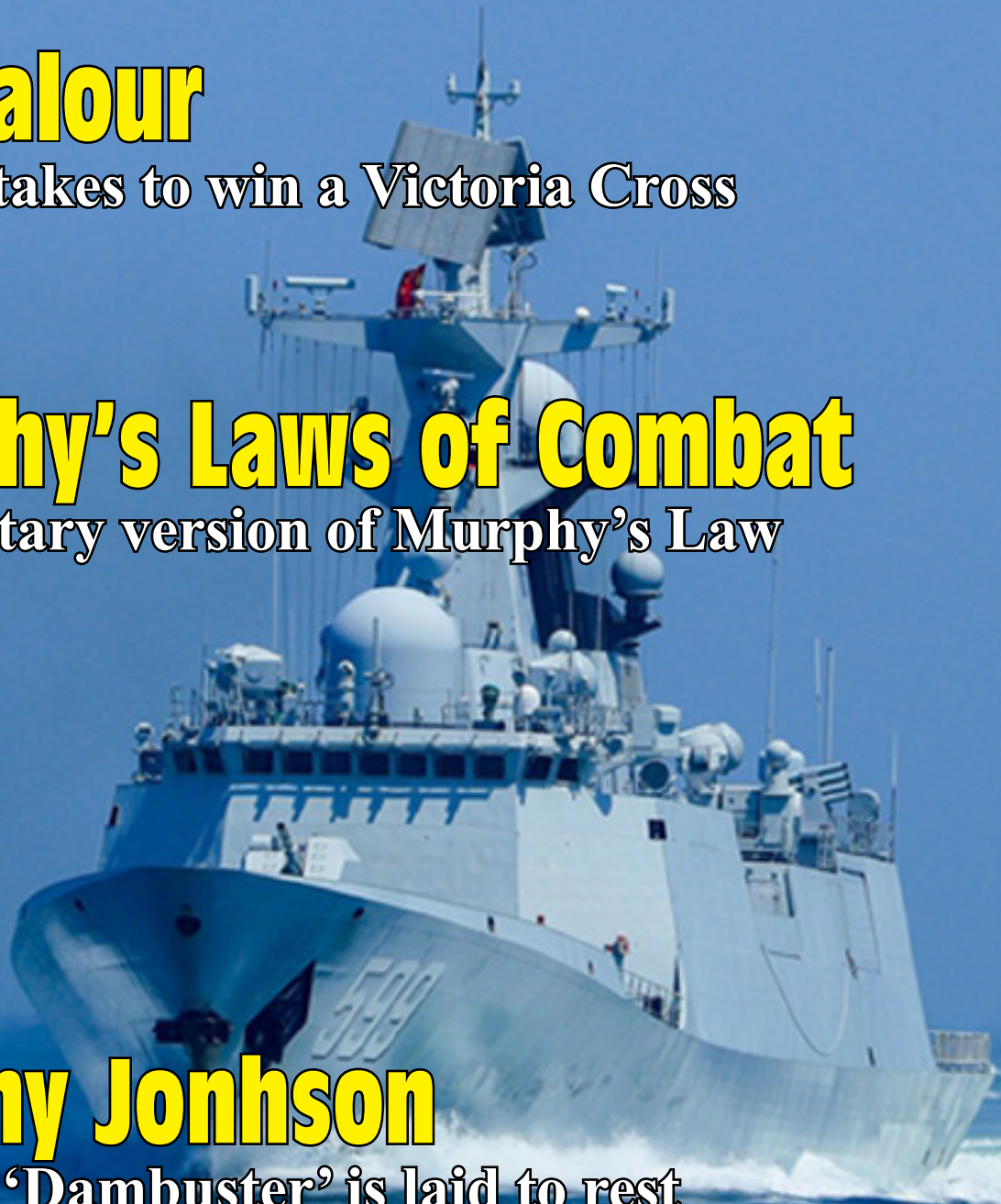
What it takes to win a Victoria Cross

## Murphy's Laws of Combat

The military version of Murphy's Law

## Johnny Jonhson

The last 'Dambuster' is laid to rest



*For the military enthusiast*



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**Paratrooper Wings Quiz**

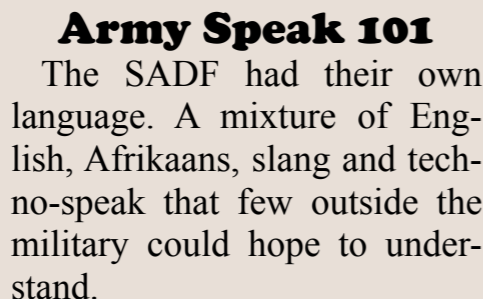
Most military paratroopers are awarded their jump wings after they have qualified.

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



**Military Firearms Quiz**

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



**Army Speak 101**

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

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



**Military Despatches**

**Army Speak 101**

Military slang from the SADF and around the world



**New videos each week**

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

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



**Elite Military Units Quiz**

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

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



**Military Despatches**

**Who said that?**

Famous military quotes quiz

**Who said that?**

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

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



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There is no doubt that you will remember your own corps badge, but how many others did you know? How many of these shown here do you recognise.

**Please remember to subscribe to our channel.**

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



## Editor's Sitrep

So we're already into the second month of 2023. I'm now convinced that the older you get, the quicker time seems to go.

There is an old Chinese curse that says "May you live in interesting times." And let's face it, we are living in interesting times.

And while on the subject of China, read the article titled 'Next attraction' in this month's edition of the magazine.

It talks about a possible Chinese invasion of Taiwan. According to many military analysts, an invasion of Taiwan by China is not a case of 'if' but a case of 'when'.

If this happens it's going to lead to a serious conflict. American President Joe Biden has warned China on three separate occasions that if they do indeed attempt to invade Taiwan, then the USA will have no choice but to become involved.

This would see the two superpowers ranked at number one and number two going up against each other. And there is a strong possibility that other NATO and SEATO countries will also become involved.

A question that has to be asked

is where will South Africa stand in all of this. The country is not a member of NATO, so they have no obligations there.

South Africa is, however, a member of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). While this is more an economical alliance, it does mean that the country has strong ties to China.

With the current conflict in the Ukraine (which is now a year old), South Africa has taken a neutral stance. Yet later this month they will be taking part in naval exercises with both Russia and China.

Now South Africa has the right to carry out exercises with whoever they want. But if there is a conflict between China and NATO and South Africa is forced to choose a side, which way will they go?

"May you live in interesting times." In a case like this the times could become really interesting to say the least.

Until next time, stay safe and stay healthy.

*Matt*

# Hipe! media

## PUBLISHER

Hipe Media

## EDITOR

Matt Tennyson

## PHOTO EDITOR

Regine Lord

## CONTRIBUTORS

Janine Cassidy, Raymond Fletcher, Ryan Murphy, Matt O'Brien, Matt Tennyson.

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email  
[editor@hipe.co.za](mailto:editor@hipe.co.za)

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### Front Cover

A Peoples Liberation Army Navy warship carries out manoeuvres in the South China Sea.

China has made numerous threats to invade Taiwan, much to the concern of other nations.



# Top Ten weapons of the IDF

Formed nearly 75 years ago, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) has been in action almost since the day it came into existence. We look at ten of their most powerful weapons.

The Israeli Defence Force (IDF) was formed on 26 May 1948 on the orders of David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel.

It consists of three service branches: the Israeli Ground Forces, the Israeli Air Force, and the Israeli Navy.

It is the sole military wing of the Israeli security apparatus, and has no civilian jurisdiction within Israel. The IDF is headed by the Chief of the General Staff, who is subordinate to the Israeli Defence Minister.

From the moment of its creation, it has been involved in a never-ending conflict with its neighbours.

For the State of Israel to survive it has had to rely on high-quality weapon systems as well as trained military personnel.

Israel received a lot of assistance from the United States and Germany to build up its arsenal. Yet they have also developed a strong local defence industry which designs and manufactures world class weapon systems.

In this article we take a look at ten weapon systems currently in use by the IDF.

Please note that the ranking of these weapons are our opinion and you are free to disagree with this.

## 10. Protector USV

The Israeli Navy were the first to develop and deploy an armed, unmanned boat for surveillance and protection duties.

The Protector USV (unmanned surface vehicle) was developed by the Israeli Rafael Advanced Defence Systems in response to emerging terrorist threats against maritime assets.

Based on a 9-metre rigid-hulled inflatable boat, the Protector is stealthy, fast and highly unrecoverable.

The vessel's low profile upper structure is sealed and aerodynamic, and its modular platform design allows it to be reconfigured to meet changing mission requirements, such as force protection, anti-terror, surveillance and reconnaissance, as well as mine and electronic warfare.

The hull is a deep V-shaped planing hull, with the inflatable section providing stability and endurance. A single diesel engine drives water jets, allowing speeds of just over 92 km/h.

The Protector offers enhanced surveillance, identification and interception capabilities.

It is equipped with a Mini-Typhoon stabilized weapon system, a TOPLITE electro-optic surveillance and targeting system with day and night targeting capabilities through the

use of forward looking infrared, charge-coupled devices and laser range-finders, as well as a public address system.

The Protector is remotely controlled and can be operated with guidance from a commander and operator located ashore or aboard a manned vessel.

This allows it to provide the first line of defence, inspecting vessels of interest while personnel and capital assets are held at a safe distance.

In 2012, Rafael announced that they were building a larger (11 metre) version of the Protector. It has greater range and can be equipped with a wider range of weapons.

The 11 metre variant can be fitted with Spike missiles and a water cannon for non-lethal engagements and fire-fighting. It has a twin diesel engine compared which increases its efficiency and speed.

These boats will continue to be improved and a new generation of larger unmanned vessels will spawn from them.

## 9. Delilah Cruise Missile

The Delilah missile is a cruise missile or loitering munition developed in Israel by Israel Military Industries (IMI).

It is designed to target moving and re-locatable targets with a circular error probable (CEP)

of one metre.

Unlike a typical cruise missile, which is locked onto a pre-programmed target prior to launch, the Delilah missile's unique feature, as claimed by the manufacturer, is being able to loiter and survey an area before a remote weapon systems officer, usually from the launching fighter aircraft, identifies the specific target of the attack.

Delilah was initially created as an aerial decoy, and was later developed into an offensive strike weapon in the 1990s, used by Israeli F-16 and upgraded F-4E attack aircraft.

It is multi-platform and has multi-target capability. Its uses include Air-to-Surface (AS) and Surface-to-Surface (SS), targeting ground targets, vehicles and sea vessels, either stationary or moving. It is classed as a Medium Range, Multi-Purpose Guided Missile (MRMP-GM), as All-in-One.

The Delilah is an air-launched stand-off missile and cruise missile with a range of 250 km. It can be fitted with a variety of warheads which can be targeted on both land and sea targets.

It has a turbo jet engine that is able to loiter, allowing it to target well-hidden threats in addition to moving targets.

Its manoeuvrability makes the missile ideal for destroying surface-to-air missile threats. The on-board autopilot and inertial navigation/global positioning navigation systems (INS/GPS) allow the missile to perform its mission autonomously. A data link enables intervention and



**CHARIOT:** The Merkava was designed to provide maximum protection to its crew.

target validation.

The Delilah missile was first used in combat by Israel over Lebanon in July and August 2006 and launched by F-16D fighter aircraft. The missile can be fired from most aircraft, helicopters, or ground launchers. Its compact dimensions allow it to be carried by the Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk and SH-60B helicopters.

## 8. Tavor/Micro-Tavor Assault Rifle

The Tavor is a futuristic looking bullpup assault rifle developed by Israel Military Industries (IMI) for the IDF.

It was designed to be lighter, reliable, durable and more accurate than the M4A1 carbine which is also used by the IDF. The standard calibre was the 5.56×45 NATO round used in a 30 round magazine.

It uses the suffix 21 (TAR-21)

which denotes that it is an assault rifle for the 21st century. There are several variants of this rifle and the major ones are:

- GTAR- The conventional variant which is longer and designed to accommodate a 40 mm UBGL
- MTAR- The Micro variant which is extremely compact and designed for special forces
- STAR- The Marksman variant with a bipod and 4x magnification ACOG sight

All the assault rifle are fitted with a reflex sight which provides a clear red aiming point. These rifles have seen extensive combat with the IDF infantry units.

The IDF uses the MTAR-21 with the 5.56×45 or 9 mm pistol rounds. It is said that it has exceptional combat performance in hot desert climates.

**7. Merkava tank**

The Merkava (Chariot) is a series of main battle tanks used by the Israel Defence Forces and the backbone of the IDF's armoured corps.

The tank began development in 1970, and its first generation, the Merkava Mark 1, entered official service in 1979. Four main variants have been deployed.

As of 2022, Merkava Mark 4 is the latest version. The Merkava was first used extensively in the 1982 Lebanon War. The name "Merkava" was derived from the IDF's initial development program name.

The tank was developed in the Merkava and Armoured Combat Vehicles Division of the Israeli Ministry of Defence, and most of its parts are manufactured in Israel.

The Merkava was designed to provide maximum protection for its crew, and therefore its front armour was fortified and the engine placed in the front part of the tank, unlike most other tanks.

Design criteria include rapid repair of battle damage, survivability, cost-effectiveness, and off-road performance.

Following the model of contemporary self-propelled howitzers, the turret assembly is located closer to the rear than in most main battle tanks.

With the engine in front, this layout is intended to grant additional protection against a frontal attack, so as to absorb some of the force of incoming shells, especially for the personnel in

the main hull, such as the driver.

It also creates more space in the rear of the tank that allows increased storage capacity and a rear entrance to the main crew compartment allowing easy access under enemy fire.

This allows the tank to be used as a platform for medical disembarkation, a forward command and control station, and an infantry fighting vehicle.

The rear entrance's clamshell-style doors provide overhead protection when off- and on-loading cargo and personnel.

The Merkava Mark I and II were armed with a 105 mm IMI M64 gun, a license built variant of the M68. The Mark III, Mark III *Dor Dalet BAZ kassag*, and the Mark IV are armed with an IMI 120 mm smooth-bore gun which can fire almost all versions of Western 120 mm smooth bore tank ammunition, as well as the LAHAT anti-tank guided missile.

Each model of the Merkava has two roof mounted 7.62 mm machine guns for use by the commander and loader and another mounted co-axially with the main gun. A 60 mm mortar is also fitted for firing smoke rounds or suppressing dug-in infantry anti-tank teams.

All Merkava tanks are fitted with a remote-controlled M2 Browning .50 heavy machine gun, aligned with the main gun and controlled from within the turret. The .50 machine gun has proven to be useful and effective in asymmetric warfare.

The tank's 1,500 horsepower turbocharged diesel engine was designed by MTU and is manufactured under license by L-3 Communication Combat Propulsion Systems (formerly General Dynamics). The Mark IV's top road speed is 64 km/h and it has an operational range of 500 kilometres.

**6. ATMOS 2000 howitzer**

ATMOS (Autonomous Truck Mounted howitzer System) is a 155 mm/52 calibre self-propelled gun system manufactured by Israeli military manufacturer Soltam Systems.

The system is long range, fast moving, truck mounted with high firepower and mobility, rapid deployment, short response time, operable in all terrain areas.

The system is integrated with a fully computerized system, providing an automatic control, accurate navigation and target acquisition.

The ATMOS is fitted with a 155 mm/52 calibre ordnance which conforms to NATO Joint Ballistic Memorandum of Understanding (JBMoU), and is mounted on a 6 x 6 cross-country truck chassis.

The breech mechanism is horizontal sliding which automatically opens to the right with a self-sealing metal obturating ring. The buffer is a hydraulic cylinder with a hydro-pneumatic recuperator. Recoil length is variable from 850 to 1,100 mm with two pneumatic equilibrators.

Weapon elevation and trav-

erse are all hydraulic and computer controlled. The gun's aiming gears, load assist systems and spades are operated by a hydraulic power pack.

With a 155 mm/52 barrel, a 41 km maximum range can be achieved, using Extended Range Full-Bore - Base Bleed (ERFB-BB) projectile, 30 km firing the NATO L15 High Explosive (HE) projectile and 24.5 km firing the older M107 HE projectile.

The ATMOS 2000 carries a total of 27 155 mm projectiles and associated charges and can be operated by a four-man crew, consisting of two loaders positioned one either side at the rear. The system provides a rate of fire of between four and nine rounds per minute.

**5. F-15I Ra' am**

Although Israel is a very tiny country, it needs long range aircraft capable of carrying out operations deep into enemy territory to obtain air superiority and carry out strikes.

The F-16I *Sufa* (Storm), which is based on the American General Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon, was not ideal for such operations and is used mainly for homeland defence.

The Israeli Air Force (IAF) designed a multi-role fighter based on the American McDonnell Douglas F-15E Strike Eagle. It is known as the F-15I



**F-15I Ra' am**

*Ra'am* (Thunder).

The F-15I is one of the most advanced fighters ever to be produced. Its avionics include the Hughes APG-70 synthetic aperture radar, the Kaiser holographic head-up display system, and an Elbit display and sight helmet (DASH) system.

These extremely capable multirole fighters have been customized by Israel using their own equipment. It has the ability to carry American and Israeli missiles and features an enhanced countermeasures and jamming system compared to the American variant F-15E.

It also had the standard conformal fuel tanks (CFTs) which gave it the ability to carry additional fuel without sacrificing weapon carrying stations.

The main reason these F-15I's were procured was to give Israel the ability to strike targets deep inside countries like Iran without conducting half a dozen mid-air refuelings. The F-15I has enough fuel to carry a significant weapon load and strike targets inside Iran with just a single mid-air refueling.

In a strike configuration, it is capable of carrying GPS, Laser

guided bombs, Glide bombs, Popeye and Delilah cruise missiles along with Jamming pods and Air to Air missiles for self-defence.

In the future, the F-15I will be complemented by the F-35I to make a formidable ground attack combination.

**4. Arrow 3 ABM**

The Arrow 3 or Hetz 3 is an exoatmospheric hypersonic anti-ballistic missile, jointly funded, developed and produced by Israel and the United States.

Undertaken by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and Boeing, it is overseen by the Israeli Ministry of Defence's *Homa* (rampart) administration and the U.S. Missile Defence Agency.

It provides exo-atmospheric interception of ballistic missiles (during the space-flight portion of their trajectory), including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) carrying nuclear, chemical, biological or conventional warheads.

With divert motor capability, its kill vehicle can switch directions dramatically, allowing it to pivot to see approaching satellites. The missile's reported flight range is up to 2,400 km.

According to the chairman of the Israeli Space Agency, Arrow 3 may serve as an anti-satellite weapon, which would make Israel one of the world's few countries capable of shooting down satellites.

### 3. Barak 8 SAM

Barak 8 (Lightning), also known as LR-SAM or MR-SAM, is an Indo-Israeli jointly developed surface-to-air missile (SAM) system, designed to defend against any type of airborne threat including aircraft, helicopters, anti-ship missiles, and UAVs as well as ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and combat jets. Both maritime and land-based variants of the system exist.

Barak 8 was jointly developed by India's Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI). The Barak 8 missile defence system is produced by Israel's Directorate of Research and Development (DDR&D), Elta Systems, Rafael Advanced Defence Systems and India's Bharat Dynamics limited (BDL).

Barak 8 is loosely based on the original Barak 1 missile and is expected to feature a more advanced seeker, alongside range extensions that will move it closer to medium range naval systems like the RIM-162 ESSM or even the SM-2 Standard.

Israel successfully tested the improved Barak II missile on 30 July 2009. The radar system provides 360 degree coverage

and the missiles can take down an incoming missile as close as 500 meters away from the ship.

Each Barak system (missile container, radar, computers and installation) costs about \$24 million. In November 2009 Israel signed a \$1.1 billion contract to supply an upgraded tactical Barak 8 air defence system to India.

In May 2017, India placed an order of \$630 million for four ships of the Indian Navy.[18] In September 2018, MDL and GRSE awarded Bharat Electronics Limited with a \$1.28 billion contract to supply seven Barak-8 air defence systems for Project 17A-class frigates.

In October 2018, Bharat Electronics Limited signed a \$777 million deal with Israel Aerospace Industries to help fulfil the Barak-8 order. Parallel to the Barak-8, IAI has completed development and is manufacturing the Barak MX system that broadens the Barak into a multi-layered air defence system employing unified smart launchers carrying Short, Medium, and Extended-Range interceptors.

The Smart Launcher supports flexible deployment architecture for land and naval applications. Unlike the Barak-8 system, the interceptors, and sensors were developed exclusively by IAI to meet specific requirements from domestic and foreign customers.

### 2. Sa'ar 5 corvette

Israel has a small coastline, but it has a lot of valuable oil

wells and other assets which it needs to defend. Its neighbours are acquiring powerful anti-ship missiles and submarines.

The Sa'ar 5 (lightning) is a multi-role corvette which is designed to carry out Anti-Submarine, Anti-Surface, and Anti-Air warfare with equal ease. The best part of this ship is that it displaces around 1,100 tons but has the firepower of a 4,000-ton frigate. The latest upgrade includes the MF-STAR radar and the armament list includes:

- 1 Phalanx CIWS
- 3x2 324 mm torpedo tubes
- 8 Harpoon Anti-Ship missiles
- 16 Barak-8 SAM
- 32 Barak-1 SAM

The unique feature is that it is the smallest warship in the world to be fitted with a 4 Panel AESA radar. The MF-STAR can search, track targets and guide up to 16 Barak-8 SAMs simultaneously to intercept them.

This gives the Sa'ar 5, an ability to defend itself against any aerial threat. And this ship holds the unique distinction of being the most heavily armed ship in the world if you consider the Weapons-Displacement ratio of the vessel. Another feature is that this ship can operate easily in the littorals and blue water as well and attack and defend itself from any threat it faces.

### 1. Iron Dome

Iron Dome (*Kippat Barzel*) is a mobile all-weather air defence system developed by

Rafael Advanced Defence Systems and Israel Aerospace Industries.

The system is designed to intercept and destroy short-range rockets and artillery shells fired from distances of 4 kilometres to 70 kilometres away and whose trajectory would take them to an Israeli populated area.

From 2011 to 2021, the United States contributed a total of US\$1.6 billion to the Iron Dome defence system, with another US\$1 billion approved by the US Congress in 2022.

Iron Dome was declared operational and initially deployed on 27 March 2011 near Beer-sheba.

On 7 April 2011, the system successfully intercepted a rocket launched from Gaza for the

first time. On 10 March 2012, The Jerusalem Post reported that the system shot down 90% of rockets launched from Gaza that would have landed in populated areas.

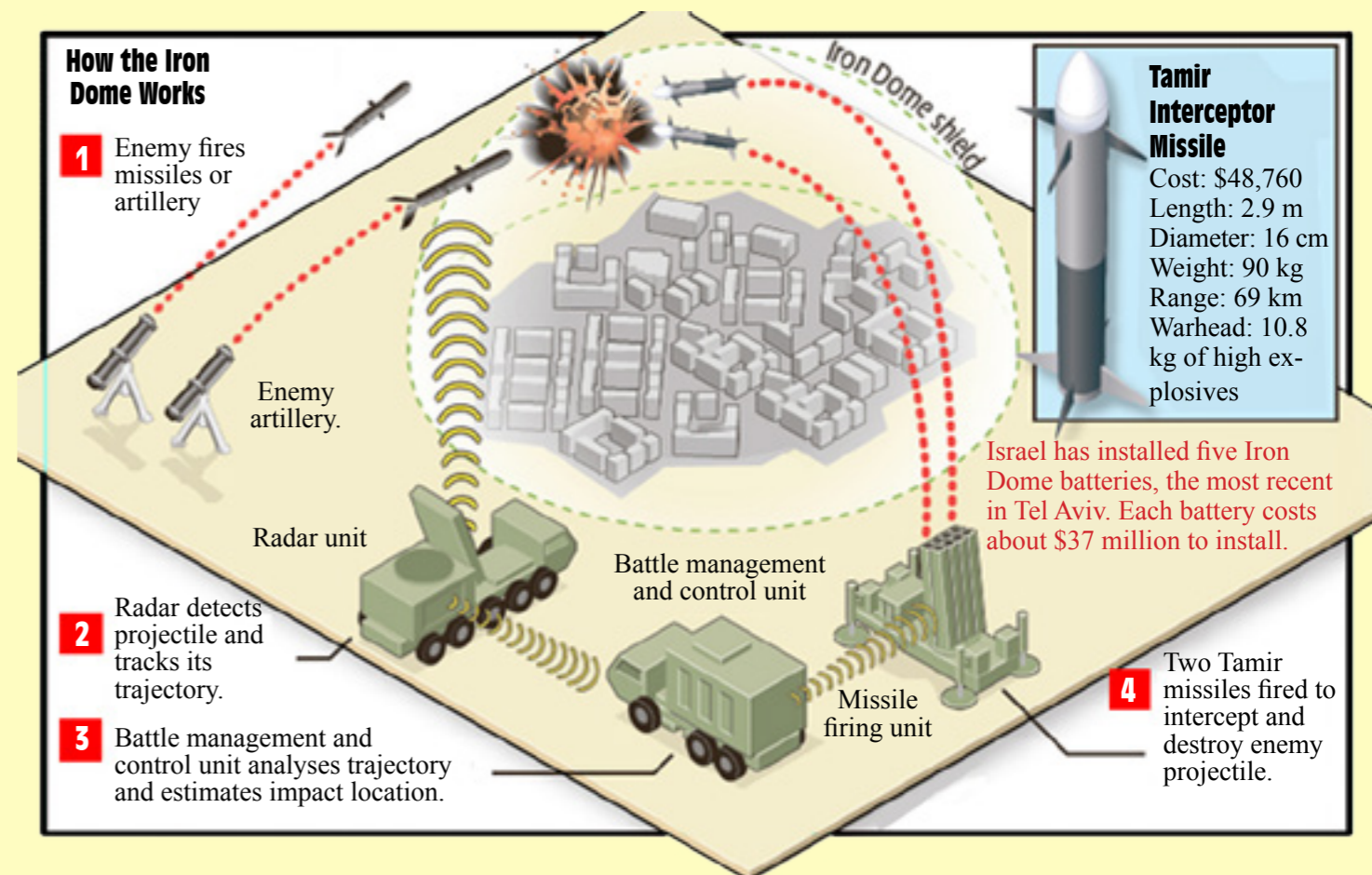
In late 2012 Israel said that it hoped to increase the range of Iron Dome's interceptions, from a maximum of 70 kilometres to 250 kilometres and make it more versatile so that it could intercept rockets coming from two directions simultaneously.

In November 2012, official statements indicated that it had intercepted over 400 rockets. By late October 2014, the Iron Dome systems had intercepted over 1,200 rockets.

In addition to their land-based deployment, it was reported in

2017 that Iron Dome batteries would in future be deployed at sea on Sa'ar 6-class corvettes, to protect off-shore gas platforms in conjunction with Israel's Barak 8 missile system.

There is no doubt that Israel has some of the most modern and effective weapon systems. It is also a leading nation when it comes to design and development.



# Operation Raviv

Masquerading as Egyptian troops, an IDF task force causes havoc behind the Egyptian Lines. Israeli Naval Special Forces unit Shayetet 13 played a major role in the operation.

- **Date:** 9 September 1969
- **Location:** Red Sea coast
- **Units involved:** Israeli Ground Force, Israeli Navy, Israeli Air Force, Shayetet 13

Operation Raviv, also known in Egypt as the Zaafarana accident or the Ten-Hour War, was a mounted raid conducted by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) on Egypt's Red Sea coast during the War of Attrition.

Taking place on 9 September 1969, Raviv was the sole major ground offensive undertaken by the IDF against Egypt throughout the war. The operation saw Israeli forces masquerading as Egyptian troops and



using captured Arab armour.

## Background

As the War of Attrition raged along the Suez Canal in the summer of 1969,

Israel was hard-pressed to find a solution to Egypt's superiority in both manpower and artillery.

With Operation Boxer it had begun employing the Israeli Air Force as "flying artillery", yet these operations were under the constant threat of expanding Egyptian air defences.

Furthermore, the static nature of the war meant not all of Israel's assets, including its ground forces and their superior mobility, were being put to use.

Adopting a policy that has been described as "temporary escalation for the sake of eventual de-escalation", the Israeli government decided to take the fight to the Egyptians, drawing Egyptian forces from the Suez Canal zone while striking a blow against air defences along the exposed Egyptian flank.

## Prelude

The planning of Operation Raviv was carried out jointly by the Armoured Forces Command under Major General Avraham Adan and the Israel Navy under Rear Admiral Avraham Botzer.

A dedicated task force was set up for the raid, composed of troops from various units. It was led by Lieutenant Colonel Baruch "Pinko" Harel, with Major Shlomo Baum as his second in command.

The raid was to be carried out by Israeli armor and infantry masquerading as Egyptians. Israeli troops wore Egyptian uniforms and used Arab hardware



## Shayetet 13

captured during the Six-Day War which had been introduced into service with the IDF; the force was to use Tiran 5 tanks (IDF designation for the T-55) and BTR-50 armoured personnel carriers, camouflaged with the Egyptian sand-coloured scheme.

The tanks were manned by crews from the IDF Armour school and each commanded by an officer. Infantry was provided by the reconnaissance company of the 7th Armoured Brigade, augmented by Arabic speaking members of Sayeret Matkal.

The crossing of the Gulf of Suez was to be carried out using the landing craft of the navy's 11th Flotilla and was to be secured by Shayetet 13 naval commandos.

Assisting the embarkation and disembarkation of the armoured force fell to Unit 707, the navy's underwater works unit.

After training for six weeks, the force came together at its staging point at Ras Sudar in early September 1969. The armoured vehicles arrived at night to avoid detection.

On 7 September 1969, Shayetet 13 commandos carried out Operation Escort, raiding the

Egyptian Navy anchorage at Ras Sadat.

Arriving on a pair of *Maiale* (Pig) human torpedoes, the eight operators attached limpet mines to two P-183 torpedo boats before withdrawing and detonating their charges from a distance.

The sinking of the two boats served a dual purpose, preventing the interception of the Israeli landing craft and their cargo, while drawing Egyptian attention north from the planned point of disembarkation.

Despite the operation's successful execution, Shayetet 13 suffered three fatalities when the self-destruct mechanism of one of the *Maiales* accidentally went off as the commandos were making their way back across the Gulf of Suez.

## Battle

"Pinko" Harel's small force of about a hundred men, six Tiran 5s and three BTR-50s, landed on the Egyptian coast at 03:37 on the morning of 9 September.

Delivered by three landing craft to a beachhead secured by Shayetet 13, Harel's force landed at El Hafair, 40 kilometres south of Suez and 20 kilometres south of the anchorage at Ras

Sadat.

Laden with extra fuel and ammunition, the force headed south, wreaking havoc behind Egyptian lines and attacking installations along the way. The first of these was the Egyptian Army camp and radar site at Abu Darag, which by 07:17 had been secured.

Masquerading as an Egyptian force, the raiders met no significant resistance and had little trouble overcoming the surprised and lightly armed troops guarding Egyptian installations, ill-equipped to repel enemy tanks.

An Egyptian armoured force was camped 40 kilometres north of the landing point, but not only were the raiders driving away from it, but also created obstructions to cover their rear.

Blowing down rock formations overhanging the road, the force was able to hinder any pursuing force.

Supporting the ground forces were the air force's A-4 Skyhawks, providing continuous aerial cover.

Two four-ship formations from 109 Squadron departed Ramat David in the morning, the first tasked with suppressing an SA-2 battery and the second providing close air support to the troops.

As Israeli forces were advancing according to plan and meeting little resistance, the latter were directed to attack an Egyptian radar site. The lead Skyhawk, however, was lost in the attack.

Flight leader Major Hagai Ronen was last seen hanging beneath his parachute over the

Gulf of Suez and is still missing in action. 102 Squadron provided additional close air support.

After the destruction of a radar site at Ras Zafarana, the force came within sight of another Egyptian armoured force but was ordered to disengage.

After covering 45 km and operating unhindered for over nine hours in Egyptian territory, the force rendezvoused once again with the 11th Flotilla landing craft.

From Ras Zafarana it was ferried back to Israeli-held territory in the Sinai, having suffered a single light injury throughout.

The Egyptian Army suffered an estimated 100-200 casualties, including two Soviet military advisors, and had 12 outposts destroyed.

## Aftermath

On 10 September, shocked and angered by news of the raid, Egyptian president Gamel Abdel Nasser suffered a heart attack.

Upon recovery, ten days later, he dismissed the Egyptian Army Chief of Staff, General Ahmad Ismail Ali, the Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Navy, Vice Admiral Fouad Abu Zikry, the commander of Egypt's Red Sea District, as well as a number of other officers.

Having been caught off guard, Egypt had to respond and on 11 September launched a large 102-aircraft raid on Israeli positions in the Sinai.

During this action a single MiG-17 was shot down by Israeli air defences, while the Israeli Air Force claimed the destruction of five MiG-21s and two Sukhoi Su-7s for the loss



**WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING:** The Israeli Tiran-5 series of tanks were actually captured T-55 tanks. Most were captured from the Egyptian Army.

of a single Dassault Mirage.

Its pilot, Giora Romm, was taken prisoner. Egypt claimed the destruction of three Israeli aircraft.

## Shayetet 13

Shayetet 13 (Flotilla 13) is a unit of the Israeli Navy and one of the primary *sayeret* (reconnaissance) units of the Israel Defence Forces.

Shayetet 13 specializes in sea-to-land incursions, counter-terrorism, sabotage, maritime intelligence gathering, maritime hostage rescue, and boarding.

The unit is trained for sea, air and land actions. The unit has taken part in almost all of Israel's major wars, as well as other actions.

The unit is one of the most secretive in the Israeli military. The details of many missions and identities of active operatives are kept highly classified.

The unit is respected as among the best of the world's special forces, and is compared to the

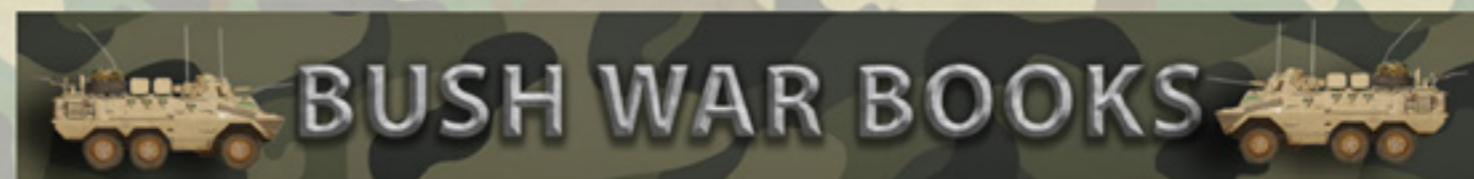
US Navy SEALs and Britain's Special Boat Service.

Unlike many other Israeli Special Forces Units which take men only for their 36-month mandatory service, volunteers for Shayetet 13 must agree to service at least four and a half years (18 months over and above the normal commitment).

Unit's Motto: "As the bat emerges from the darkness, As the blade cuts through with silence, As the grenade smashes in rage." In addition the unit is also referred to as "people of silence".

The training of Shayetet 13 recruits lasts 20 months, and is considered one of the toughest courses in the IDF.

Shayetet 13 operates a summer course for teenagers about to enter military service considering joining the unit, who have the opportunity to get a taste of training in diving, raids, navigation, boats, and more.



**Bush War Books has probably one of the finest collections of military titles available. Especially on the South African Border War.**

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



# Next attraction

*Many military experts agree that it's not a case of "if" China invades Taiwan, but rather a case of "when" China invades Taiwan.*

In the February 2022 edition of Military Despatches I wrote an article that was titled "Potential 2022 flash points".

In the article I made a prediction that within the space of three months the following could happen.

China would invade Taiwan, Russia would invade Ukraine, or both could happen.

Four days after I wrote the article Russia did launch an invasion of the Ukraine. It was one of the few times that I was upset that I had been right about something.

The war in the Ukraine has been going for almost a year now and much has been written about the conflict.

It is a war that has not gone the way the Russians planned. It is

safe to say that, to date, Russia has come off second best. The West, and in particular the United States, has provided Ukraine with vast funding and weapons. At the same time they have imposed sanctions on Russia.

However, let's move the focus from the Ukraine to the South China Sea, another powder keg with a very short fuse and enough players more than

willing to light the fuse.

Yet why does China want to invade Taiwan in the first place? And, if they do invade, who would be willing to come to the aid of Taiwan?

## Background

Trying to understand the background to this potential conflict is kind of like playing hopscotch in a mine field - it's tricky.

To begin with you have to go back 1895. Up until then the island of Taiwan had been part of the Chinese Empire.

Following the defeat of China in the First Sino-Japanese War

(1894–1895), Taiwan, its associated islands, and the Penghu archipelago were ceded to the Empire of Japan by the Treaty of Shimonoseki, along with other concessions.

In 1945, after the Japanese surrender brought an end to World War II, Chiang Kai-shek became the leader of China. Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong, however, had other ideas. He wanted China to become a communist country.

He launched a costly full-scale civil war between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Nationalist Party, or

Kuomintang (KMT), which broke out immediately following World War II and had been preceded by on and off conflict between the two sides since the 1920's.

By mid 1949 the civil war was all but over, with the Communist Party as the victors. On 1 October 1949 Mao Zedong declared the creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist Party retreated to the island of Taiwan and declared themselves an independent country - The Republic of China (ROC).



Currently only 13 nations and the Vatican recognise the ROC as a country. There are, however, many nations that support the ROC while not giving them official status as a country.

Since 1949 the PRC has always claimed that Taiwan is still a province of mainland China - and they want it back.

The People's Republic of China has always danced to their own tune. Their human rights record is deplorable, they have no respect for international copyright laws, and they tend to do whatever they want.

Democracy is not a word that appears in the PRC vocabulary and the country is a one-party state. There is no media freedom and citizens are severely censored as to what they can read, hear or watch. Even access to the Internet is restricted.

Many years ago I used to watch a cartoon on television. It was called 'Pinky and the Brain'. It was about two laboratory mice and, as the theme song said, one was a genius and the other's insane.

In every episode Pinky would ask the question, "So, what are we going to do tonight Brain?"

"The same thing we do every night Pinky - try to take over the world."

Chinese President Xi Jinping kind of reminds me of Brain. On 15 November 2012 he became the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC). In 2013 he became the President of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Xi has been the paramount leader of China, the most prom-

inent political leader in China, since 2012. He is often ranked among the most powerful people in the world.

Xi has made no secret of the fact that he wants China to become the largest and most powerful superpower in the world. Many of them believe that they already are.

He is also adamant that Taiwan is part of mainland China and that he is going to take control of Taiwan. Even if this means taking back the island by force.

Another source of contention is the South China Sea and, in particular, the Taiwan Strait. It is a 180 kilometre wide strait separating the island of Taiwan and the Chinese mainland.

The strait is part of the South China Sea and connects to the East China Sea to the north. The narrowest part is 130 km wide.

The Taiwan Strait is considered to be international waters and is a main conduit between the South China Sea and northern waters used by China, Japan, South Korea and others. Just over 40% of the world's shipping passes through the South China Sea.

Xi Jinping, however, claims that the Taiwan Strait, and most of the South China Sea, is Chinese territorial waters, as is the airspace above it.

Yet Xi has gone ever further. Since 2014 the Chinese have been creating artificial islands in the South China Sea. Mainly in the disputed Spratly Islands area.

They have dug up more than 2,000 acres of coral reef that has then been dumped on top of existing coral reef to create the

islands. These have then been transformed into military bases. Currently there are seven of them. Three of the islands have runways.

China now claims that these islands are Chinese sovereign territory and that the waters and airspace around them belong to the PRC. Countries from around the world have insisted that China's expansion into the South China Sea is illegal and that the water and airspace around them is international waters and airspace. Xi Jinping, however, is not concerned about international opinion, nor the legalities of what he is doing.

Over the past few months Xi Jinping has threatened Taiwan with invasion on numerous occasions. There have also been multiple incidents where Chinese fighter-jets have violated Taiwanese airspace.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been carrying out rehearsals for an invasion of Taiwan.

Most military analysts agree that it is now not a question of "if China invades Taiwan", but rather a question of "when China invades Taiwan".

### How it could play out

A Chinese invasion of Taiwan would mean that the PLA would have to cross at least 160 kilometres of open sea.

The first priority of the PLA would be to gain air supremacy. On paper, the PLA Air Force has the assets to accomplish this.

The People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) has a total aircraft strength of 3,260.

Of these, 1,200 are fighter/interceptors with 371 dedicated attack aircraft.

There are 264 transport aircraft with a tanker fleet of three aircraft.

They have a total of 902 helicopters with 327 of these being attack helicopters.

The most modern aircraft in the PLAAF arsenal is the Chengdu J-20 single-seat, twin-jet, all-weather, stealth fighter. It was introduced into service in March 2017.

It has a maximum speed of Mach 2.0 and a range of 5,500 km with two external fuel tanks. It can carry short range, medium range and long range anti-air missiles (AAM).

While they Chengdu J-20 is a capable aircraft, the PLAAF only has 24 of them.

The main PLAAF fighters are the Chengdu J-7 (a licensed variant of the MiG-21) and the Shenyang J-11 (a licensed variant of the Su-27). They have 340 Chengdu J-7 and 150 Shenyang J-11 fighters.

The PLAAF use Russian-designed Mil Mi-8 as their main attack helicopter.

Up against them would be the Republic of China Air Force, commonly referred to as the Taiwanese Air Force. They have a total of 741 assets.

They have 288 fighter/interceptors, with no dedicated attack aircraft.

They have only 19 transport aircraft with no tanker fleet. They have 208 helicopters with 91 attack helicopters.

The main Taiwanese fighter aircraft are the AIDC F-CK-1 Ching-Kuo multi-role combat aircraft designed and built in



**A PRETTY PENNY:** The US Navy aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78). It is the most technologically advanced warship ever built and cost a cool \$13 billion.

Taiwan. The Ching-Kuo entered service in 1997 and they have 103 of them currently in service.

It has a speed of Mach 1.8 and a range of 1,100 kilometres. It can be armed with air-to-air missiles, air-to-surface missiles, anti-ship missiles, and air-to-ground cruise missiles.

The other fighter is the American-built F-16 Fighting Falcon of which they have 114.

According to many military analysts the sheer weight of numbers would see the Chinese gain air supremacy in a relatively short time. Although they also agree that it could prove costly to the PLA Air Force.

When it comes to sea power, once again China hold the upper hand. The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has a total of 777 assets. This includes two aircraft carriers.

They also have 50 destroyers, 46 frigates, 72 corvettes, 123 patrol vessels, and 36 mine warfare vessels.

Their submarine fleet consists of 79 submarines and includes

ballistic missile submarines (SSBN), nuclear attack submarines (SSN), conventional attack submarines (SS/SSK), and conventional ballistic missile submarines (SSB).

The Republic of China Navy (ROCN) is fairly small, with only 117 assets in total.

This number is made up of four destroyers, 22 frigates, two corvettes, four submarines, 43 patrol vessels, and 14 mine warfare vessels.

Two of the submarines are of the Chien Lung class, modified versions of the Dutch Navy's Zwaardvis class. Both are diesel-electric craft. A new class of submarines being built by Taiwan's Indigenous Defence Submarine program, will eventually replace them.

The other two submarines are of the Hai Shih-class. They are used for training and are actually Tench-class submarines built for the United States Navy (USN) between 1944 and 1951. There are only three of these class of submarine still surviving.

After gaining supremacy in the air and at sea the PLA would be able to launch a full ground invasion of Taiwan. With an army of more than two million men, nearly 5,000 tanks, nearly 3,000 towed artillery, and more than 3,000 rocket launchers, the PLA should have no problem with achieving their objectives.

The ROC Army can muster an army of little more than 100,000 troops. Without any air support and vastly outnumbered, military analysts agree that Taiwan could not hold out for longer than three months.

Then again, it was these same military analysts that said that the Ukraine would fall to a Russian invasion within a few weeks.

### Where it gets interesting

US President Joe Biden has warned China on three occasions that if they invade Taiwan, the United States will take action.

And he is not talking about imposing sanctions or condemning China, he is talking about direct military intervention.

While the United States have not had any official military presence in Taiwan since 1979, it is an open secret that there are US assets in Taiwan. China knows this and there is little doubt that they will also be targeted in any invasion.

If the United States steps in then this would paint an entirely different picture of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan.

As of 2023, America is ranked as the most powerful military force in the world. It's current annual defence budget is \$770,000,000,000.

The USA has a total of

1,832,000 military personnel. This is made up of 1,390,000 active military personnel and a reserve force of 442,000.

The United States Navy is rated as the largest and most powerful navy in the world.

The USN has a total of 484 assets. They currently have 11 aircraft carriers, which they regard as their most powerful asset. All US aircraft carriers are nuclear-powered.

The US Navy also has nine helicopter carriers, 92 destroyers, 22 corvettes, 10 patrol vessels and eight mine warfare vessels.

Of their 68 submarines, all are nuclear-powered. The US Navy operates three types: ballistic missile submarines, guided missile submarines, and attack submarines.

The United States boasts the largest and most powerful air fleet in the world.

The US Army (United States Army Air Corps), US Air Force, US Navy, and US Marine Corps (United States Marine Corps Aviation) all have their own air assets. The US Air Force is the largest with 5,217 aircraft.

In total, America has 13,247 air assets which consists of 1,937 fighter/interceptors, 783 dedicated attack aircraft, 982 transport aircraft, a tanker fleet of 627 aircraft, and 774 special mission aircraft.

Finally, they have 5,463 helicopters, which includes 910 attack helicopters.

America boasts two modern jet fighters in the Lockheed Martin F-22 Raptor and the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II.

The F-22 Raptor is a sin-

gle-seat, twin engine, all-weather stealth tactical fighter aircraft. It is used by the US Air Force.

Introduced into service in December 2005, it has a speed of Mach 2.25 and a range of 3,000 kilometres. It is armed with a 20 mm M61A2 Vulcan rotary cannon and can carry air-to-air loads or air-to-ground loads.

The F-35 Lightning II is a single-seat, single-engine, all-weather stealth multi-role combat aircraft. It is used by the US Air Force, US Marine Corps, and US Navy.

It was introduced into service with the Marine Corps in July 2015. It has a speed of Mach 1.6 at altitude and a range of 2,800 kilometres. It is armed with a 25 mm GAU-22/A 4-barrel rotary cannon and can carry air-to-air missiles, air-to-surface missiles, anti-ship missiles and bombs, including the B61 mod 12 nuclear bomb.

Although it is already 32 years old, the Northrop Grumman B-2 Spirit is still the most advanced stealth bomber in the world.

The bomber is subsonic and can deploy both conventional and thermonuclear weapons, such as up to eighty 230 kg Mk 82 JDAM GPS-guided bombs, or sixteen 1,100 kg B83 nuclear bombs. The B-2 is the only acknowledged aircraft that can carry large air-to-surface stand-off weapons in a stealth configuration.

It has a speed of 1,010 km/h and a range of 11,000 kilometres. Twenty B-2s are in service with the United States Air Force.

While there is no chance that

the US would commit their entire Navy and Air Force in the defence of Taiwan, they would send a sizeable task force.

It is unsure of how many other NATO and SEATO nations would become involved in the situation. There is, however, a strong possibility that Japan would commit their military in support of the United States.

After all, Japan is not that far from China, there is little love lost between Japan and China, and Japan fears that they could be caught in the crossfire.

### Military think-tank

A highly respected military think-tank has been looking closely at the situation.

They have run 25 war-game simulations looking at various scenarios of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. They have also factored in that the United States will be involved.

All of the 25 simulations played out have shown them the same thing - a Chinese invasion of Taiwan will fail.

Yet these same 25 simulations have shown something else. The costs in human life will be high, very high.

There are also other questions that need to be asked. For example, does Xi Jinping take Biden's threats seriously? Does he believe that Biden will actually commit US Forces against China?

And if the United States or other countries do come out with military support for Taiwan, how will Xi Jinping respond?

It's all well and good for Biden to promise military support for Taiwan, but how would the



**SILENT DEATH:** The B-2 Spirit stealth bomber is still the most advanced stealth bombers in the world. It can carry large air-to-surface weapons, including nuclear bombs, in a stealth configuration

American public feel about it?

If, for example, the Chinese manage to sink a US Navy aircraft carrier and over 5,000 American lives are lost, how will the public respond?

Will they rally around the flag or will they start demanding answers to the question "why are American dying in a war being fought over an island in the Far East?"

Then, of course, there is the question that is at the back of everyone's mind - what if the conflict turns nuclear?

As of 2021 China had a nuclear stockpile of more than 400 warheads. And they are more than capable of delivering them.

They have medium-range ballistic missiles, tactical cruise missiles, long-range ballistic missiles, and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

The Dongfeng 5 or DF-5 is a three-stage Chinese ICBM that has an estimated range of between 12,000 and 15,000

kilometres. This means that it is capable of reaching North America.

While Russian President Vladimir Putin has threatened to use tactical nukes to defend his country, he knows that if he does it will bring the full might of NATO, led by the United States, down on him. I don't believe it is a risk he is willing to take.

Xi Jinping on the other hand is a different kettle of fish. He may be under the illusion that China could actually win a nuclear confrontation. If this is indeed the case, then he may be tempted to launch a first-strike.

### Conclusion

Let's hope and pray that none of this comes to pass. Let's hope that China continues to threaten and posture, but never goes further than that.

So who would win a nuclear war between China and the USA? Well no-one would win. We would all lose.

# Counting the cost

*According to official records, 2,573 members of the SADF died while on active service. Yet less than a third of them were killed in action. How did the rest die?*

In 1957 the New Defence Act, Act No.44 of 1957 was passed, merging the former Union Defence Force (including Reserves), the Citizen Force, Commandos and South African Permanent Force into the South African Defence Force (SADF), head quartered in Pretoria.

The SADF consisted of a permanent Force, a Citizen Force and Commandos. The three arms of the SADF were the Army, Air Force and the Navy. Later a fourth arm, the South African Medical Services, was formed.

In 1968 conscription was introduced when it was decided that all white South African males would be required to do a period of compulsory military service.

Note carefully the use of the word compulsory. It was not a request, it was an instruction and it was backed up by an act of parliament.

Every white male who was a South Africa citizen or had permanent residence was required to register with the South African Defence Force in the year that he turned sixteen.

Conscription was better known as 'National Service'. At first it was for a period of nine months and was then extended to a period of 12 months. In 1978 national service was increased to 24 months. In 1989 national service was reduced back to one year.

The SADF was disbanded in 1994 and absorbed into the new South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

While the SADF was never involved in any declared war, they were involved in combat in South West Africa (now Namibia), Angola, Rhodesia (now

Zimbabwe), Mozambique, and Zambia.

The undeclared war in South West Africa and Angola became known as the 'Border War'. It lasted from 26 August 1966 to 21 March 1990. A total of 23 years, six months, three weeks and two days. The SADF took part in no fewer than 52 major operations.

In the 37 years that it existed, a total of 2,573 members of the SADF died while on active service.

Considering the fact that the SADF was involved in a 'war' for 23 years, this is not a high figure. Especially when you compare it to the American casualty figures during the Vietnam War, another undeclared war.

The Americans were involved in Vietnam for 20 years. During that time they suffered 58,318 dead and more than 300,000 wounded.

The US had more soldiers killed in action (KIA) in a single year than the SADF had in 23 years.

Even a short war such as the 1982 Falklands War between the United Kingdom and Argen-

tine resulted in the death of 255 British troops and 633 Argentinian troops. And this was in a war that lasted just over two months.

Yet the figure of 2,573 SADF deaths is a misleading one. It would be easy to assume that these people died during the Border War. This, however, is not the case.

In fact only 791 members of the SADF were killed in action or died as a direct result of combat. That is only 30.7%. So what happened to the remaining 69.3%? How did they die?

The shocking, and sad, fact is that the highest cause of death in the SADF was as a result of motor vehicle accidents.

A total of 844 members of the SADF lost their lives in accidents involving vehicles, both military and civilian. This equates to 32.8%.

Many troops were killed driving home on a weekend pass, or while returning to their base after a pass.

The driver of a Buffel APC would lose control of the vehicle and it would roll. It was a standing order that troops travelling in the back of the vehicle had to be wearing their seatbelts. Of course some didn't and they would pay the consequences.

The next highest cause of death was as a result of aircraft accidents. These were not as a result of damage to aircraft during combat, but accidents. Many of these accidents took place during pilot training. 241 people died in aircraft accidents.

A total of 236 SADF members lost their lives in shooting accidents. It was not uncommon for there to be accidental discharges (AD). In the majority of cases

no-one would be injured.

This was not, however, always the case. Troops shot either themselves or someone else as a result of an AD.

Naturally other accidents occurred on a frequent basis. People would be electrocuted, struck by vehicles, fatally injured in falls. More than a few died in parachute accidents. 151 people died as a result of accidents.

Another cause of death was drowning. This could have been as a result of trying to cross a river, being caught in a flash flood, or even drowning in the base swimming pool. 97 people died from drowning.

Accidents with explosives resulted in 89 deaths. A mortar bomb falling short during a live fire exercise, troops playing with a hand grenade - these were just some of the causes.

A total of 85 people died as a result of disease or natural causes. These included heart attacks, strokes, asthma attacks and so on.

According to the official records, 24 members of the SADF committed suicide while on active service.

Finally, 15 members of the SADF were killed by wild animals. These included crocodiles, hippo, and elephant.

The unit that suffered the most casualties as a result of being killed in action was not an SADF unit. It was in fact a police unit.

The South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division, better known as Koevoet, lost 127 men killed in action.

The SADF unit with the most killed in action was 32 Battalion. They lost 100 men in battle.

101 Battalion (SWATF) suffered 75 killed in action while 202 Battalion lost 44.

61 Mechanised Battalion Group, better known as 61 Mech, took part in numerous cross-border operations during the Border War. They lost 37 men killed in action.

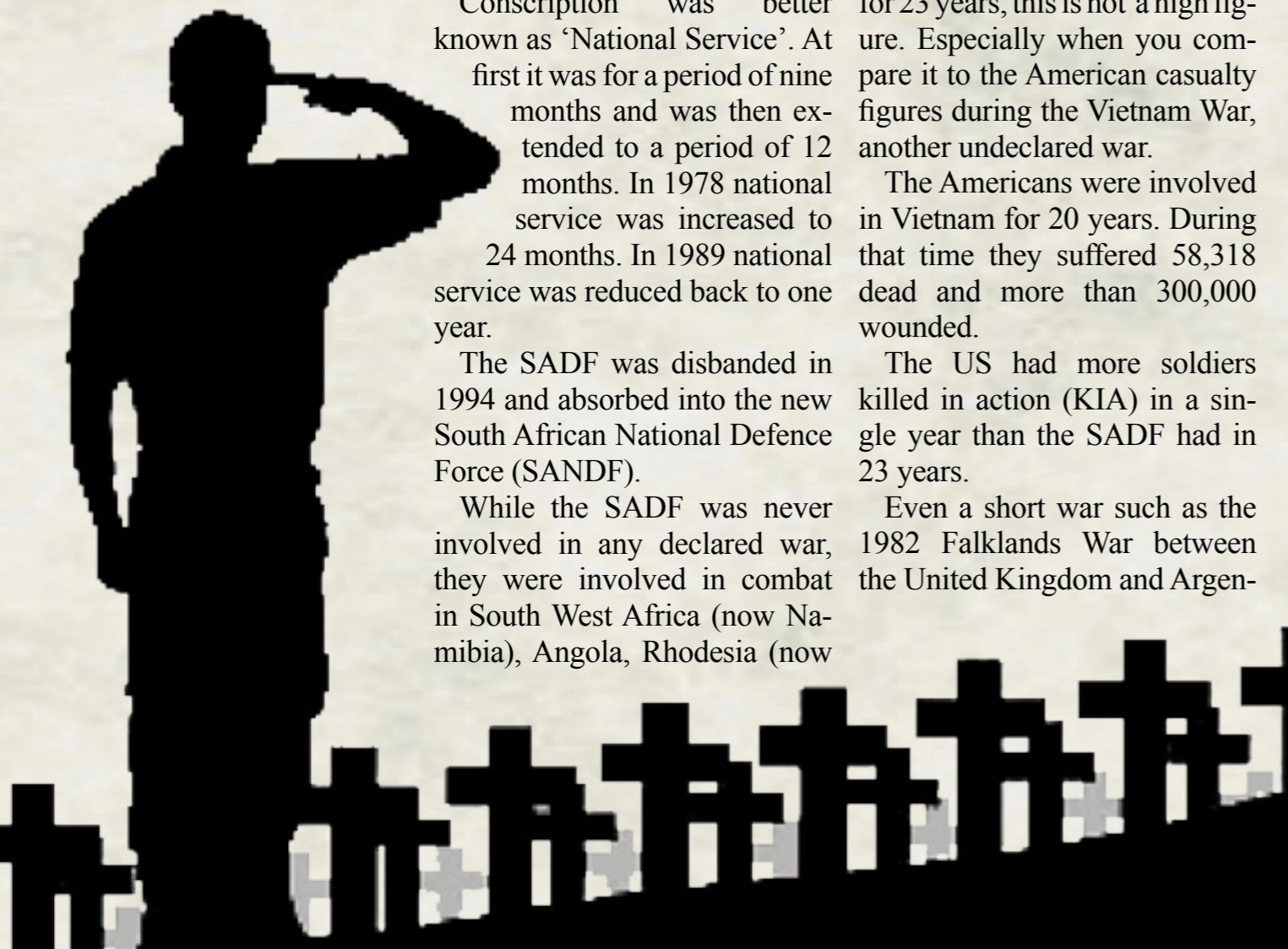
Another unit that lost 37 men was 4 South African Infantry Battalion (4 SAI).

5 Reconnaissance Commando (later 5 Reconnaissance Regiment) lost 33 men.

Below are other units that lost 10 or more men killed in action.

- 5 South African Infantry Battalion (5 SAI) - 22
- 201 Battalion - 22
- 1 Parachute Battalion - 21
- 1 Special Services Battalion (1 SSB) - 21
- 102 Battalion - 21
- 1 Reconnaissance Commando/Regiment - 20
- 6 South African Infantry Battalion (6 SAI) - 16
- 8 South African Infantry Battalion (8 SAI) - 16
- 1 South African Infantry Battalion (1 SAI) - 14
- 3 South African Infantry Battalion (3 SAI) - 12
- 2 South African Infantry Battalion (2 SAI) - 10
- Group 34 - 10

*\*Authors note: Please note that the figures used in this article are taken from the official figures given. The total number of deaths may have been higher. It also does not take into consideration those wounded, disfigured or permanently disabled. Nor those that suffered from psychological effects.*



# Those left behind

*Whenever a soldier leaves to serve his country there is always an amount of uncertainty. Where is he going? What will he be doing? Will he come home again? And it is not only the soldier that asks these questions.*

Back in 1966 US Special Forces Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler had an unlikely hit song with The Ballad of the Green Berets.

The song reached Number One in the United States, as well as in South Africa.

The song originally had 12 verses, but it was trimmed down to a radio-friendly three verses.

The author Robin Moore, who wrote the book, *The Green Berets*, helped Sadler write the lyrics and get a recording contract with

RCA Records.

The lyrics were written, in part, in honour of U.S. Army Specialist 5 James Gabriel, Jr., a Special Forces operator and the first native Hawaiian to die in Vietnam, who was killed by Viet Cong gunfire while on a training mission with the South Vietnamese Army on 8 April 1962.

The third and final verse of the song goes:

Back at home a young wife  
waits

Her Green Beret has met his  
fate

He had died for those  
oppressed.

Leaving her this last request.

And every soldier that has gone off to serve his country or fight in a war has left a woman waiting back home.

It may be a mother, a wife,

a girlfriend, a sister, or even a daughter. They tend to ask the same questions that he does. Where is he going? What will he be doing? Will he come home again?

David\* spent nearly 30 years as a permanent force member of the South African Defence Force. As a member of an infantry battalion he spent a considerable amount of time on the border.

According to David it was just as hard, if not harder, for the women as it was for the men.

“I joined the army straight from school, so

I never did national service or anything,” David says. “That was back in 1962 and I was 17 years old. I didn’t have a girlfriend at the time, so the only woman I left behind was my mother. I know she wasn’t all that happy about me joining

the army. My father worked for the railways and she was hoping I would do the same.”

Three years later, while home for the weekend, David met the woman that would become his wife.

“She was 18 and worked at the local bank. I invited her out for coffee and a movie and we started dating. It was difficult because I only saw her on weekends when I could get home. If I had the weekend off, which luckily was most weekends, I would have to drive nearly 300 kilometres to get

home and then do the return journey on Sunday evening.”

Three months after they started dating David and Yolanda\* became engaged and a year later they were married. He had been married for less than a month when he received a nasty surprise.

“We were married on a Saturday and my officer commanding gave me the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday leave so we could go on honeymoon. Just three days.

“Two weeks after I was married I was informed that our battalion was leaving for

South West Africa the following week. This was in November 1966. I was a sergeant back then and was a company platoon sergeant. We were among the first SADF troops sent to South West Africa.”

Naturally his new bride was not all that happy.

“We had only been married a few weeks,” says Yolanda. “And now he was going away. He didn’t really know where he was going, or when he would be coming back. You must realise that back then we didn’t know anything about the ‘Border War’. Look, I know I married a soldier, but we weren’t fighting a war or anything. So I didn’t understand why he had to go away.”

It was only four months later when David returned home. During his time away the only contact had been by letters.

During the remainder of his military career David spent many months away from home. It often put a strain on his marriage. During his career David and Yolanda had three children, two girls and a boy, and they have seven grandchildren. These days he is retired and he has moved to the coast.

“I missed out on a lot of important events,” he says. “I wasn’t there for the birth of two of my three children. I missed out on all of their first day at school. When my father passed away I was on the border. I only managed to make it back just in time for the funeral.

“When I think about it I think that Yolanda had it far worse than I did. When I was on the border I knew where I was and I knew what I was doing. Back

at home Yolanda had no idea.” At least David was fortunate enough to come home after every trip. Some where not so lucky.

Sandra\* and Owen\* started dating when she was in standard six and he was in standard seven.

In 1981 she went into matric and Owen left to do his two years national service.

“I promised that I would wait for him, and I did. During the two years he did national service I never dated anyone else. I even went to my matric dance with my cousin.

“Owen would write as often as possible and at least once a week he would phone me, except for the four months he was on the border. And we would spend every one of his weekend passes together.”

After matric Sandra began work and at the end of that year Owen finished his national service. Three months later they were married.

A year later Sandra was two months pregnant. It was then that Owen received his first call up. He was now with a Citizen Force unit and they would be doing a three-month camp on the border.

“I can’t say I was thrilled about it,” says Yolanda. “But we both knew he would be required to do camps every year. About three weeks after he left I was really missing him. He had written me two letters and I had written back and also sent him a parcel.

“I had just arrived home from work when there was a knock at the door. I opened up to find a military chaplain and another

army officer on my doorstep. My blood went ice cold.

“They told me that Owen had been killed in a contact with the enemy that morning. Everything was a blur. He was given a military funeral and to be honest I don’t remember much about it. My life had been torn apart.”

Seven months later Sandra gave birth to a baby girl that would never get to meet her father. Five years later Sandra moved with her daughter overseas. She remarried and a year later gave birth to another baby girl.

“I’m happy with my husband and he has always been very understanding. He helped raise my first child as if it was his own. Yet I will never forget Owen and he will always be the love of my life.”

Yet Sandra is not the only woman to have lost a loved one as a result of war.

One third of the 9.7 million soldiers killed or declared missing during the Great War left behind a widow. The total number of women widowed as a result of the First World War is estimated to be three to four million.

After the war Italy was left with more than 200,000 widows. Great Britain had more than 240,000 while Germany ended up with over 525,000 widows. France ended the war with more than 700,000 widows, approximately half of the 1,400,000 French soldiers killed or missing action.

Many of these women had children who would now have to face life without a father.

And it was not just the mar-



**LEAVING ON DEPLOYMENT:** A military C-130 transport plane takes off. This was the same type of aircraft that carried most South African troops to and from the border.

ried women that suffered. Soldiers have parents, relatives and loved ones. The death of a soldier affects a wide circle of people.

Many wives would wait anxiously at home for their men to return from military service. Often they had to handle day to day affairs on their own with little support from their men.

They would often have to raise children, handle all the monthly accounts, take the car for a service, and do a hundred and one other things - all while their husbands were away on military service.

Of course not every wife was prepared to wait patiently at home while her husband was away. This is something that has happened as long as there have been wars.

When Susan\* married James\* he had already finished his one year national service and he worked as a marketing consultant.

“James really loved the military,” Susan says. “Once a week he would go through to the officer’s mess at his citizen

force unit for drinks. He would often be involved with his unit on weekends as well.”

Two years after completing his national service James joined the permanent force as an officer.

“After that he was away more than he was at home. He did a couple of courses at the Infantry School and quite a few courses in Pretoria. So he would be away for weeks, sometimes more than a month, at a time.

“And of course when he went to the border it was for long periods of time. I was still in my early 20s and the last thing I wanted was to sit at home alone every night and weekend. I started an affair and after a while it turned serious. James came back after one border trip and I told him I wanted a divorce. He was devastated, but really, can you blame me?”

Of course many young soldiers, especially those that were conscripted, had girlfriends. Many of them were not prepared to put their young lives on hold for a year or two. Throughout the history of the military there

have been soldiers that received the dreaded “Dear John” letter. Basically this was a letter from their girlfriend telling them that they had been dumped.

Gert\* did his one year national service in 1976. He lived in Johannesburg and was called up to the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg, only 45 kilometres away from home.

“It was really cool because I was so close to home,” Gert says. “After basic and phase one training I became a duty driver. It wasn’t back-breaking work and I would get pass every second weekend.

I enjoyed being the duty driver at night. I used to sit around the duty room until about midnight and then go to bed.

One night I was on duty and it was my girlfriend’s 18th birthday. I can remember that it was a Tuesday night and I really wanted to visit her and give her a big surprise. I don’t know what I was thinking, but I decided to take the duty vehicle and go and visit her.”

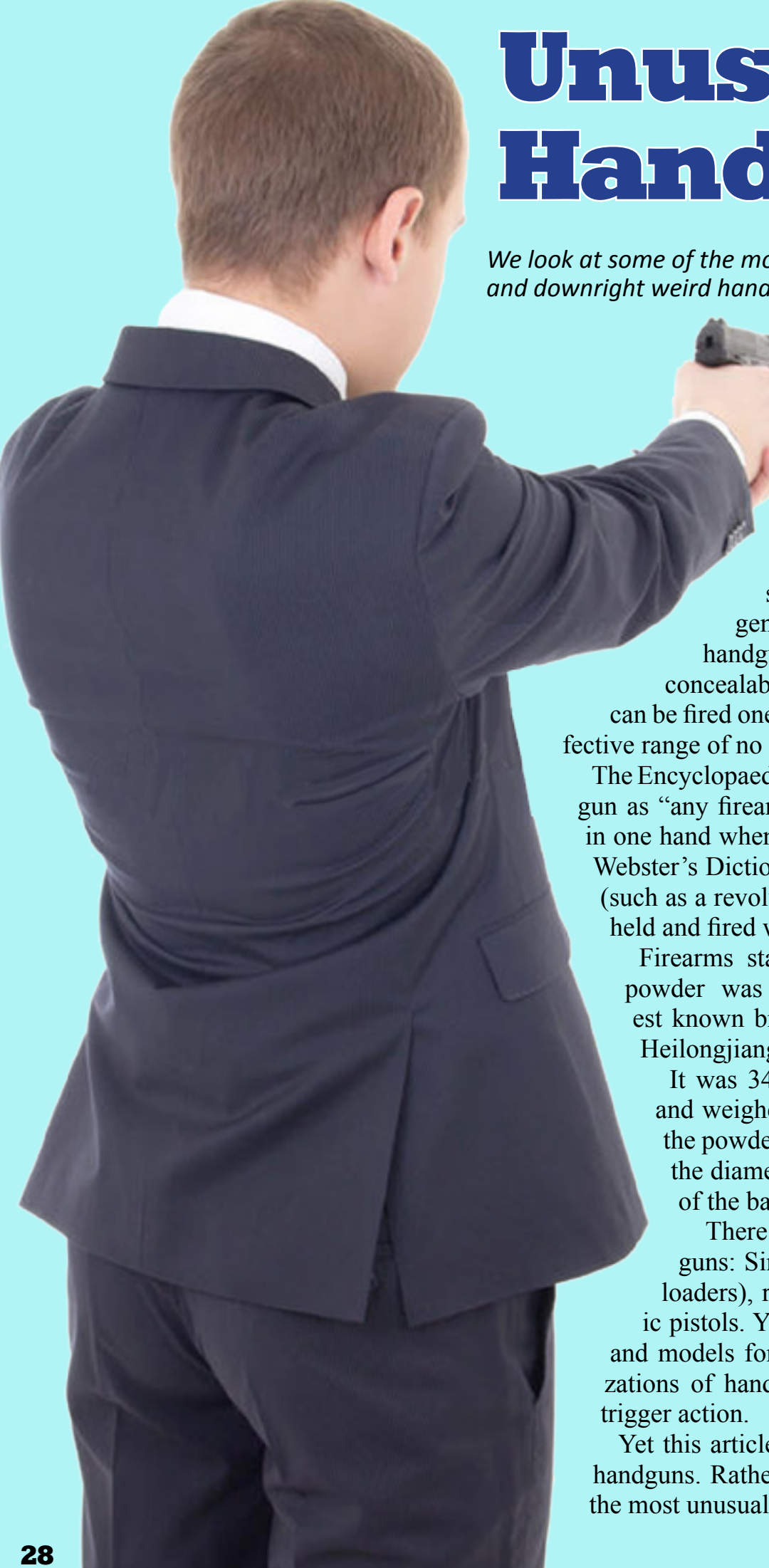
Gert’s little trip was discovered when the duty officer went looking for him to make a trip to the local shop in town.

“I was charged and sentence to 14 days in detention barracks. After that I was sent as a signaller to 2 SAI in Walvis Bay for the remainder of my national service. Now I was so far away from home I couldn’t even go home over weekends. And the worst of it all, about three weeks after I was posted to Walvis Bay my girlfriend broke up with me.”

\* Names changed on request.

# Unusual Handguns

*We look at some of the most odd, unique, unusual, and downright weird handguns ever designed.*



**H**andguns have a history that stretches back more than 900 years. Although the exact definition of a handgun is sometimes disputed, the general perception of what is a handgun does not vary far from a concealable, close-range firearm that can be fired one-handed, usually with an effective range of no greater than 100 metres.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines a handgun as “any firearm small enough to be held in one hand when fired”; while the American Webster’s Dictionary defines it as “a firearm (such as a revolver or pistol) designed to be held and fired with one hand”.

Firearms started in China where gunpowder was first developed. The oldest known bronze barrel handgun is the Heilongjiang hand cannon, in 1288.

It was 34 cm long without a handle and weighed 3.55 kg. The diameter of the powder chamber was 6.6 cm while the diameter of the interior at the end of the barrel was 2.5 cm.

There are three basic types of handguns: Single-shot handguns (muzzle loaders), revolvers and semi-automatic pistols. You can find many variations and models for each type. Some categorizations of handguns only depend on their trigger action.

Yet this article is not about the history of handguns. Rather it takes a look at some of the most unusual handguns ever designed.

## Pepper-box

The pepper-box revolver or simply pepperbox (also “pepper-pot”, from its resemblance to the household pepper shakers) is a multiple-barrel firearm, mostly in the form of a handgun, that has three or more gun barrels in a coaxially revolving mechanism.

Each barrel holds a single shot, and the shooter can manually rotate the whole barrel assembly to sequentially index each barrel into alignment with the lock or hammer, similar to rotation of a revolver’s cylinder.

Pepperbox guns have existed

## Jarre Harmonica Gun

Designed during the era of pinfire cartridges this was an early attempt at creating higher



capacity handguns.

Developed in the 1850s in Paris, France, the Jarre is fed via a 10-round horizontal magazine of sorts which is pre-load-

## Knife Revolver

How about a handgun that you can use to shoot someone and, if that doesn’t work, you can then use it to stab them. Well, they do actually exist.

While there are various types, we are going to look at the G.R.A.D. Knife Pistol 22 LR, NRS-2, and the QSB-91.

The G.R.A.D knife pistol is produced in Las Vegas, Nevada, and is a large knife, similar in profile to a bayonet or fighting

for all types of firelock firearms and metal cased ammunition systems used in breechloading firearms: matchlock, wheellock, flintlock, snaplock, caplock, pinfire, rimfire and centerfire. While they are usually sidearms, a few long guns were also made.

For example, Samuel Colt owned a three-barrel pepperbox matchlock musket from British India, and an eight-barrel pepperbox shotgun was designed in 1967 but never went



into production.

Pepperbox pistols were popular in the 19th century, finding favour with soldiers as backup weapons, and various versions were used for self-defence.

ed with pinfire cartridges.

The magazine automatically advances between chambers horizontally when the pistol is cocked.

While the short-lived design gave an increase in capacity over conventional six-shooter revolvers of the era, it definitely had its flaws.

The gun had poor balance as the horizontal magazine made its way through the gun’s breech. And, the gun could not be easily carried like the standard revolver of the era.

One would have to remove the magazine and carry it separately in order to holster the pistol conventionally, negating the ability to use the gun as quickly as a revolver.

In an attempt to resolve this problem shorter starter magazines could be employed in various sizes providing from three to six initial loaded rounds before having to reload with the wider ten round magazine.

But still, due to the lop-sided nature of the gun it remained difficult to carry.

## G.R.A.D. Knife Pistol 22 LR



## NRS-2



knife, with the addition of a 6-shot .22 calibre double action revolver integrated into the grip, firing over the blade.

The NRS-2 “Scout Firing Knife” is a gun

hybrid with a combination of a knife blade and a built-in single-shot shooting mechanism

designed to fire a 7.62×41mm SP-4 (CII-4) cartridge, originally designed for the PSS silent pistol.

It was manufactured by the Tula Arms Plant for Soviet *Spetsnaz* troops in the 1980s, and is still used as a personal weapon for modern *Spetsnaz* troops and special law enforcement groups.

The NRS-2 is designed for either stabbing or throwing with the blade, or fired at distances of up to 25 metres.

The QSB-91 shooting knife was developed in China during early 1990s, and is in use by special elements of PLA and Chinese armed police.

The QSB-91 is a fixed blade

combat knife with round hollow handle, made of metal. Inside the handle there are four fixed 7.62mm barrels, pointing toward the blade (two barrels at each side of the blade).

Each barrel is reloaded separately from the breech, once the screw-on end cap is removed. The end cap contains a rotating



QSB-91

striker, which turns 90 degrees before striking next primer every time the trigger is pulled.

The trigger is placed at the front of the grip and doubles as a guard for the knife. Trigger unit is of double action only type, with relatively long and heavy trigger pull.

### Fegyvergyar Frommer Baby

Fegyvergyar is a common name for the Hungarian state firearms factory in Budapest that is best known for Mannlicher rifles and the Roth-Steyr pistol.



Rudolf Frommer was one of the factory's designers and engineers and was with the firm from 1896 until 1935.

This 'Baby' model from 1912 was basically a smaller version of the Frommer 'Stop' service pistol which began production in the same year.

It worked on the system known as long recoil, in which the barrel recoiled almost its full length before returning,

leaving the breechblock to come forward after it, stripping a cartridge from the magazine and chambering it.

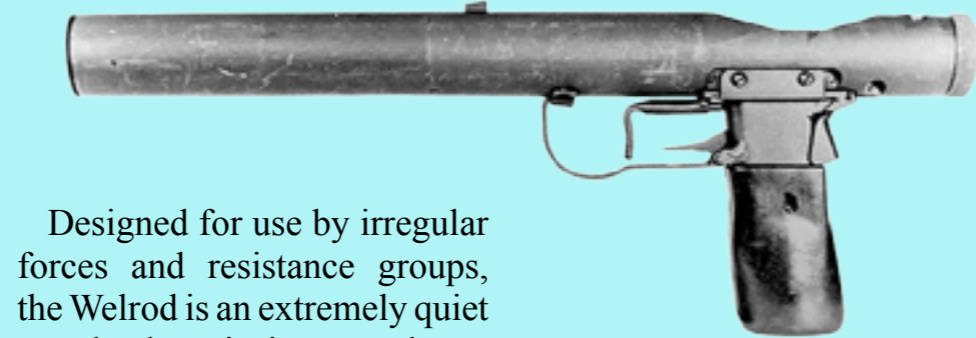
This independent movement of barrel and breechblock made it necessary to have two separate springs, both of which were housed in the separate spring cylinder above the barrel.

It fired a 6.35 mm round and the firearm was only 12 cm in length.

### Welrod

The Welrod is a British bolt action, magazine fed, suppressed pistol devised during the Second World War by Major Hugh Reeves at the Inter-Services Research Bureau (later Station IX).

Station IX, being based near Welwyn Garden City, gave the Welrod its unusual name, being derived from "Wel" from "Welwyn Garden City" (a prefix used by covert equipment designed by Station IX) and "rod", gangland slang for gun, as a way to obscure its purpose.



Designed for use by irregular forces and resistance groups, the Welrod is an extremely quiet gun thanks to its integrated suppressor. Approximately 2,800 were made in wartime and perhaps 14,000 in total when post-war examples are included.

The Welrod was used primarily by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) but was

also used by the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and Resistance forces.

The Mk II version fired .32 ACP rounds while the Mk I used the 9x19mm Parabellum. It could hold six rounds.

### Turbiaux Palm Pistol

This unique "assassin's" style palm pistol was originally patented in Paris, France by Jaques E. Turbiaux in 1882.

The pistol's firing chambers are arranged around an internal rotating disk with the cartridges all pointing outwards.

The pistol is held in the palm of the hand with barrel protruding from between the middle fingers, and is fired by squeezing

ing a spring loaded lever into the back of the gun.

This lever had a 'double action' operation that would rotate the turret before firing the next round.

This style of gun is commonly known as a turret revolver. Turbiaux developed a 10 round version for the 6mm Protector cartridge and a seven round version for the 8mm Gaulois cartridge.



### Liberator Pistol

In 1942 the United States Office of Strategic Services (OSS) asked the Guide Lamp division



of General Motors, Detroit, to design a cheap, simple hand-

gun which could be produced in large numbers.

Although General Motors knew little about firearms, it knew a great deal about the mass-production of small metal items using the most modern methods.

Within about three months it had produced about one million of the crude pistols. 300 workers produced a pistol with 23 parts every 7 seconds, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

This is the only pistol that could be made faster than it

could be loaded, which took about 10 seconds. The production cost was \$2.10 each.

Often referred to as the 'Woolworth Gun', the Liberator Pistol's actual name was the 'Flare Projector' Calibre .45 (FP-45).

A single-shot pistol, the Liberator was designed to be scattered about World War II occupied Europe to be used by Resistance groups as disposable assassination weapons or to enable resisters to kill a German soldier and then take his weapon.

### Mk 22 'Hush Puppy'

The Mark 22 Model O was a popular weapons with the US Navy SEALs during the Vietnam era.

Much of the work was done behind enemy lines and stealth was their primary weapon.

Operating in an intensive and unforgiving environment, these early Seals were always on the look out for non-standard firearms to help give them an edge.

One of these non-standard weapons was the Mark 22 Model 0 'Hush Puppy'.

It was developed from the

commercial Smith & Wesson M39 pistol. The Mark 22 weapons has a longer barrel which is threaded to accept the Mark 3 Model 0 silencer and a special slide latch for locking the slide shut, eliminating mechanical noise when the weapon is fired.

Special plugs and a long holster were made so that the Mark 22 can be carried underwater without damage. Only the front plug need be removed and



the slide operated to allow the weapon to be fired.

It could carry eight rounds of special subsonic Mark 144 ammunition or standard NATO 9x19 mm. The name 'Hush Puppy' was coined from the weapon's original use of quietly eliminating enemy guard dogs.



# For valour

*To win a Victoria Cross is no mean feat. So what does it take to win it more than once? And just how many people have managed to do it?*

The Victoria Cross, often simply known as the VC, is the highest and most prestigious award of the British honours system. It is awarded for gallantry "in the presence of the enemy" to members of the British Armed Forces. It may be awarded posthumously.

It was previously awarded to Commonwealth countries, most of which have established their own honours systems and no longer recommend British honours. It may be awarded to a person of any military rank in any service and to civilians under military command although no civilian has received the award since 1879.

Since the first awards were presented by Queen Victoria in 1857, two-thirds of all awards have been personally presented by the British monarch. These investitures are usually held at Buckingham Palace.

The VC was introduced on 29 January 1856 by Queen Victoria to honour acts of valour during the Crimean War. Since then, the medal has been awarded 1,358 times to 1,355 individual recipients.

Only 15 medals, of which 11 were to members of the British Army and four were to members of the Australian Army, have been awarded since the Second World War.

The traditional explanation of the source of the metal from which the medals are struck

is that it derives from Russian cannon captured at the Siege of Sevastopol. However, research has suggested another origin for the material.

Historian John Glanfield has established that the metal for most of the medals made since December 1914 came from two Chinese cannon, and that there is no evidence of Russian origin.

## VC Facts

Here is some interesting trivia about the Victoria Cross.

- The cross is inscribed 'For Valour'. Queen Victoria had this changed from the suggested 'For The Brave' as she considered all soldiers brave.
- The jeweller Hancocks of London has made all the VCs awarded.
- More than an eighth of all VCs awarded, a total of 176, are now owned by Lord Ashcroft and can be seen in the Imperial War Museum together with their own collection of 46 Victoria Crosses.
- Between 1861 and 1908, eight men had their VCs taken away after being convicted of crimes. Those crimes included theft of a colleague's medals, stealing a cow, desertion and bigamy.
- George V was strongly against forfeiture of a Victoria Cross and said that

even if a man was hanged he should wear his VC on the scaffold.

- A Royal Warrant in 1920 made it possible to award VCs to women but this has never happened.
- At any investiture the VCs are presented first, taking precedence even over knighthoods.
- Holders of the VC receive an annuity of £1,495 a year, which is free of tax.
- The first man to win the award was Mate (later Rear-Admiral) C. D. Lucas, Royal Navy, in the Baltic on 21 June 1854. An unexploded Russian shell lay on the deck of his ship during an engagement. He threw it overboard seconds before it exploded.
- In earlier years no provision was made for posthumous awards. A memorandum would appear in the London Gazette stating that the person 'would have been recommended for the Victoria Cross had he survived.' Approximately 291 posthumous awards have been made since the regulations of August 8th, 1902 sanctioned posthumous awards retrospectively to the Zulu War in 1879.
- The youngest people to be awarded the VC are Andrew Fitzgibbon and Thomas Flynn. Both were 15 years

and three months old when they won the medal.

- The oldest VC recipient was Lieutenant W. Raynor of the Bengal Veteran Establishment during the Indian Mutiny in 1857. He was 69 years old.
- Originally the Crosses were issued with crimson ribbons for soldiers and dark blue for the navy.

of respect for the lives lost during the Great War.

- At the relief of Lucknow in India the highest number of Victoria Crosses' given during one day of action was on the 16th November 1857. A total of 24 were awarded.
- At the first investiture on 26 June 1857, 62 Victo-

medal bearing her name.

- The Victoria Cross was awarded 628 times during World War I.
- During World War II the Victoria Cross was awarded 182 times.
- During World War I four South Africans were awarded the Victoria Cross. They were Private W. F. Faulds (1st Bn. S.A. Infantry), Captain W. A. Bloomfield (Scout Corps and 2nd S.A. Mounted Brigade), Sergeant F. C. Booth (BSAP attached Rhodesia Native Regiment), and Lance-Corporal W. H. Hewitt (2nd



This was changed in 1918, when the Royal Air Force was formed and one ribbon was used for all services.

- Though created in 1856 the Victoria Cross award was backdated to allow recognition for two previous years of action in the Crimean War.
- The Battle of Rorke's Drift in Natal in 1879 saw 11 Victoria Crosses' being awarded for what was classified as a single action.
- In 1921 America's Unknown Soldier from World War I was awarded the Victoria Cross. To reciprocate Britain's Unknown Soldier was awarded the American Medal of Honour. Both awards were made as a mark

of respect for the lives lost during the Great War. Queen Victoria insisted on presenting the medals herself. She had taken a keen interest throughout the procedure of creating the new

Victoria Crosses were awarded. During World War II three South Africans were awarded the Victoria Cross. They were Sergeant Q. G. M. Smythe (1st Royal Natal

Carbineers), Lieutenant G. R. Norton, MM (Kaffrarian Rifles - attached to Hampshire Regiment), and Captain E. Swales, DFC (South African Air Force - attached to R.A.F.). Captain Swales was awarded a posthumous VC.

## VC and bar

Only three men have been awarded the VC twice in the history of the medal.

They were Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Martin-Leake, Captain Noel Chavasse and Captain Charles Upham.



## Arthur Martin-Leake VC & Bar, VD

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

He was 27 years old and a surgeon captain in the South African Constabulary attached

to the 5th Field Ambulance during the Second Boer War on 8 February 1902, at Vlakfontein, when he was awarded his first VC.

His citation read:

*During the action at Vlakfontein, on the 8th February, 1902, Surgeon-Captain Martin-Leake went up to a wounded man, and attended to him under a heavy fire from about 40 Boers at 100 yards range. He then went to the assistance of a wounded Officer, and, whilst trying to place him in a comfortable position, was shot three times, but would not give in till he rolled over thoroughly exhausted. All the eight men at this point were wounded, and while they were lying on the Veldt, Surgeon-Captain Martin-Leake refused water till every one else had been served.*

He received the decoration from King Edward VII at St James's Palace on 2 June 1902.

Martin-Leake qualified as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1903 after studying while convalescing from wounds. He then took up an appointment in India as Chief Medical Officer with the Bengal-Nagpur Railway.

In 1912, he volunteered to serve with the British Red Cross during the Balkan Wars, attached to the Montenegrin army, and was present during the Siege of Scutari (1912-13) and at Tarabosh Mountain. He was awarded the Order of the Montenegrin Red Cross.

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

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

His award citation reads:

*Lieutenant Arthur Martin Leake, Royal Army Medical Corps, who was awarded the Victoria Cross on 13th May, 1902, is granted a Clasp for conspicuous bravery in the present campaign.*

*For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty throughout the campaign, especially during the period 29th October to 8th November, 1914, near Zonnebeke, in rescuing, whilst exposed to constant fire, a large number of the wounded who were lying close to the enemy's trenches.*

His Victoria Cross is displayed at the Army Medical Services Museum, Aldershot, England.

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

He died, aged 79, at High



Cross, Hertfordshire.

## Noel Chavasse VC & Bar, MC

Noel Godfrey Chavasse was a British medical doctor, Olympic athlete, and British Army officer.

Chavasse was first awarded the VC for his actions on 9 August 1916, at Guillemont, France when he attended to the wounded all day under heavy fire. The full citation was published on 24 October 1916 and read:

*Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse, M.C., M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps.*

*For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty.*

*During an attack he tended the wounded in the open all day, under heavy fire, frequently in view of the enemy. During the ensuing night he searched for wounded on the ground in front of the enemy's lines for four hours.*

*Next day he took one stretcher-bearer to the advanced trenches, and under heavy shell fire carried an urgent case for 500 yards into safety, being wounded in the side by a shell splinter during the journey. The same night he took up a party of twenty volunteers, rescued three wounded men from a shell hole twenty-five yards from the enemy's trench, buried the bodies of two officers, and collected many identity discs, although fired on by bombs and machine guns.*

*Altogether he saved the lives of some twenty badly wounded men, besides the ordinary cases which passed through his hands. His courage and self-sacrifice, were beyond praise.*

Chavasse's second award was made during the period 31 July to 2 August 1917, at Wieltje, Belgium; the full citation was published on 14 September 1917 and read:

*War Office, September, 1917.*

*His Majesty the KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of a Bar to the Victoria Cross to Capt. Noel Godfrey Chavasse, V.C., M.C., late R.A.M.C., attd. L'pool R.*

*For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when in action.*

*Though severely wounded early in the action whilst carrying a wounded soldier to the Dressing Station, Capt. Chavasse refused to leave his post, and for two days not only continued to perform his duties, but in addition went out repeatedly under heavy fire to search for and attend to the wounded who were lying out.*

*During these searches, although practically without food during this period, worn with fatigue and faint with his wound, he assisted to carry in a number of badly wounded men, over heavy and difficult ground.*

*By his extraordinary energy and inspiring example, he was instrumental in rescuing many wounded who would have otherwise undoubtedly succumbed under the bad weather conditions.*

*This devoted and gallant officer subsequently died of his wounds.*

Chavasse died of his wounds in Brandhoek and is buried at Brandhoek New Military Cemetery, Vlamertinge. He was 32 years old.

Chavasse was the only man

to be awarded both a Victoria Cross and Bar in the First World War.



## Charles Upham VC & Bar

Charles Hazlitt Upham was a New Zealand soldier who was awarded the Victoria Cross twice during World War II.

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

His citation read:

*War Office, 14th October, 1941.*

*The KING has been graciously pleased to approve of awards of the Victoria Cross to the undermentioned:*

*Second Lieutenant Charles Hazlitt Upham (8077), New Zealand Military Forces.*

*During the operations in Crete this officer performed a series of remarkable exploits, showing outstanding leadership, tactical skill and utter indifference to danger.*

*He commanded a forward*

platoon in the attack on Maleme on 22nd May and fought his way forward for over 3,000 yards unsupported by any other arms and against a defence strongly organised in depth. During this operation his platoon destroyed numerous enemy posts but on three occasions sections were temporarily held up.

In the first case, under a heavy fire from a machine gun nest he advanced to close quarters with pistol and grenades, so demoralizing the occupants that his section was able to "mop up" with ease.

Another of his sections was then held up by two machine guns in a house. He went in and placed a grenade through a window, destroying the crew of one machine gun and several others, the other machine gun being silenced by the fire of his sections.

In the third case he crawled to within 15 yards of an M.G. post and killed the gunners with a grenade.

When his Company withdrew from Maleme he helped to carry a wounded man out under fire, and together with another officer rallied more men together to carry other wounded men out.

He was then sent to bring in a company which had become isolated. With a Corporal he went through enemy territory over 600 yards, killing two Germans on the way, found the company, and brought it back to the Battalion's new position. But for this action it would have been completely cut off.

During the following two days his platoon occupied an exposed position on forward

slopes and was continuously under fire. Second Lieutenant Upham was blown over by one mortar shell, and painfully wounded by a piece of shrapnel behind the left shoulder, by another. He disregarded this wound and remained on duty. He also received a bullet in the foot which he later removed in Egypt.

At Galatas on 25th May his platoon was heavily engaged and came under severe mortar and machine-gun fire. While his platoon stopped under cover of a ridge Second-Lieutenant Upham went forward, observed the enemy and brought the platoon forward when the Germans advanced. They killed over 40 with fire and grenades and forced the remainder to fall back.

When his platoon was ordered to retire he sent it back under the platoon Sergeant and he went back to warn other troops that they were being cut off. When he came out himself he was fired on by two Germans. He fell and shammed dead, then crawled into a position and having the use of only one arm rested his rifle in the fork of a tree and as the Germans came forward he killed them both. The second to fall actually hit the muzzle of the rifle as he fell.

On 30th May at Sphakia his platoon was ordered to deal with a party of the enemy which had advanced down a ravine to near Force Headquarters. Though in an exhausted condition he climbed the steep hill to the west of the ravine, placed his men in positions on the slope overlooking the ravine and himself went to the top with

a Bren Gun and two riflemen. By clever tactics he induced the enemy party to expose itself and then at a range of 500 yards shot 22 and caused the remainder to disperse in panic.

During the whole of the operations he suffered from dysentery and was able to eat very little, in addition to being wounded and bruised.

He showed superb coolness, great skill and dash and complete disregard of danger. His conduct and leadership inspired his whole platoon to fight magnificently throughout, and in fact was an inspiration to the Battalion.

Upham was evacuated to Egypt, now promoted to captain. He received a Bar to his VC for his actions on 14–15 July 1942, during the First Battle of El Alamein.

The citation read: War Office, 26th September, 1945.

The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of a Bar to the VICTORIA CROSS to:

Captain Charles Hazlitt UPHAM, V.C. (8077), New Zealand Military Forces.

Captain C. H. Upham, V.C., was commanding a Company of New Zealand troops in the Western Desert during the operations which culminated in the attack on El Ruweisat Ridge on the night of 14th–15th July, 1942.

In spite of being twice wounded, once when crossing open ground swept by enemy fire to inspect his forward sections guarding our mine-fields and again when he completely destroyed an entire truck load of

German soldiers with hand grenades, Captain Upham insisted on remaining with his men to take part in the final assault.

During the opening stages of the attack on the ridge Captain Upham's Company formed part of the reserve battalion, but, when communications with the forward troops broke down and he was instructed to send up an officer to report on the progress of the attack, he went out himself armed with a Spandau gun and, after several sharp encounters with enemy machine gun posts, succeeded in bringing back the required information.

Just before dawn the reserve battalion was ordered forward, but, when it had almost reached its objective, very heavy fire was encountered from a strongly defended enemy locality, consisting of four machine gun posts and a number of tanks.

Captain Upham, without hesitation, at once led his Company in a determined attack on the two nearest strongpoints on the left flank of the sector. His voice could be heard above the din of battle cheering on his men and, in spite of the fierce resistance of the enemy and the heavy casualties on both sides, the objective was captured.

Captain Upham, during the engagement, himself destroyed a German tank and several guns and vehicles with grenades and although he was shot through the elbow by a machine gun bullet and had his arm broken, he went on again to a forward position and brought back some of his men who had become isolated. He continued to dominate the situation until his men had beaten off a vio-

lent enemy counter-attack and consolidated the vital position which they had won under his inspiring leadership.

Exhausted by pain from his wound and weak from loss of blood Captain Upham was then removed to the Regimental Aid Post but immediately his wound had been dressed he returned to his men, remaining with them all day long under heavy enemy artillery and mortar fire, until he was again severely wounded and being now unable to move fell into the hands of the enemy when, his gallant Company having been reduced to only six survivors, his position was finally overrun by superior enemy forces, in spite of the outstanding gallantry and magnificent leadership shown by Captain Upham.

The Victoria Cross was conferred on Captain Upham for conspicuous bravery during the operations in Crete in May, 1941, and the award was announced in the London Gazette dated 14th October, 1941.

He died in Canterbury on 22 November 1994, aged 86.

### Worthy contender

A man many considered to be unlucky not to be awarded a bar to his Victoria Cross was the unassuming, bespectacled World War I medical officer Harold Ackroyd VC, MC.

He was nominated for the VC not once, not twice, but on a remarkable 34 separate occasions during World War I.

Despite being deeply involved in scientific research at Cambridge, he decided to join the army in early 1915.

He was commissioned Tem-



Harold Ackroyd VC, MC

porary Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps on 15 February 1915.

During fierce fighting for the possession of Delville Wood on 19 July 1916 Harold Ackroyd acted with such bravery that he was recommended eleven times for the award of the Victoria Cross. He was eventually awarded the Military Cross for this action.

During the third Battle of Ypres that became known as the Battle of Passchendaele. Throughout the fierce fighting of 31 July and 1 August, there were 23 separate recommendations of Ackroyd's name for the Victoria Cross.

He came through the battle unscathed but died eleven days later on 11 August in Jargon Trench on the western edge of Glencorse Wood, shot in the head by a sniper. He was 40 years old.

Harold's Victoria Cross was gazetted on 6 September 1917. A medal investiture was held outside Buckingham Palace on 26 September 1917. His widow Mabel and their five-year-old son Stephen received both the Victoria Cross and the Military Cross from King George V.

# A little extra...

Many troops that carried out foot patrols in the bush would pack a little something extra to take with them. But what exactly did they carry.

Between Christmas and New Year I decided to have a braai and invited around a few of my old army mates.

At some stage in the afternoon someone posed the question "What item did you always carry with you on patrols?"

There were a few interesting answers and it gave me an idea for an article. I put out a survey and asked this question of other veterans - what item did you consider an essential part of your patrol kit.

Here are some of the answers I received.



## Toilet paper

More than a few people claimed that the first item they would pack would be a toilet roll. It wasn't given the nickname 'white gold' for nothing.

"And I would make sure that it was two-ply toilet paper," said Andre. "If I had to take a crap in the bush I wanted something nice and soft to wipe my butt with."



## Aromat

According to quite a few of those asked, nothing spiced up dull rat pack food like a liberal sprinkling of Aromat seasoning.

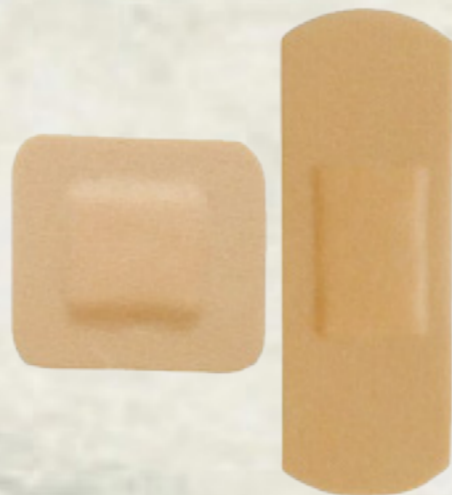


## Smash

This was a packet of instant mash potato. You mixed it with hot water, gave it a good stir, and it had the consistency and taste (almost) of mash potato.

Peter would always take at least two packets of Smash with him on a patrol.

"I used to mix the packet of soup, either oxtail or beef, that came with the rat pack together with the Smash. It actually tasted pretty good and each packet served four people. Or one hungry troop."



## Plasters

"I would always pack in a few loose plasters of various sizes," said Bruce.

"You would always end up getting little cuts and scratches from thorn bushes, and they could quickly get infected in the heat. The worse was getting a blister on your heel.

"So I always carried some plasters with me. The only problem was that everyone else was always trying to bum plasters from me."



## Penlight torch

While it was never a good idea to shine a torch at night when out on patrol in the bush, John said that he still carried a small torch with him.

"I would often use it to find something in my pack in the dark. I would turn in on inside my pack, so the light wasn't visible outside of the pack. It beat scratching around trying to find something."



## Pain killers

"Walking patrol in the heat would often give me a mean headache," recalls Brian.

"And the longer we walked, the worse the headache would become. So I would always carry a bottle of pain killers with me. If I remember, they were Anadin. I used to take two in the morning. Two at about midday, and then two when we stopped for supper in the late afternoon."

According to Brian they did work, but they also led to a problem.

"I became hooked on them," Brian said. "No jokes, I became addicted to the bloody things. It lasted for just over two years after I finished my national service."

"I would end up taking between eight and 12 pain killers every single day. Eventually I had to get professional treatment to wean myself off of them."



## Zippo lighter

Mark did his national service in 1976 and he recalls that his dad gave him a gift before he left to do his service.

"My dad travelled quite a bit on business. In 1975 he went to the United States and he brought a Zippo lighter back with him.

"I did border duty in Owamboland and during the rainy season it really used to come down. When you were out on patrol everything was always soaking wet.

"When we did patrols we would stop about an hour before last light and then make our supper. Some of the guys would cook using Esbit fuel tablets, but I was never fond of that.

"I would dig a small hole and then make a fire. This meant that I could cook my supper in a dixie half and at the same time make a fire bucket of boiling water for coffee.

"This is where my Zippo lighter was perfect. I could always get a fire going, no matter what.

"Of course we would never sleep where we had supper. Once we had eaten we would wait until it was dark and then move off at least a kilometre away and set up our TB for the night. Our corporal, who was

our section leader, would always insist on it. It was just as well because on two separate occasions the spot where we had eaten was mortared from across the border about an hour after last light. Pity for them that we were no longer there."



## Tabasco

Kevin enjoys his food hot and spicy. To cater for his taste he would always carry a bottle of Tabasco sauce with him.

"Nothing gave rat pack meals a bit of a kick than a bit of the old hot

sauce."



## Gina

Matt O' Brien has always been a bit of a strange lad. Gina was just more proof of this.

"Before I left for the army my girlfriend at the time gave me this little plastic duck. I called it Gina and it went everywhere with me.

"When I used to shower I would take Gina with me on a piece of string. Everyone was convinced that I was crazy.

"On the border, Gina was with me on every patrol I did. She was my good luck charm."

# Murphy's Laws of combat

Most people are familiar with the principle of Murphy's Law. So it makes sense that the military would have its own version of Murphy's Law.

Murphy's law is an adage or epigram that is typically stated as: "Anything that can go wrong will go wrong." In some formulations, it is extended to "Anything that can go wrong will go wrong, and at the worst possible time."

So it makes sense that the military would have its own version of Murphy's Law.

Legend has the phrase originating in the military from Air Force captain Edward Murphy, who served at Edwards Air Force base in 1949.

The Air Force was testing high-speed jets and Captain Murphy once complained about one of the technicians serving under him on the project, saying "If there is any way to do it wrong, he'll find it."

Soon, people on the base were referring to things going wrong as Murphy's Law.

Marion F. Sturkey served as a military pilot in the U.S. Marine Corps. In 1966 and 1967 he flew combat-assault helicopters during the war in Vietnam.

In 2009 he wrote a book titled "Murphy's Laws of Combat". It is from this book that the following 'laws' are taken.

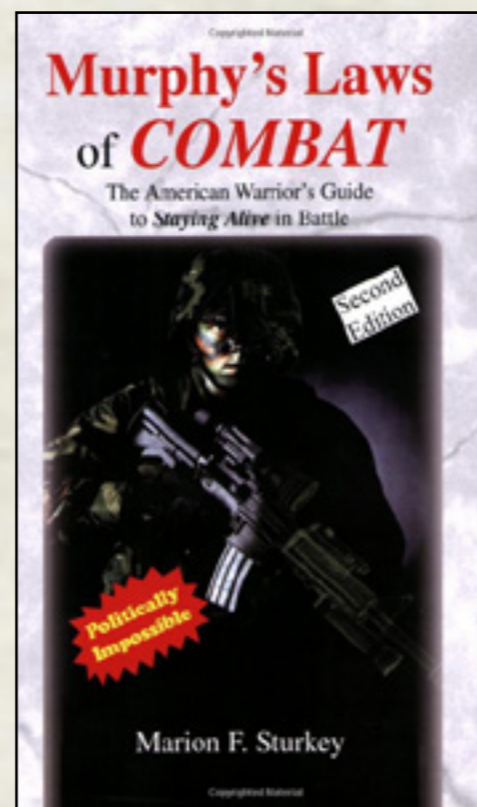
## Murphy's Laws of Combat

1. You are not Superman.
2. Suppressive fire - won't.
3. If it's stupid but works, it's not stupid.
4. Don't look conspicuous - it draws fire.

5. Don't draw fire - it irritates the people around you.
6. When in doubt, empty the magazine.
7. Never share a foxhole with someone braver than you.
8. Never forget that your weapon was made by the lowest bidder.
9. If your attack is going really well, it's an ambush.
10. No plan survives the first contact intact.
11. If you are forward of your position, the artillery will fall short.
12. The enemy diversion you are ignoring is the main attack.
13. The easy way is always mined.
14. If you are short of everything except enemy, you're in combat.
15. Incoming fire has the right of way.
16. No combat ready unit has ever passed an inspection.
17. If the enemy is in range, so are you.
18. Friendly fire - isn't.
19. Radios will fail the moment you need fire support urgently.
20. Tracers work both ways.
21. The only thing more accurate than incoming fire is incoming friendly fire.
22. When the pin is pulled, Mr Grenade is not your friend.
23. A sucking chest wound is nature's way of telling you to slow down.
24. If at first you don't succeed,

- call in an air-strike.
25. Never stand when you can sit, never sit when you can lie down, never stay awake when you can sleep.
26. Professionals are predictable, it's the amateurs that are dangerous.
27. The most dangerous thing in the world is a Second Lieutenant with a map and a compass.
28. There is no such thing as military 'intelligence'.
29. Mines are equal opportunity weapons.
30. When you have secured the area, make sure the enemy knows it too.

We trust that you enjoyed these.



# Beret and Cap Badges

There is no doubt that you will remember your own corps badge, but how many others did you know? How many of these shown here do you recognise. You'll find the answers to the quiz on page 88.

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

## Fighter Aces of World War II

A fighter ace was someone that had been credited with shooting down five or more enemy aircraft. This month we look at the top fighter aces of World War II.

The aircraft flown in World War II were far superior to those flown 21 years earlier. Aircraft technology also increased in leaps and bounds. By June 1944 the first jet-powered aircraft was in combat. By the end of the war a total of five dif-

### Germany

German pilots flew for the *Luftwaffe*, which was headed by *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Göring. He had been a fighter ace in World War I with 22 kills.

Germany had 427 pilots with 20 or more kills. The most of any country during the war.

In fact the top 120 aces of the war were all German. 182 of these aces were killed in action.

- Erich Hartmann (352 kills). He was nicknamed *Bubi* (The Kid) by his comrades and the 'Black Devil' by the Soviets. He flew 1,404 combat missions and participated in aerial combat on 825 separate occasions. 345 of the aircraft he shot down were Soviet, while seven were American. He was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds. After the war he surrendered to the Americans, but was handed over

ferent jets had seen combat.

Fighter aces in World War II had tremendously varying kill scores, affected as they were by many factors: the pilot's skill level, the performance of the airplane he flew and those he flew against, how long he served, his opportunity to meet the enemy in the air (Allied to Axis disproportionate), and the standards his air service brought to the awarding of victory credits.

The pilots of World War II

to the Red Army. He spent 10 years in various Soviet prison camps and gulags until he was released in 1955. In 1956 he joined the newly established West German German Air Force in the *Bundeswehr*.

- Gerhard Barkhorn (301 kills). He was the only other pilot besides Hartmann to achieve more than 300 kills. In March 1944 he was awarded the third-highest decoration in the Wehrmacht when he received the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords. After the war he joined the German Air Force of the *Bundeswehr*, serving until 1976.
- Gunther Rall (275 kills). He ended the war with the rank of major. He served as Inspector of the Air Force 1971–1974 and as the German Military Representa-

achieved a far greater number of kills than those of World War I. The top fighter ace of World War I was Manfred von Richthofen, the famed 'Red Baron', with 80 kills.

In World War II, 150 pilots surpassed von Richthofen's score.

Once again in this article we are looking at pilots that achieved 20 or more kills.



**Bubi Hartmann**

tive to the NATO Military Committee 1974–1975.

- Otto Kittle (267 kills). He flew 583 combat missions on the Eastern Front before being killed on 14 February 1945.
- Walter Nowotny (258 kills). He flew 442 combat missions and was killed on 11 November 1944.

### Finland



**Ilmari Juutilainen**

Pilots from Finland flew for

the *Ilmavoimat* (Finnish Air Force). They had 13 aces with 20 or more kills. All of their aces survived the war.

Their top five aces were:

- Ilmari Juutilainen (94 kills). He was the top non-German ace of World War II. After the wars he served in the air force until 1947. He worked as a professional pilot until 1956.
- Hans Wind (75 kills). He was awarded the Mannerheim-risti (Mannerheim Cross of Liberty), Finland's highest military decoration, twice.
- Eino Luukkanen (56 kills).

### Japan



**Tetsuzo Iwamoto**

Japanese pilots flew either for the *Dai-Nippon Teikoku Kaigun Kōkū-tai* (Japanese Imperial Navy Air Service) or the *Dainippon Teikoku Rikugun Kōkūbutai* (Japanese Imperial Army Air Service).

In total 13 of their aces achieved 20 or more kills, and

four were killed in action.

- Tetsuzo Iwamoto (80 kills). He survived the war only to die from septicemia at the young age of 38.
- Shigeo Fukumoto (72 kills). While he did survive the war, there are no records as to what happened to him afterwards.
- Shoichi Sugita (70 kills). He was killed in action on 15 April 1945.
- Hiromichi Shinohara (58 kills). On his first day in combat he recorded 10 kills. He would also go on to claim a Japanese record by shooting down 11 enemy aircraft in a single day. He was killed in action on 27 August 1939 during the undeclared Soviet–Japanese border conflicts in 1939.
- Takeo Okumura (54 kills). He was killed in action on 22 September 1943.

After the war, he was convicted of spying for Sweden. He retired in November 1951 after he was found guilty of espionage for having handed over some aerial photographs to a man who worked for the Swedish intelligence service.

- Urho Lehtovaara (44 kills). He was awarded the Mannerheim Cross on 9 July 1944.
- Oiva Tuominen (44 kills). After the war Tuominen resigned from military service and became a taxi operator. He remained an active sports pilot well into old age.

### Kills in other Wars

- 12 German aces scored kills in the Spanish Civil War and six of them became aces.
- Lev Shestakov (Russia) - had 39 kills in the Spanish Civil War.
- Seven Italian aces scored victories in the Spanish Civil War and two became aces. American ace Albert Baumler also became an ace in the Spanish Civil War.
- Fourteen American aces scored kills in the Korean War. Two of them became aces.
- Three German aces had kills in World War I. Two of them were also World War I aces.
- Robin Olds of the USA scored four kills in Vietnam.

## Romania

Romanian pilots were part of the *Aeronautica Regala Romana* (Royal Romanian Air Force).

Eight of their aces scored more than 20 kills and one of them was killed in action.

- Constantin Cantacuzino (69 kills). Nicknamed Bâzu, he came from a noble family. He was the captain of the Romanian ice hockey team at the World Championships in 1931 and 1933. Not wanting to live under a communist regime after the war, he escape to Italy and later went to Spain where he flew in air shows to earn a living.
- Alexandru Șerbănescu (47 kills). While most of his victories were against the Russians, he did shoot down an American B-17 Flying For-

ress and two P-51 Mustangs. He was killed on 18 August 1944.

- Ion Milu (45 kills). After the war he became a test pilot.
- Daniel Vizanty (43 kills). He accumulated 4,600 flying hours during the war. After the war he was removed from the army by the Communist regime. He was charged with “conspiracy against social order” and sentenced to five years in prison, of which he served two. In June 1977 he was invited to Paris by mayor Jacques Chirac. He never returned to Romania.
- Tudor Greceanu (42 kills). After the war he was arrested by the communist government and spent a number of years in prison.



**Constantin Cantacuzino**



**Romanian aircraft marking**

golden stars and six Orders of Lenin. He continued to serve after the war and in 1968 he became Deputy Chief of the Air Defense Forces.

Flying for the *Voyenno-Vozdushnye Sily* (Soviet Air Force), Russian pilots saw extensive action on the Eastern Front.

Twelve of their pilots would go on to score more than 20 kills.

- Ivan Kozhedub (66 kills). He was the Allied “Ace of Aces” in World War II. In 1951, with the rank of colonel, he took part in the Korean War but was not allowed permission to participate in combat missions. He went on to become a general and was made an Aviation Marshal in 1985.
- Alexdandr Pokryshkin (59 kills). Among the medals he was awarded were three Hero of the Soviet Union

## Russia



**Ivan Kozhedub**

## Croatia



**Mato Dukovac**

Croatian pilots flew for the *Zrakoplovstvo Nezavisne Države Hrvatske* (Air Force of the Independent State of Croatia) and fought on the side of the Germans.

Two of their pilots went on to achieve more than 20 kills, with one of them being killed in action.

- Mato Dukovac (44 kills). He defected to the Soviet Union in September 1944 and was returned to Yugoslavia in November 1944. After the war he worked as a flight instructor for the Yugoslav Air Force. In April 1945 he defected to Italy and left in 1946 and became a captain in the Syrian Air Force. Dur-

ing the 1948 Arab-Israeli War he flew combat missions against Israel. Following the war, he emigrated to Canada.

- Cvitan Galic (38 kills). He was awarded the German Cross in Gold on 23 June 1943. He also won the Iron Cross 1st Class and 2nd Class. He was killed in action on 6 April 1944. He had just landed after completing a patrol and was in the act of getting out of the cockpit when Spitfire IXs of No.2 Squadron SAAF South African Air Force strafed the airfield. His plane was hit by a bomb.

## America

American pilots flew for either the United States Army Air Forces, United States Navy, or the United States Marine Corps Aviation.

A total of 27 Americans would go on to score 20 or more kills and six of them were killed in action.

- Richard I. Bong (40 kills). He was one of the most decorated American fighter pilots of World War II. His awards included the Medal of Honour. He was killed on 6 August 1945 while testing a P-80 Shooting Star jet fighter in California.
- Thomas B. McGuire (38 kills). He was killed in action on 7 January 1945 and posthumously awarded the Medal of Honour.
- David McCampbell (34 kills). He flew for the United

States Navy and was a winner of the Medal of Honour. He also set a world single mission aerial combat record of shooting down nine enemy planes in one mission, on October 24, 1944.

- Francis “Gabby” Gabreski (28 kills). He was the top American and United States Army Air Forces fighter ace over Europe in World War II and a jet fighter ace with the Air Force in the Korean War.
- Gregory “Pappy” Boyington (28 kills). He received both the Medal of Honour and the Navy Cross. He flew for the United States Marine Corps Aviation and the 1st American Volunteer Group, the ‘Flying Tigers’, in the Republic of China Air Force in Burma.



**Richard I. Bong**



**US aircraft marking**

## South Africa

South African pilots flew for the Royal Air Force and the South African Air Force.

Four South African would score 20 or more kills and one of them was killed in action.

- Marmaduke “Pat” Pattle (40 kills). When he was rejected by the South African Air Force at the age of 18, he travelled to the UK and joined the RAF in 1936. He was the top British Commonwealth ace and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar. He was killed in action on 20 April 1941.
- Adolph “Sailor” Malan (32 kills). He led No. 74 Squadron RAF during the Battle of Britain. In the 1920s he

served as a cadet on the South African Training Ship *General Botha*. This would later earn him the nickname ‘Sailor’. After the war he became involved in the South African domestic political scene and was a fierce opponent of the National Party and the Apartheid system.

- Johannes Jacobus le Roux (23 kills). Known as Chris, he saw action in the Battle of France and later in North Africa. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and two Bars. He died in an aircraft accident on 9th September 1944.
- Petrus ‘Dutch’ Hugo (22 kills). He was awarded the Distinguished Service Or-

Commander Douglas Badger and Australian ace Tony Gaze. His numerous awards included the DSO and DFC and Bar. After the war he participated in the Korean War, flying the American Lockheed F-80 Shooting Star. He ended his career as an air vice marshal and was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB).

- Robert Tuck (30 kills). He won the DSO, DFC and two Bars, and the Air Force Cross. On 28 January he was shot down and taken prisoner of war. In February 1945 he escaped and joined up with the advancing Russians, where he spend some time fighting alongside them.
- William Vale (30 kills). He fought in the North African



**Marmaduke Pattle**

der, the Distinguished Flying Cross and two Bars. He retired from the RAF in 1950 as a Group Captain.

Campaign and the Greek Campaign. He was awarded the DFC and Bar and the Air Force Cross. He retired from the RAF as a squadron leader on 3 June 1959.

- Bob Braham (29 kills). He flew Hawker Hurricanes and De Havilland Mosquitos. He was awarded the DSO and two Bars, the DFC and two Bars, and the Air Force Cross. He was shot down in June 1944 and spent the remainder of the war as a POW at Stalag Luft III.
- James ‘Ginger’ Lacey (28 kills). He was the second highest scoring RAF fighter pilot of the Battle of Britain. He retired from the RAF on 5 March 1967 as a flight lieutenant

## France



**Pierre Clostermann**

French pilots flew for either the Royal Air Force or the Free French Air Force

Three French pilots achieved 20 or more kills.

- Pierre Clostermann (33 kills). He was born in Brazil but move to France to complete his secondary education. He wrote a very successful book *Le Grand Cirque* (The Big Show), on his experiences in the war. He also briefly re-enlisted in the *Armée de l’Air* in 1956–57 to fly ground attack missions during the Algerian War.
- Marcel Albert (23 kills). He flew for both the Roy-

al Air Force and the Free French Airforce. After the war he flew as a test pilot in 1946 and was later sent to Czechoslovakia as air attaché. In 1948, he left the military and moved to the United States with his wife.

- Jean Demozay (21 kills). Another pilot that flew for the RAF and the Free French Airforce. When the war ended he became deputy general commander of the Air Schools in October 1945 and died in a plane crash on December 19, 1945, three months after the war had ended.

## Slovak Republic

Their pilots flew for the *Slovenské vzdušné zbrane* (Slovak Air Force). They fought on the side of the Germans in the Russian Campaign.

Three of their pilots achieved more than 20 kills. Two of them survived the war.

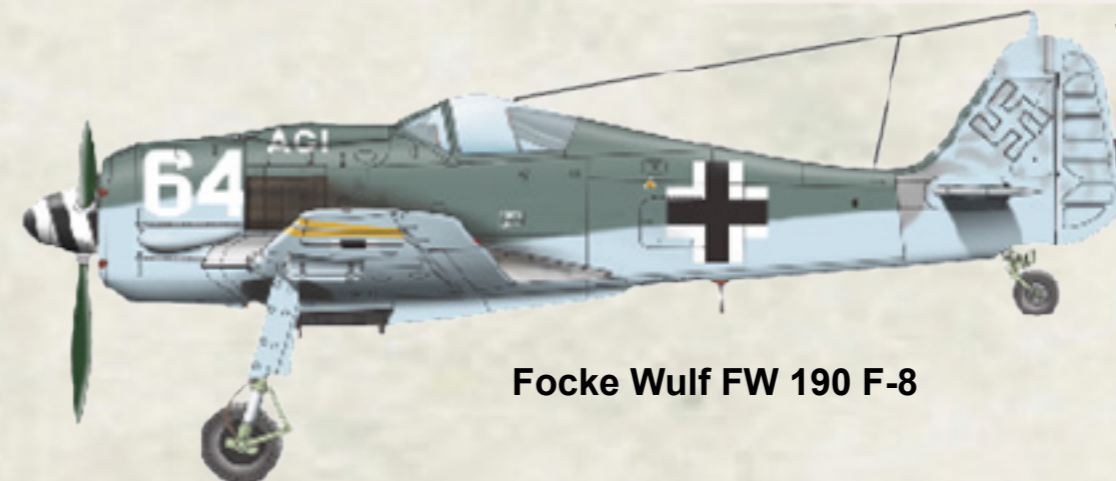
- Ján Režňák (32 kills). He flew for the Slovak Air Force until April 1945 when the retreating Germans invited him to join the *Luftwaffe*. After the war he worked as a private flying instructor and later as an aircraft designed

and engineer.

- Izidor Kovárik (28 kills). Among the medal he was awarded were the German Cross in Gold, and the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd Class. He was killed in an aircraft accident on 11 July 1944.
- Jan Gerthoffer (26 kills). Although credited with 26 kills, his final tally may have been as high as 33. This would have made him the top Slovak ace of World War II.



**Ján Režňák**



**Focke Wulf FW 190 F-8**

## Britain



**Johnnie Johnson**

Britain had 12 pilots that would achieve 20 or more kills. One of them was killed in action.

- James Edgar Johnson (38 kills). Early in the war he often flew alongside Wing



## Hungary

Hungarian pilots flew for the Magyar Királyi Honvéd Légierő (Royal Hungarian Air Force). They fought on the side of the Germans against the Russians.

Three of their pilots would score more than 20 kills.

- Dezső Szentgyörgyi (30 kills). After the war, he returned home and became a pilot of the MASZOVLET (Hungarian-Soviet Airlines) between 1946 and 1949. Between 1950 and 1956 he spent several years in Communist prisons, before becoming a pilot of the renamed Malév Hungarian Airlines. On 28 August

1971 he died in a crash near Copenhagen while flying an Ilyushin Il-18 (HA-MOC). He was due to retire in less than three weeks.

- György Debrődy (26 kills). Not much is known about him. While he did survive the war, he was seriously injured.
- Lajos Tóth (26 kills). In March 1951 he was one of 12 people charged with conspiracy. He was sentenced to death and executed on 11 June 1951. In 1990 his sentence was overturned and he was promoted to posthumous lieutenant colonel.



**Dezső Szentgyörgyi**

## Australia



**Clive Caldwell**

Australian pilots flew for the Royal Australian Air Force. Only one Australian pilot would achieve more than 20 kills.

- Clive Caldwell (28 kills). He flew over 300 operational sorties and was one of the few pilots to become “an ace in a day”. In other words he shot down five or more enemy aircraft in a single day. He flew Curtiss P-40 Tomahawks and Kittyhawks in the North African Campaign and Supermarine Spitfires in the South West

Pacific Theatre. He was the highest-scoring P-40 pilot from any air force and the highest-scoring Allied pilot in North Africa. He was awarded the DSO, DFC and Bar. His military service ended in controversy, when he resigned in protest at the misuse of Australian First Tactical Air Force’s fighter units and was later court-martialed and convicted for trading liquor.



**P-40 Tomahawk**

## Canada



**George Beurling**

Canadian pilots flew for the Royal Air Force or the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Four Canadian pilots achieved more than 20 kills with one of

## Ireland

A number of Irishmen decided to take up the fight against Germany. They joined the Royal Air Force.

Only one of them would go on to score more than 20 kills, and he in turn was killed in action.

- Brendan ‘Paddy’ Finucane (28 kills). He was awarded the DSO, DFC and two Bars. He flew in the Battle of Britain. He is noted as being the youngest person ever given command of a fighter

them being killed in action.

Four Canadian pilots achieved 20 or more kills, with one of them being killed in action.

- George ‘Buzz’ Beurling (31 kills). He was known as ‘The Falcon of Malta’ and the ‘Knight of Malta’ after shooting down 27 Axis aircraft in just 14 days over the besieged Mediterranean island. In 1948, he was recruited to fly P-51 Mustangs for the Israeli Air Force. On 20 May 1948, while en-route to Israel, he was killed in an aircraft crash in Rome.
- Edward F. Charles (22 kills). He was awarded the DSO, DFC and Bar, and the American Silver Star. After the war he returned to Canada and stayed in the RCAF. He

had a mental breakdown in 1949 and was diagnosed with acute schizophrenia that was later pronounced incurable.

wing in the history of aerial combat, at the age of just 21. On 20 February 1942 he was wounded in a dogfight with German FW 190s. He managed to land and shut down his engine before passing out from blood loss. He returned to operations on 13 March 1942. He was killed in action on 15 July 1942 while leading a ground attack on a German Army camp at Étapes, France.



**Brendan Finucane**



**Spitfire Mk I**

# Johnny Johnson

*Squadron Leader George Leonard Johnson, MBE, DFM, was better known as Johnny Johnson. This British Royal Air Force officer was the last surviving original member of No. 617 Squadron RAF and of Operation Chastise, the "Dambusters" raid of 1943.*

On 7 December 2022 George Leonard Johnson passed away at the age of 101. What made his passing newsworthy was not just his age.

Rather it was the fact that he was the last surviving member of No. 617 Squadron, Royal Air Force - the famous 'Dambusters'.

## Early life and education

George Johnson (known within the family as Leonard) was the sixth and last child born to Mary Ellen (née Henfrey) and Charles Johnson.

He was born in the village of Hameringham in the East Lindsey district of Lincolnshire, England. His mother died when he was three, leaving his father, a farm foreman, to bring up the family in somewhat poor conditions.

Johnson grew up to loathe his father, whom he described as someone who would inflict severe corporal punishment on him.

When Johnson's father died in 1957, he did not attend his funeral, a decision he stated he never regretted.

The family lived in a tied cottage in Langford, his oldest sister Lena largely being responsible for his early upbringing.

Johnson attended Winthorpe Primary School in the village

of Winthorpe, Nottinghamshire until the age of 11.

Through a bursary scheme set up for the children of agricultural workers, he was sent as a boarder to the Lord Wandsworth Agricultural College in Long Sutton, Hampshire.

He was active in sport, playing football, cricket and participating in athletics, winning several events.

He passed his School Certificate, leaving school in December 1939.

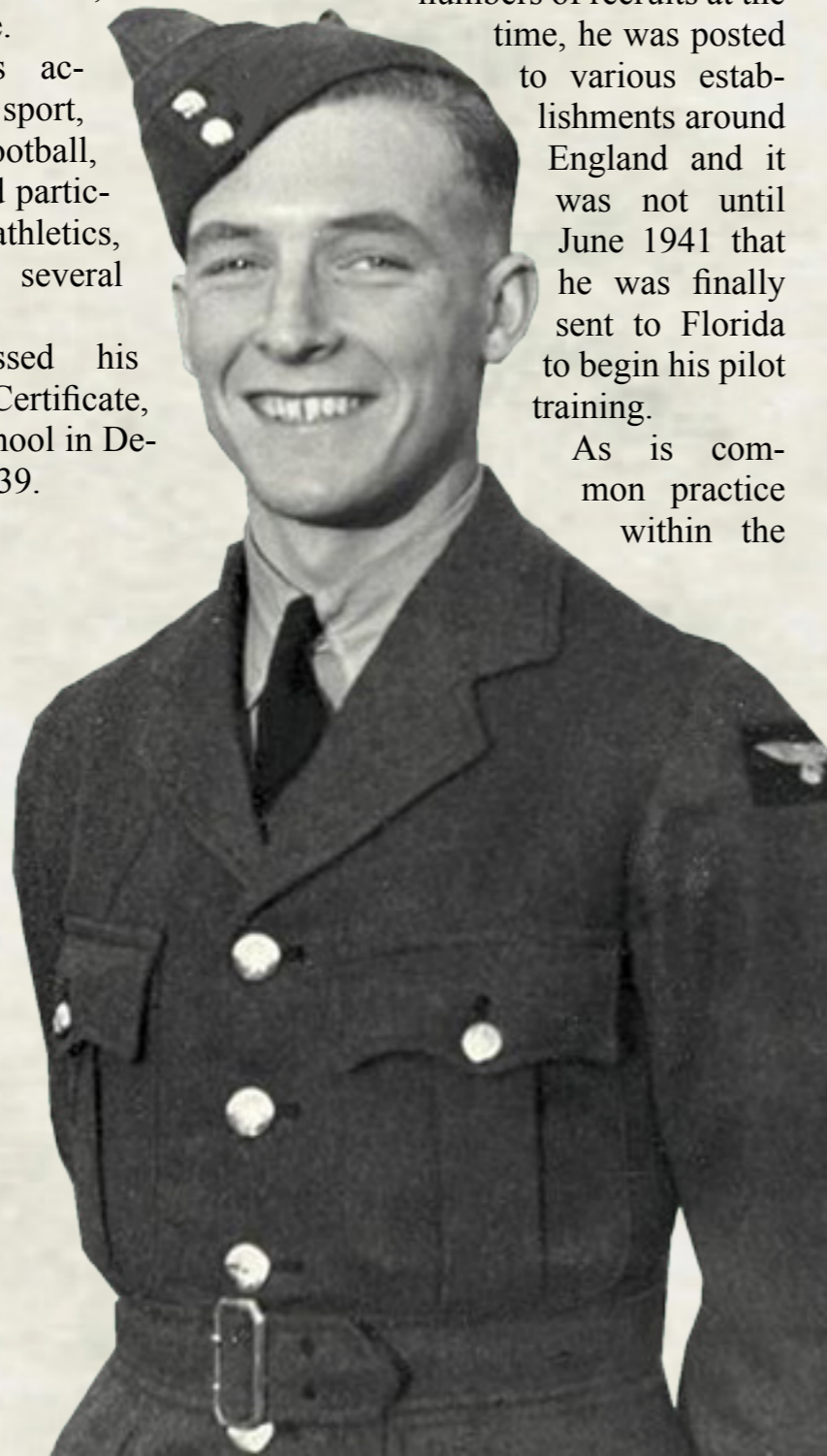
## Royal Air Force

Volunteering to join the Royal Air Force in 1940 as a navigator, Johnson was instead selected for pilot training.

However, due to the difficulties in processing the vast numbers of recruits at the time, he was posted

to various establishments around England and it was not until June 1941 that he was finally sent to Florida to begin his pilot training.

As is common practice within the



British armed forces, Johnson's surname led to him being nicknamed "Johnny".

Johnson did not make the required grade during his pilot training and as a consequence he opted to become an air gunner.

In July 1942, Johnson was posted to No. 97 Squadron RAF at RAF Woodhall Spa where he was initially designated as a spare (reserve) gunner.

This however gave him the opportunity to fly with numerous crews in the squadron, his first operational sortie being a raid on Gdynia in Poland on 27 August 1942, forming part of the crew under the command of Squadron Leader Elmer Cotton.

En route to the target, the aircraft suffered an engine failure, forcing the pilot to abort the mission and return to Woodhall Spa. The following night, the crew were part of a successful raid on Nuremberg.

Johnson continued on squadron operations as an air gunner, until the opportunity came along for him to train as a specialist bomb aimer.

Undergoing a course at RAF Fulbeck in November 1942, he returned to No. 97 Squadron filling the vacancy for a bomb aimer with the crew of Joe McCarthy.

Initially, Johnson showed reticence in operating with an American skipper, however having met with McCarthy, he changed his mind.

Johnson's first sortie as part of McCarthy's crew was as part of a raid on Munich on 21 De-

cember 1942, conducted in bad weather.

Attacked by night fighters on their way to and returning from the target, the Avro Lancaster lost all power on one engine and developed problems in another, forcing McCarthy to land at RAF Bottesford.

Together with this crew, Johnson conducted a further 18 missions with No. 97 Squadron, bringing him to the end of a full operational tour, followed by a leave, after which he spent six months working in a non-combat training role.

## Operation Chastise

Selected to be part of the specialist No. 617 Squadron RAF, Johnson arrived at RAF Scampton on 27 March 1943.

It was at this time that he was due to marry; however, due to the requirements of the training for Operation Chastise, all leave had been cancelled. Johnson appealed to his new Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Guy Gibson, who eventually relented, giving Johnson four days' leave.

McCarthy's crew in Lancaster AJ-T (T-Tommy) were detailed to attack the Sorpe Dam, the structure of which differed considerably from the other main targets insofar as it being an earthen dam as opposed to the gravity construction of the Möhne and Eder dams, thus necessitating a completely different type of attack.

Like the rest of No. 617 Squadron, Johnson had practised dropping his bomb as the

aircraft flew straight towards the target at low level.

However, on the afternoon prior to the raid, when the five crews detailed to attack the Sorpe Dam received their briefing, they were told that they had to fly along the dam wall and drop their mine at its centre.

It would roll down the wall and explode when it reached the correct depth. The specialist bomb sight developed for the raid would also be of no use.

Due to various losses and technical issues en route to the target, AJ-T was the first Lancaster to reach the Sorpe, and McCarthy soon realised how difficult the attack would be.

Although there were no flak batteries, the attack would require the aircraft to be flown low across the nearby town of Langscheid, with its prominent church steeple, followed by the aircraft having to drop even lower so the bomb could be released.

It was not until the tenth attempt that the crew were satisfied, with Johnson finally releasing the bomb.

For his part in the raid, Johnson received the Distinguished Flying Medal. Along with other members of the squadron, he received his medal in an investiture at Buckingham Palace.

## Subsequent operations

Following the Dams Raid, Johnson was commissioned in November 1943. As an integral part of McCarthy's crew, Johnson participated in a further 19 missions during his time with

No. 617 Squadron until April 1944.

By this time, his wife was pregnant, resulting in McCarthy insisting Johnson stand down. Reluctantly, this request was accepted, Johnson was “screened” (classed as “tour expired” or, in effect, due for a rest from operational flying).

He was subsequently posted to a Heavy Conversion Unit back at RAF Scampton, where he became a bombing instructor until the end of hostilities.

At the end of the war, Johnson qualified as a navigator so he could receive a permanent commission. He joined No. 100 Squadron RAF operating the Avro Lincoln before transferring to RAF Coastal Command, where he served with No. 120 Squadron RAF operating the Avro Shackleton. This was followed by a tour in the Far East, before he returned to the UK.

Johnson was promoted to flight lieutenant on 7 September 1948. He continued in the RAF until 1962, retiring with the rank of Squadron Leader.

### Post-military career

Following his career in the RAF, Johnson became a teacher.

He initially taught in primary schools, subsequently becoming involved in adult education before he undertook a period in teaching psychiatric patients at Rampton Hospital.

On his retirement, Johnson and his wife moved to Torquay, where they both became active in local politics.

A member of the Conservative Party, Johnson became a local councillor and went on

to become the chairman of the constituency party.

### Personal life

Johnson married Gwyneth Morgan in April 1943, having met her during a posting to Torquay in 1941. Together they had three children, the marriage lasting until Gwyneth’s death in August 2005.

For a short time following his wife’s death, Johnson decided to withdraw from public life. However, alongside Les Munro, he was at the forefront of the 70th anniversary commemorations of the Dams Raids in May 2013.

He lived in Westbury on Trym, Bristol, and continued to give interviews on the various aspects of his active service and particularly concerning Operation Chastise. In 2015, he was awarded the Lord Mayor of Bristol’s Medal.

Johnson’s autobiography George “Johnny” Johnson, The Last British Dambuster was published in 2014.

Johnson was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the 2017 Birthday Honours for services to Second World War remembrance and the community in Bristol.

The award followed shortly after an unsuccessful petition for Johnson to be knighted was initiated by Carol Vorderman, which garnered over 200,000 signatures within a few weeks.

The 237,000 signature petition was handed in to 10 Downing Street on 26 January 2017 by Vorderman and former RAF officer John Nichol.

On 7 September 2017, John-



**‘Johnny’ Johnson  
25 November 1921 -  
7 December 2022**

son received an honorary doctorate from the University of Lincoln for his contribution to British society, and two months later, on 7 November, was presented his MBE by Queen Elizabeth II in a ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

On 7 November 2017, Johnson was given an Honorary Life Membership to the Royal Air Force Club in Piccadilly, London.

On 22 June 2018, Johnson was honoured by having a train named after him. Following the death of his wartime colleague Fred Sutherland, on 21 January 2019, Johnson became the last survivor of the original flying members of 617 Squadron.

On 25 November 2021, Johnson celebrated his 100th birthday, an occasion that was widely covered by the UK regional and national media.

Johnson died on 7 December 2022 at his care home in Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, at the age of 101.

# Springbok



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

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



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



# The Lanc

## Avro Lancaster Bomber

*It first saw service with RAF Bomber Command in 1942 and as the strategic bombing offensive over Europe gathered momentum, it was the main aircraft for the night-time bombing campaigns that followed. The Avro Lancaster heavy bomber was forged in battle.*

World War I had shown that not only were bombers necessary, they were becoming vital.

In the 1930s, the Royal Air Force (RAF) was primarily interested in twin-engine bombers. These designs put limited demands on engine production and maintenance, both of which were already stretched with the introduction of so many new types into service.

Power limitations were so serious that the British invested heavily in the development of huge engines in the 2,000 horsepower (1,500 kW) class in order to improve performance.

During the late 1930s, none of these was ready for production.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union were pursuing the development of bombers powered by arrangements of four smaller engines, the results of these projects proved to

possess favourable characteristics such as excellent range and fair lifting capacity.

Accordingly, in 1936, the RAF also decided to investigate the feasibility of the four-engine bomber.

The origins of the Lancaster stem from a twin-engine bomber design that had been submitted in response to Specification P.13/36, which had been formulated and released by the British Air Ministry during the mid 1930s.

This specification had sought a new generation of twin-engine medium bombers suitable for “worldwide use”.

Further requirements of the specification included the use of a mid-mounted cantilever monoplane wing, all-metal construction; the adoption of the in-development Rolls-Royce Vulture engine was also encouraged”.

Various candidates were submitted for the specification by such manufacturers as Fairey, Boulton Paul, Handley Page and Shorts; all submissions were designed around two-engine configurations, using the Rolls-Royce Vulture, Napier Sabre, Fairey P.24 or Bristol Hercules engines.

In response, British aviation company Avro decided to submit their own design, designat-

ed the Avro 679, to meet Specification P.13/36.

In February 1937, following consideration of the designs by the Air Ministry, Avro’s design submission was selected along with Handley Page’s bid being chosen as “second string”.

Accordingly, during April 1937, a pair of prototypes of both designs were ordered. The resulting aircraft, named the Manchester, entered RAF service in November 1940.

Although considered to be a capable aircraft in most areas, the Manchester proved to be underpowered and troubled by the unreliability of the Vulture engine. As a result, only 200 Manchesters were constructed and the type was quickly withdrawn from service in 1942.

### Enter the Lancaster

As early as mid-1940, Avro’s chief design engineer, Roy Chadwick, had been working on an improved Manchester design.

This redesign was powered by four of the more reliable but less powerful Rolls-Royce Mer-

lin engines, specifically adopted the form of the Merlin “Power Plant” installations which had been developed by Rolls-Royce for the earlier Beaufighter II, installed on a larger wing.

Initially, the improved aircraft was designated as the Type 683 Manchester III, it was subsequently renamed as the Lancaster. The prototype aircraft, serial number BT308, was assembled by the Avro experimental flight department at Ringway Airport, Manchester; the prototype was constructed from a production Manchester airframe, which was combined with a new centre section designed to accommodate the additional engines.

On 9 January 1941, test pilot H. A. “Sam” Brown performed the prototype’s maiden flight at RAF Ringway, Cheshire.

Flight testing of the new aircraft quickly proved it to be a substantial improvement on its predecessor, aviation author Jim Winchester referred to the Lancaster as being “one of the few war-



planes in history to be ‘right’ from the start.”

The first prototype was initially outfitted with a three-finned tail layout, a result of the design having been adapted from the Manchester I; this was quickly revised on the second prototype, DG595, and subsequent production Lancasters to the familiar larger elliptical twin-finned tail unit that had also been adopted for the later-built Manchesters, discarding the stubby central third tail fin.

The adoption of the enlarged twin fins not only increased stability but also provided for a greater field of fire from the dorsal gun turret position. The second prototype was also outfitted with more powerful Merlin XX engine.

Based upon its performance, a decision was taken early on to re-equip twin-engine bomber squadrons with the Lancaster as quickly as possible. In October 1941, the first production Lancaster, L7527, powered by Merlin XX engines, conducted its first flight.

## Overview

The typical aircraft was powered by an arrangement of four wing-mounted Rolls-Royce Merlin piston engines, each of which drove a set of four metre diameter de Havilland Hydromatic three-bladed propellers.

While not optimal, the Lancaster was capable of flying the return journey home on only two operational engines, along with very limited distances on a single running engine.

It is claimed that experienced Lancaster pilots were often able



**HOT SEAT:** The cockpit of a Lancaster bomber. The pilot's seat is on the left.

to out-manoeuvre Luftwaffe fighters. It possessed largely favourable flying characteristics.

Aviation authors Brian Goulding and M. Garbett described the Lancaster as being: “a near-perfect flying machine, fast for its size and very smooth...such a delightfully easy aeroplane to fly...there are instances of Lancasters having been looped and barrel-rolled, both intentionally and otherwise”.

The Lancaster benefited from a structure that possessed considerable strength and durability, which had been intentionally designed to maximise structural strength-per-weight; this resulted in the Lancaster being capable of withstanding some levels of damage resulting from attacks by hostile interceptor aircraft and ground-based anti-aircraft batteries.

Compared with other contemporary aircraft, the Lancaster was not an easy aircraft to escape from; in a Halifax, 25 per cent of downed aircrew bailed out successfully, and in Ameri-

can bombers (albeit in daylight raids) it was as high as a 50 per cent success rate while only 15 per cent of the Lancaster crew were able to bail out.

The Lancaster was equipped with a retractable main undercarriage and fixed tail wheel; the hydraulically-actuated main landing gear raised rearwards into recesses within the inner engine nacelles.

The distinctive tail unit of the aircraft was outfitted with a large twin elliptical fins and rudder arrangement.

## Crew

The standard crew for a Lancaster consisted of seven men, stationed in various positions in the fuselage.

Starting at the nose, the bomb aimer had two positions to man. His primary location was lying prone on the floor of the nose of the aircraft, with access to the bombsight controls facing forward, with the bombsight computer on his left and bomb release selectors on the right. He also used his view out of the

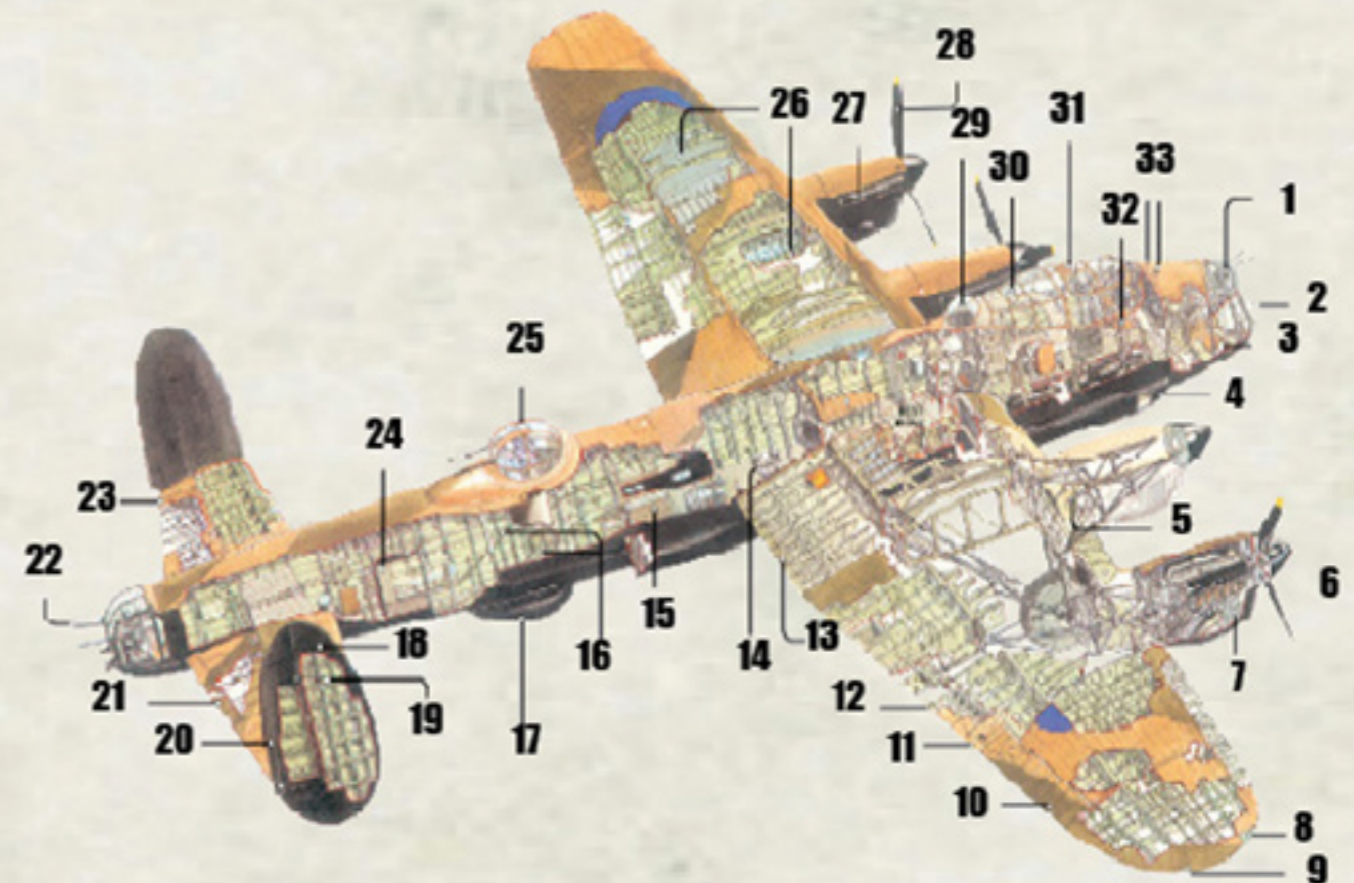
## Avro Lancaster B Mk 1

1. FN5 turret with two .303 Vickers machine guns.
2. Nose blister.
3. Bomb aimer's chest support.
4. Front of bomb bay doors.
5. Oil tank.
6. Rolls-Royce Merlin XX engine.
7. Oil cooler radiator.
8. Right navigation light (green).
9. Right formation light (green).
10. Aileron.
11. Aileron balance tab.
12. Aileron trim tab.
13. Flap.
14. Flap operating hydraulic jack.
15. Ammunition boxes.
16. Cartridge belt to rear turret.
17. H25 (radar bombing) ventral antenna fairing.
18. Vertical stabilizer.
19. Rudder balance weight.
20. Rudder trim tab.
21. Elevator trim tab.
22. FN50 dorsal turret with four .303 machine guns.
23. Elevator.
24. Door and rear gunner's parachute exit.
25. FN20 turret with two .303 Vickers machine guns.
26. Wing fuel tanks.
27. Flame damper.
28. Three-bladed DeHavilland constant speed propeller.
29. Astrodome.
30. AD/F loop.
31. Cockpit canopy emergency escape hatch.
32. Pilot's seat.
33. Windscreen sprays.

large transparent perspex nose cupola to assist the navigator with map reading.

On the roof of the bomb bay the pilot and flight engineer sat side by side under the expansive canopy, with the pilot sitting on the left on a raised portion of the floor (almost all British bombers, and most German bombers, had only a single pilot seat as opposed to American practice of carrying two pilots, or at least having controls for two pilots installed).

The flight engineer sat on a collapsible seat (known as a “second dicky seat”) to the pilot's right, with the fuel selectors and gauges on a panel behind him and to his right. The pilot and other crew members could use the panel above the cockpit as an auxiliary emergency exit while the mid-upper gunner was expected to use the rear entrance door to leave the aircraft.



The tail gunner escaped by rotating his turret to the rear, opening the door in the back of the turret, passing into the fuselage, and clipping on a parachute that was hung on the side wall. He could then exit through the rear entrance door.

Behind the pilot and flight engineer, and behind a curtain fitted to allow him to use light to work, sat the navigator. His position faced to port with a chart table in front of him. An instrument panel showing the airspeed, altitude, and other information required for navigation was mounted on the side of the fuselage above the chart table. The wireless operator's radios were mounted on the left-hand end of the chart table, facing the rear of the aircraft. Behind these and facing forwards the wireless operator sat on a seat at the front of the main spar. On his left was a window, and above him was the astrodome, used for visual signalling and by the navigator for celestial navigation.

Behind the wireless operator were the two spars for the wing, which created a major obstacle for crew members moving down the fuselage even on the ground. On reaching the end of the bomb bay the floor dropped down to the bottom of the fuselage, and the mid-upper gunner's turret was reached. His position allowed a 360° view over the top of the aircraft, with two Browning .303 Mark IIs to protect the aircraft from above and to the side. The mid-upper gunner sat on a rectangle of canvas that was slung beneath the turret and would stay in position throughout the flight.

Ammunition for the turret was 1,000 rounds per gun.

To the rear of the turret was the side crew door, on the starboard side of the fuselage. This was the main entrance to the aircraft, and also could be used as an emergency exit.

The Elsan chemical toilet, a type of aircraft lavatory, was located near the spars for the tailplane. At the extreme tail-end of the fuselage, the rear gunner sat in his exposed position in the tail turret, which was entered through a small hatch in the rear of the fuselage. Depending on the size of the rear gunner, the area was so cramped that the gunner would often hang his parachute on a hook inside the fuselage, near the turret doors. Neither the mid-upper nor the rear gunner's position was heated, and the gunners had to wear electrically heated suits to prevent hypothermia and frostbite.

### Hard hitting

An important feature of the Lancaster was its unobstructed 10 metre long bomb bay. At first, the heaviest bomb carried was the 1,800 kg high capacity HC "Cookie". Bulged doors were added to 30 per cent of B Is to allow the aircraft to carry 3,600 kg and later 5,400 kg "Cookies".

The Lancaster also carried a variety of smaller weapons, including the Small Bomb Container (SBC) which held 236 x 1.8 kg or 24 x 14 kg incendiary and explosive incendiary bomblets; 500 x 230 kg and 450 kg General Purpose High Explosive (GP/HE) bombs (these came in a variety of designs); 840 kg parachute deployed

magnetic or acoustic mines, or 910 kg armour-piercing (AP) bombs; 110 kg Semi-Armour-Piercing (SAP) bombs, used up to 1942 against submarines; post 1942: 110 kg or 230 kg anti-submarine depth charges.

In 1943, 617 Squadron was created to carry out Operation Chastise, the raid against the Ruhr dams. This unit was equipped with B.III (Specials), officially designated the "Type 464 (Provisioning)", modified to carry the 9,250 lb (4,200 kg) "Upkeep" bouncing bomb.

Towards the end of the war, attacking special and hardened targets, other variants of B I Specials were modified to carry the 6.4 metre long 5,400 kg "Tallboy" or 7.8 metre long 10,000 kg "Grand Slam" "earthquake" bombs. Aircraft intended to carry the "Grand Slam" required extensive modifications.

### Proud history

The Lancaster conducted a total of 156,000 sorties and dropped 618,378 tonnes of bombs between 1942 and 1945.

Only 35 Lancasters completed more than 100 successful operations each, and 3,249 were lost in action. The most successful survivor completed 139 operations, and was ultimately retired from service and scrapped in 1947.

From 1942 onwards, the Lancaster became the mainstay of the British heavy bomber fleet; by the end of the war in Europe, there were roughly 50 squadrons equipped with the Lancaster, the majority of these being the Lancaster B I model.

From its entry into service,

the original model of the Lancaster was operated in almost every major bombing raid of the European conflict.

Adolf Galland (commander of the Luftwaffe fighters) considered the Lancaster to be "the best night bomber of the war", as did his adversary, Arthur "Bomber" Harris, who referred to it as the RAF Bomber Command's "shining sword".

Goulding and Garbett wrote that: "The achievements of the Lancaster and the men who flew it have been widely acclaimed, and the aircraft has been described as the greatest single factor in winning WWII, an exaggeration but a pardonable one".

Throughout July 1943, large numbers of Lancasters participated in the devastating round-the-clock raids on the city of Hamburg during Air Chief Marshal Harris's "Operation Gomorrah".

A particularly famous mission performed by the Lancaster was the mission flown 16-17 May 1943, codenamed Operation Chastise, to destroy the dams of the Ruhr Valley. The operation was carried out by 617 Squadron in modified Mk IIIs carrying special drum-shaped bouncing bombs, which had been designed by British engineer Barnes Wallis. The story of the operation was later made into a film, *The Dam Busters*.

During the latter half of 1944, a series of high-profile bombing missions were performed by the Lancaster against the German battleship Tirpitz.

Executed by Nos. 617 and 9 Sqs, a combination of Lancas-

ter B I and B III bombers were armed with 5,400 kg 'Tallboy' bombs and were adapted with enlarged bomb bay doors in order to accommodate their special payloads and additional fuel tanks to provide the necessary endurance.

A total of three attacks, individually codenamed Operation Paravane, Operation Obviate and Operation Catechism, were conducted against Tirpitz, which was anchored in a fjord in Occupied Norway.

The first of these attacks disabled the vessel while the third mission was responsible for sinking the ship. As a result of actions such as Operation Chastise and the sinking of Tirpitz, No. 617 Sq was perhaps the most famous of all Lancaster squadrons.

During early 1945, a total of 33 Lancaster B Is were modified so that they could deploy the 10,000 kg Grand Slam bomb; the Grand Slam, considered to be the ultimate conventional bomb to be used during the conflict, was so heavy that the bomb and the Lancaster itself weighed roughly the same.

On 13 March 1945, the first operational use of the Grand Slam was performed by a Lancaster of No. 617 Sqn against the Schildesche viaduct at Bielefeld, North Rhine-Westphalia. Amongst the final wartime operations performed by the Lancaster was the destruction of Eagle's Nest, the extensive holiday home complex used by German leader Adolf Hitler.

The Avro Lancaster bomber was an aircraft forged in battle.

### Victoria Cross

Many Lancaster crew members were highly decorated for actions while flying the aircraft.

Ten Lancaster pilots or crew members were awarded the Victoria Cross.

These included Wing Commander Guy Gibson, Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, and Captain (acting Major) Edwin Swales.

### Specifications

- **Crew:** Seven - pilot, flight engineer, navigator, bomb aimer/nose gunner, wireless operator, mid-upper and rear gunners
- **Length:** 21.11 m
- **Wingspan:** 31.09 m
- **Height:** 6.25 m
- **Empty weight:** 16,738 kg
- **Loaded weight:** 24,948 kg
- **Powerplant:** 4 × Rolls-Royce Merlin XX liquid-cooled V12 engines, 1,280 hp (954 kW) each
- **Maximum speed:** 454 km/h at 29,000 kg) and 4,000 m)altitude
- **Cruise speed:** 322 km/h
- **Range:** 4,073 km
- **Service ceiling:** 6,500 m at 29,000 kg
- **Guns:** Two 0.303 inch (7.62 mm) Browning Mark II machine guns in nose turret, two 0.303 inch Browning Mark II machine guns in upper turret, and four 0.303 inch Browning Mark II machine guns in the rear turret.
- **Bombs:** Maximum normal bomb load of 6,400 kg of bombs or single 10,000 kg Grand Slam (with modifications to bomb bay)

*The sabotage of a special order from Adolf Hitler saved priceless Catholic history. We examine some of the lesser-known aspects of the Battle of Monte Cassino.*

**O**n 3 September 1943 the British 8th Army landed at Reggio and six days later at Taranto. The invasion of Italy, the ‘soft underbelly of Europe’, had begun.

Both of these landings were uncontested by the Germans who had pulled out some time before.

The US 5th Army then landed on the west coast, further north, at Salerno on 9 September 1943, to coincide with the Italian armistice.

The move was predicted by the commander of the German forces in Italy, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring. The German 16th Panzer Division was moved to the area, backed up the the German 10th Army.

Unable to contain the Allies, the Germans withdrew to prepared positions which ran across the width of central Italy, from the mouth of the Sangro river in the east, through the Abruzzi mountain region to the mouths of the Rapido/Garigliano rivers on the west coast.

This defensive position was to be known as the Gustav Line and within its defensive line, about 160 km south east of Rome, stood the town of Cassino.

Towering above the town stood Monte Cassino, or Mount Cassino. From 529 AD Monte Cassino had been home to the Benedictine monastery. The monastery has witnessed numerous battles over the centuries and had itself been destroyed twice, having been rebuilt in the mid-1100s.

Monte Cassino was in a perfect defensive position. It dominated the surrounding countryside, including the Liri valley that ran through the mountains to the north and Route 6, the main highway linking the south to Rome. It also had a superb view of the town.

Cassino town was first bombed on 10 September 1943 when targets all along the Garigliano river were hit. It caused heavy casualties among the civilian population and many took refuge in the monastery at Monte Cassino.

Soon after the bombing, the first units of the 14th Panzer Corps that had been withdrawn from the south began to arrive at Cassino. They immediately began to dig themselves in and they fortified the town of Cassino.

The approaches to the town were mined and they flooded the countryside in front of the Rapido east of Cassino and awaited the Allied advance.

The 14th Panzer Division could barely live up to its name. They were desperately short of tanks and most of its troops were being used as infantry soldiers. They were reinforced by troops from other divisions, including men from the 1st Parachute Division.

Facing the Cassino front the Allies now had seven Commonwealth divisions, containing men from India, New Zealand, South Africa and Brazil.

There were also five American, five British, four French and three Polish divisions. A formidable force.

The Allies were convinced that the Germans were using the monastery on Monte Cassino as a strongpoint, which the Germans strongly denied.

The denial was justified. No German troops had occupied the monastery, although an artillery observation point was situated on the lower slopes of the mountain.

Yet while denying that they



**BEFORE AND AFTER:** The monastery at Monte Cassino (left) before it was turned into a heap of rubble (right) by Allied bombers and heavy artillery. In one air raid the Allies dropped 250 tons of bombs onto the monastery.

had occupied the monastery, they Germans were feeding information via intelligence agents that they had in fact turned the monastery into a fortress. This was due to a special order issued by Adolf Hitler.

The monastery contained priceless relics of Catholic history, including a library of over 70,000 volumes, paintings by famous masters, age-old crucifixes, historic carvings in wood and goldsmith’s work.

Hitler knew that if the Allies believed that the monastery had been turned into a defensive position, the Allies would have no choice but to bomb it. He wanted all the treasures of Monte Cassino to go up in flames.

While some people may have seen this as the height of stupidity, a German officer had the following comment at the time: “Far from stupid. The decisive battle will be fought here on top of the holy mountain. We are to protect the monastery, while the other side blows it to smithereens. And Joseph Goebbels (German minister of propaganda) just has to say: Was it our shells that smashed the mon-

astery? No sir, it was the other side’s.”

It was actually a clever ploy. A large portion of the Italian population are Catholic. If they believed that the Allies had deliberately destroyed priceless artefacts of Catholic history, it could have turned Italian sentiment against the Allies.

Hitler’s plan seemed to be working. The Allies, especially the New Zealand commander, General Freyburg, was convinced that the monastery was infested with Germans. They reluctantly agreed that it would have to be bombed. What choice did they have?

It was then that fate, some may say divine intervention, stepped in. Certain elements of the German High Command were not prepared to allow the priceless treasures at Monte Cassino to be destroyed. A bold, yet highly illegal plan was put into action.

Under the command of *Oberst* (Lieutenant Colonel) Julius Schlegel and *Hauptmann* (Captain) Maximilian Becker, members of the Hermann Göring Panzer Division and the *Luftwaffe*, began transporting

all the treasures and works of art from the monastery, out of harms way.

Over three days in October 1943 they were removed to a safer location in the north before being handed over to the Italian government.

After a mass in the basilica, Abbot Gregorio Diamare formally presented signed parchment scrolls in Latin to General Paul Conrath, to *tribuno militum Julio Schlegel and Maximiliano Becker medicinae doctori* “for rescuing the monks and treasures of the Abbey of Monte Cassino.”

Not only had a direct order from Hitler been sabotaged, but they also used thousands of litres of fuel vital to the war effort.

It is unsure whether Schlegel was the mastermind behind the operation. Certain historians believe that it was Field Marshal Kesselring himself who planned and authorised the removal of the relics from the monastery. In any event, Kesselring would inevitably have known about it.

Unfortunately, the Allies also

became aware of what was happening. They were quick to broadcast this fact.

“This is the Allied transmitter for Southern Italy. We repeat our previous message to patriotic Italians. Unite against the bandits who are desecrating your churches and graves. At this moment the Hermann Göring Panzer Division are plundering the treasures of the monastery of Monte Cassino. Fight and stop them! One transport has already gotten away with treasures of untold value. Italian patriots, protect your property. Don’t let these bandits rob you.”

The rumours of what had been happening at Monte Cassino soon reached Berlin with the result that a Heinkel bomber was sent to Aeroporto del’ Ube outside Rome.

On board was General Wilhelm Burgdorf, chief of army personnel. The general was a man who regarded the whole world as a gigantic joke, who promoted a colonel to general with the same smile with which he handed a field marshal a cyanide pill.

General Burgdorf met with Field Marshal Kesselring. “Is it true that the sacred relics have been removed from Monte Cassino? The Allied broadcasting stations have been proclaiming from the housetops that a few days ago the Hermann Göring Panzer Division was busy plundering the monastery. It is certainly plundering of which the *Reichsmarschall* (Hermann Göring, head of the Luftwaffe) is entirely ignorant, but perhaps your intelligence officers are asleep? This is clear sabotage

of the *Führer’s* (Adolf Hitler) orders.

“The *Führer* wishes that all the stuff in the monastery should be destroyed by American bombardment. Can’t you understand what we are aiming at man? Just imagine the headlines in the gutterpress all over the world: Anglo-American gangsters destroy the West’s most precious Catholic relics.

“We can get them to smash the monastery, but the important thing for us is that the art treasures should go up in smoke at the same time. Freyberg is quite convinced that our agents are telling the truth, when they report that the monastery is being turned into an impregnable fortress, so just before they raze it to the ground, we shall see that we get a statement from the lot of black crows (priests) up there that there has never been a single German soldier inside of it. From the point of view of or propaganda that will be of tremendous importance to us.

“The only good thing to come out of this mess is that the transports have been photographed by Allied reconnaissance planes, which is grist to Freyberg’s mill. Now we must ensure that every one of those relics is safe and sound. The *Führer* is furious. You have one foot in front of a court martial Herr Marschal. The whole business will have to be twisted so that you have known all about the damned transport, otherwise the entire world will accuse us of plundering.”

In January 1944 the first battle of Monte Cassino began. The monastery was indeed reduced to rubble by Allied artillery and



**VICTORY:** A Polish bugler plays the *Hejnał mariacki* (St Mary’s Call), announcing the victory. The *Hejnał mariacki* is a traditional, five-note Polish anthem closely bound to the history and traditions of Kraków. It is played every hour on the hour, four times in succession in each of the four cardinal directions, by a trumpeter on the highest tower of the city’s Saint Mary’s Church. The noon performance is broadcast via radio to all of Poland and the world.

bombers. The Germans quickly moved into the ruins, turning them into natural fortifications.

The battle raged for nearly four months and needed four assaults before Monte Cassino was finally captured. It cost over 75,000 casualties on both sides. Troops from the Polish Division were the first into the ruins of the monastery.

If not for the bravery of a few senior German officers, some of the Catholic Church’s most priceless treasures would have been lost forever.



**ADVANCE:** Polish troops advance through the town of Cassino. Their objective is the monastery on Monte Cassino.



**DUG IN:** Two paratroopers from the German 1st *Fallschirmjäger* Division lay down fire on the advancing Allied troops. After the monastery was bombed, the ruins offered excellent cover for the defenders.



**ARMOUR:** Allied armour moves through the ruins of the town of Cassino. It was not ideal terrain for armour and it was left to the infantry to take the monastery.





*Private Matt O' Brien is off to the Med. Unfortunately for him, this is not a vacation. He's about to take part in the invasion of Italy and it leaves the Italians going "Mama Mia! Please, not him."*

In past issues of Military Despatches I've done reviews on the original Company of Heroes, and the follow-up, Company of Heroes 2.

These are both games that I still enjoy and that I still often play. So when Relic Entertainment announced that Company of Heroes 3 was on its way, I was excited and couldn't wait to get my hands on the game.

It was originally scheduled for a release in the fourth quarter of 2022. This release date was changed on more than one occasion and I must confess that I was getting a little frustrated.

Now they have announced that the game will be released on 23 February 2023. This means that I can't do an actual review of the game, but rather a preview of it.

What I can do, however, is pass on the info that Relic have released. I can then give a few comments on the in-game footage that I've seen to date. I will probably do a full game review in the next edition of Military Despatches.

So, what do Relic have to say about the game.

### Game overview

The legendary strategy franchise is back! Company of Heroes 3 is the ultimate package of action, tactics and strategy.

Take charge in the heat of real-time battle, then command as a General guiding the overall campaign where every decision matters.

Overwhelm your opponents with four unique factions and all new international Battlegroups. Command ground, air and naval forces and build supply lines to crush enemy advances on the new Dynamic Campaign Map - no two playthroughs are ever alike! Play at your own pace across campaign and skirmish modes before diving into blistering multiplayer action. Discover the untold stories of a stunning Mediterranean theatre, featuring next generation destructible environments, all powered by Relic's proprietary Essence Engine.

### Award-winning Tactical Gameplay

Company of Heroes 3 delivers the next generation of acclaimed tactical gameplay. Beloved combat mechanics collide with authentic new gameplay features, making for the deepest tactical experience to date.

Make use of daring flanking moves to expose enemy side armour, experience all new infantry breaching mechanics allowing you to flush enemy units from their garrisons, and mas-

ter elevation to enhance your line of sight and gain the upper hand.

### A Stunning New Theatre

Welcome to the Mediterranean - a breathtaking new theatre filled with untold stories of war. Engage ferocious enemy forces across Italian mountain passes, breathtaking coastal vistas and the sweeping deserts of N Africa. Stunning visuals deliver authentic and highly diverse environments designed to keep you on your toes.

Mountainous maps will require uniquely different strategies from coastal towns, with verticality now greatly affecting units' line of sight (True Sight). Desert plains will call for careful reconnaissance and daring armoured manoeuvres. On this new frontline, intelligence trumps speed and clever use of local terrain will let you bewilder your opponents and rout them from the field.

### New Layers Of Strategy

Experience the biggest single player campaign in franchise history. The new Dynamic Campaign Map delivers full 'sandbox-style' gameplay, allowing players to command the overall war effort and experience an unprecedented level of strategic choice.



Establish vital supply lines before deploying rear guard defences to secure your advance. Launch air and naval strikes to weaken and scatter enemy forces or liberate a nearby town to develop a Partisan spy network. Choose your forces and upgrade your veteran companies to match your playstyle. Meanwhile, the optional Full Tactical Pause feature allows players total control over the pacing of single-player action. Plan your attacks, then effortlessly queue up lethal precision plays that will give you the edge in battle.

### Diverse Factions & Units

Company of Heroes 3 promises to delight even the most ardent WW2 enthusiasts thanks to the largest number of launch factions in the series to date.

New army customization mechanics will allow you to call in the help of a varied cast of specialist units. Take up the fight with new elite squads including the American-Canadian Special Service Forces, the revered Gurkhas from the Commonwealth and many more.

From devastating tank destroyers to clandestine recon vehicles, Company of Heroes 3 features the largest roster in the series to date. The super light Weasel, the armour sniping

Nashorn, and the Chaffee Light Tank are just a few of the units making their debut. Also, let's not forget revamped classics like the M3 Recovery Vehicle Halftrack, which can now be used to repair and steal abandoned enemy vehicles!

### Cinematic Action

Feel the blistering impact of every mortar shell and naval bombardment with Relic's state-of-the-art Essence Engine. In Company of Heroes 3, every location becomes a fully destructible sandbox, opening up limitless tactical gameplay options for you or your enemy to exploit.

Bring fortified buildings crashing down onto enemy squads, then witness enhanced destruction mechanics at play as soldiers exploit fresh ruins as dynamic cover. Stunning new rendering and particle FX technology depicts fire, sand and smoke like never before. Brilliant new soldier animations combine with enhanced A.I, delivering realistic squad reactions to the battlefield. Optimized for DirectX 12 and multi-core CPUs, Relic's new engine technology will deliver cinematic action to rival any Hollywood blockbuster.

### Gameplay footage

I've watched quite a bit of gameplay videos of Company of Heroes 3 and the game is really looking good.

I even had the chance to test play a scenario for the game and I was hooked and it left me wanting more.

Okay, the game does not come cheap. It will set you back R949 for the standard version of the game. The Digital Premium Version will set you back R1,299.

You will also need a decent computer to run the game. The minimum requirements are a 64-bit processor with Windows 10, a NVIDIA GeForce GTX 950, AMD Radeon R9 370, or equivalent performance graphics card, 8 GB RAM, and 40 GB space on your system.

I, for one, can't wait to play the full game.



Publisher	-	Relic
Genre	-	RTS
Platform	-	PC
Score	-	N/A
Price	-	R949



## Movie Review

# Das Boot

Released: 1981  
Running time: 149 minutes  
Directed by: Wolfgang Petersen

Released in 1981, *Das Boot* (The Boat) is a German war film written and directed by Wolfgang Petersen, produced by Günter Rohrbach, and starring Jürgen Prochnow, Herbert Grönemeyer, and Klaus Wennemann. The sound track is in German with English subtitles.

The film is an adaptation of Lothar-Günther Buchheim's 1973 German novel of the same name, the film is set during World War II and tells the fictional story of U-96 and its crew.

It depicts both the excitement of battle and the tedium of the fruitless hunt, and shows the men serving aboard U-boats as ordinary individuals with a desire to do their best for their comrades and their country.

During production, Heinrich Lehmann-Willenbrock, the captain of the real U-96 and one of Germany's top U-boat "tonnage aces" during the war, and Hans-Joachim Krug, former first officer on U-219, served as consultants.

One of Petersen's goals was to guide the audience through "a journey to the edge of the mind". The film's tag line is "*Eine Reise ans Ende des Verstandes*," which means "what war is all about."

The film focuses on war correspondent Lieutenant Werner (Herbert Grönemeyer), who is honest but naive. He is assigned to the German submarine U-96 in October 1941. He has to accompany

the boat on a patrol, taking photographs of them in action and reporting on the voyage.

He meets the submarine's captain (Jürgen Prochnow) in a French bordello where the captain and his crew are celebrating the captain being awarded the *Ritterkreuz* (Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross).

The captain is 30 years old and is openly anti-Nazi, and embittered and cynical about the war.

The next morning the U-96 leaves La Rochelle to a cheering crowd and a band playing. Werner is given a tour of the boat and introduced to the crew.

The next three weeks are spent enduring a relentless North Atlantic gale. As time passes Werner observes the ideological differences between the new crew members and the hardened veterans.

Shortly after the storm ends they encounter a British convoy and launch four torpedoes, sinking two ships. They are spotted by a destroyer and are forced to dive below test depth, the submarine's rated limit.

They are depth-charged and sustain heavy damage. The chief machinist, *Obermaschinist* Johann (Erwin Leder), panics and has to be restrained.

After the attack they eventually manage to surface when night falls. One of the British ships they torpedoed earlier, a British tanker, is still afloat and on fire,

so they torpedo it again, only to learn there are still sailors aboard. The U-boat men watch in horror as the sailors leap overboard and swim towards them. Unable to accommodate prisoners, the captain orders the boat away.

The crew, by this time worn out, are looking forward to returning home in time for Christmas. But they are ordered to La Spezia, in Italy. This means passing through the Strait of Gibraltar—an area heavily defended by the Royal Navy.

What follows will keep you glued to the screen. *Das Boot* is an excellent film and was nominated for no fewer than six Academy Awards, including Best Director.



Click on the box cover to watch a trailer of the film.

# Men of the Mendi

Written by Brenda Shepherd, this is the story of the sinking of the SS Mendi during WWI, the bravery of the men on board and the ensuing inquiry conducted by the Board of Trade in London. The story follows the small band of survivors to France where they complete their tour of duty.

The First World War rages in Europe, it is a white man's war, but when the British government calls for 10,000 black soldiers to be sent to France as a labour force, men from around South Africa volunteer for service.

At 05h00 on 21 February 1917, in thick fog about 19 kilometres south of St. Catherine's Point on the Isle of Wright, the troopship SS Mendi was struck

in the starboard quarter by the much larger cargo ship Darro.

While Darro survived the collision, the Mendi sank, killing 616 South Africans (607 of them black volunteers) and 30 crew.

Some men were killed outright in the collision; others were trapped below decks. Many others gathered on Mendi's deck as she listed and sank. Oral history records that the men met their fate with great dignity. An interpreter, Isaac Williams Wauchope, is reported to have calmed the panicked men.

This book makes use of various historical documents and the transcripts from the inquiry held in London by the Board of Trade to establish causality for the large loss of life. On conclusion of the inquiry, these tran-

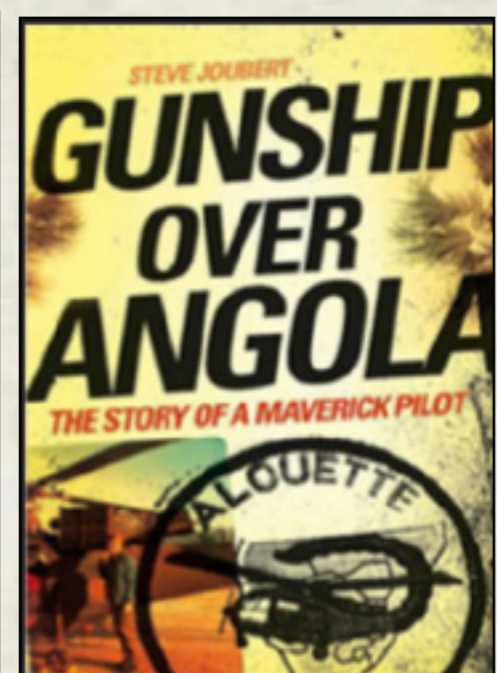


scripts were declared 'secret' and concealed from view for the next 50 years. *Men of the Mendi* gives an in depth account of the inquiry and the apparent reason for the cover-up.

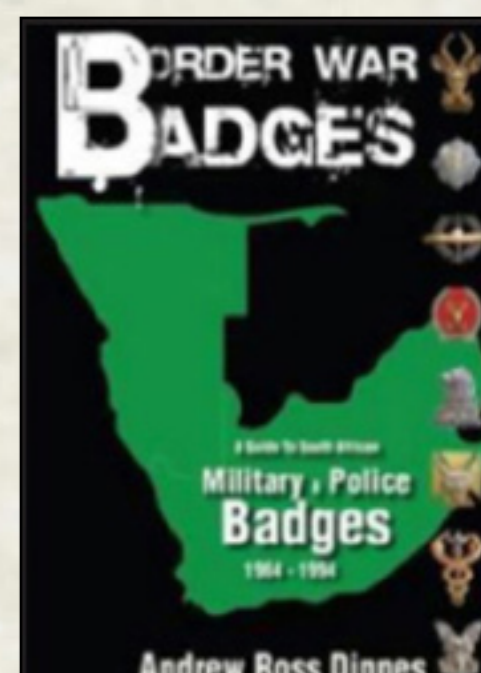
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Weekend Warriors  
R350



Gunship over Angola  
R260



Border War Badges  
R400

All books are available from [Bush War Books](#)

Some of the significant military events that happened in February. Highlighted in blue are the names of those members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that lost their lives during the month of February.

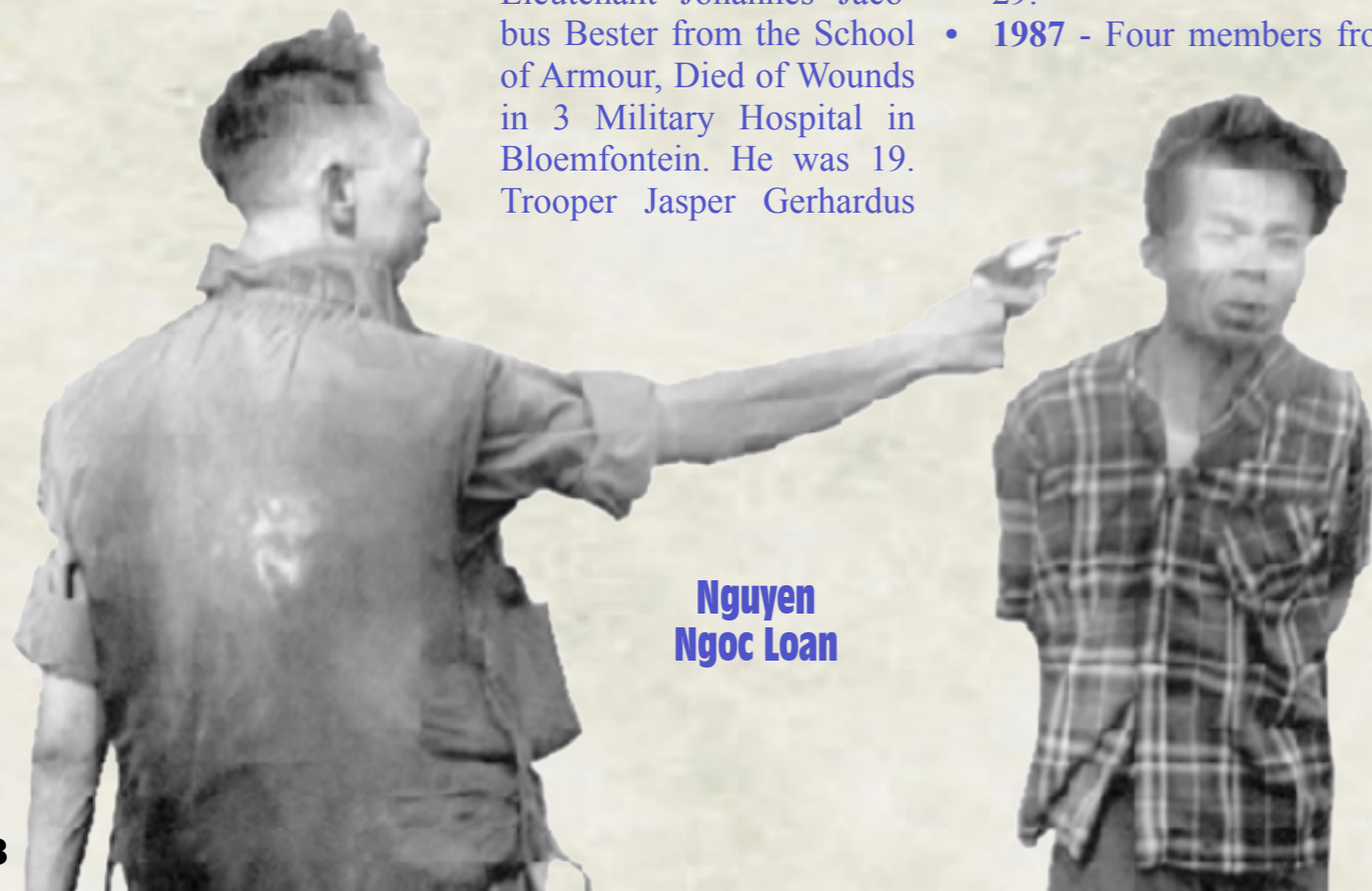
### 1 February

- **1862** - Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of Republic" is published.
- **1920** - The South African Air Force is established, the first of the Commonwealth air forces. Lt-Col. Pierre van Ryneveld is appointed as Director of Air Services.
- **1943** - Marshal Paulus surrenders the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad.
- **1944** - Japanese learn Australia has formed a war crimes commission.
- **1951** - Alfred Krupp & 28 other German war criminals are freed.
- **1957** - Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus, dies at the age of 66.

- **1960** - Extreme right-wing rebels in Algiers surrender.
- **1961** - Minuteman ICBM is successful in its first full scale test.
- **1968** - Saigon: Nguyen Ngoc Loan summarily executes a Viet Cong murderer.
- **1968** - The Canadian Forces are formed, through the merger of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, an "experiment" that is ended in 2011.
- **1971** - Two members from the Armoured Corps were accidentally Killed or Died of Wounds when a 90mm High Explosive Anti-Tank round exploded in the gun breach of their armoured car during live firing exercises at De Brug, Bloemfontein. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Johannes Jacobus Bester from the School of Armour, Died of Wounds in 3 Military Hospital in Bloemfontein. He was 19. Trooper Jasper Gerhardus

Johannes Visser from 1 SSB was killed instantly in the explosion. He was 19.

- **1976** - Rifleman Nicolaas Pretorius from Regiment Springs was critically wounded by an accidental weapon discharge in Southern Angola on 31 Jan 1976. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he succumbed to his wounds the following day on 1 February 1976. He was 29.
- **1981** - France sells 60 Mirage fighters to Iraq.
- **1986** - Sergeant Gerhardus Frederick Nortje from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 29.
- **1987** - Four members from



**Nguyen Ngoc Loan**

- 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during a first light attack on a PLAN camp in the Cassumbi area east of Cassinga during Operation Kakebeen. Lance Corporal Joao and Rifleman Tolosi the MAG Gunner were killed instantly when a Soviet 82mm Mortar Bomb landed and exploded between them while the other two suffered fatal gunshot wounds during the fire-fight. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Evaristo Joao (32). Rifleman Gonsalves Antonio (22). Rifleman Kambala Tolosi (22). Rifleman Domingoes Zua (31).
- **1988** - Gunner Stephanus Petrus Stoop of 14 Artillery Regiment, attached to "P" Battery, 32 Battalion accidentally drowned while swimming somewhere in the Operational Area. He was 20.
- **1991** - Rifleman Joao Andrade from 201 Battalion SWATF died of natural causes in Hospital. He was 42.

### 2 February

- **1848** - The war between the U.S. and Mexico ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.
- **1901** - The U.S. Army Nurse Corps was formed on this day.
- **1942** - US ceases production of private cars to convert to war production.
- **1945** - Mass escape attempt at Mauthausen concentra-

tion camp.

- **1957** - The United Nations (UN) adopts a resolution calling for Israeli troops to leave Egypt.
- **1971** - Idi Amin assumes power in Uganda following a coup that ousted President Milton Obote.
- **1972** - Irate Dubliners torch the British Embassy to protest 'Bloody Sunday' in Derry.
- **1973** - Captain Leslie John Marshall from Flying Training School Langebaanweg was Killed when his Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I, Serial No 485 crashed near Darling while he was practicing low level aerobatics. He was 26.
- **1975** - Rebels begin an offensive in Eritrea, Ethiopia. Ethiopia's military government orders bombers, armoured units and troops into operations against them in Eritrea Province.
- **1978** - Chief Matanzima announces that all South Africans seconded to the Transkei Army will leave Transkei by 31 March 1978.
- **1980** - Rifleman Willem Johannes Gerhardus Uys Olivier from 7 SAI was killed when the Buffel Troop Carrier in which he was a passenger, overturned at Ondangwa. He was 19.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Johnny Atilla Nemith from 7 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident at Hazzyview. He was 19.

- **1984** - Rifleman Joshua Sitarara from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN Insurgents. He was 24.
- **1986** - Leading Seaman Cavan Rennie Boyd from SAS President Pretorius accidentally drowned whilst restrained in an overturned paddle ski off Bloubergstrand. He was 25.
- **1989** - Rifleman Christian Le Wack from Group 39 was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident, at Bloemfontein. He was 29.
- **1989** - Soviet troops leave Afghanistan, ending nine years of war.
- **1992** - Rifleman Benjamin Boorman from 3 SAI was accidentally shot and killed by a fellow Unit member during riot control operations at Mpophweni Township. He was 23.
- **2004** - Max Schmeling, former world heavyweight boxing champion and WW II Fallschirmjaeger, dies at the age of 99.

### 3 February

- **1838** - Piet Retief, seventy burghers and thirty mounted servants arrive at Dingaan's kraal Ungungundlovu (Home of the Elephant) for the signing of the Retief-Dingane treaty.
- **1903** - Britain conquers Kano from Nigerian rebel forces.
- **1915** - Battle of the Suez

Canal: a Turkish attempt to cross the canal is defeated.

- **1922** - General Christiaan Rudolph de Wet, well-known leader of Boer forces in the Second Anglo-Boer War, dies on his farm at the age of 67.
- 1933 - Hitler informs his generals to prepare for war to secure *Lebensraum*.
- **1943** - An extraordinary act of heroism occurred in the icy waters off Greenland after the U.S. Army transport ship *Dorchester* was hit by a German torpedo and began to sink rapidly. When it became apparent there were not enough life jackets, four U.S. Army chaplains on board removed theirs, handed them to frightened young soldiers, and chose to go down with the ship while praying.
- **1943** - Troop transport 'Dorchester' torpedoed & sunk off Greenland with great loss of life.
- **1977** - General Tafari Banti (Teferi Benti), Ethiopia's chief of state, is killed in gun battle that breaks out around Addis Ababa headquarters of the nation's feuding military leaders. Lieutenant-Colonel Haile Mariam Mengistu replaces him.
- **1978** - Rifleman Afonso Da Silva from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with the enemy forces at Mamuandi during Operation Seiljag. He was 22.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal Carl Leopold Albert Craem-

er from 8 SAI was Killed in Action when the Buffel Troop Carrier he was driving, detonated three boosted Yugoslavian TMA-3 Anti-Tank cheese mines that were triggered by a Soviet PMN "Black Widow" Anti-Personnel Mine on the road between Oshigambo and Ondangwa. He was 20.

#### 4 February

- **1861** - Apache Chief Cochise was arrested in Arizona by the U.S. Army for raiding a ranch. Cochise then escaped and declared war, beginning the period known as the Apache Wars, which lasted 25 years.
- **1874** - British forces under Garnet Wolseley burn Kumasi, Ghana, ending Ashanti War.
- **1899** - The Philippine-American War (Philippine Insurrection) begins with heavy fighting at Manila.
- **1904** - Herero Revolt in German South West Africa: Omaruru is relieved after a fierce battle between Franke and the Ovaherero.
- **1911** - Pieter Arnoldus Cronjé, Boer general during the Second Anglo-Boer War, dies in Potchefstroom.
- **1938** - Hitler assumes direct control of the German Army.
- **1939** - The "Ossewabrand-

wag" (OB) is founded as an Afrikaans cultural and political organisation in Bloemfontein, under leadership of Col. J. Laas.

- **1944** - Japanese launch major offensive against British in the Arakan, Burma.
- **1961** - Civil war erupts in Angola.
- **1964** - The number of men required for military training in 1964 is to increase by 60%, i.e. from 10,368 to 16,537.
- **1967** - Crew of the US carrier FDR are refused leave in South Africa because of the apartheid laws.
- **1980** - Three members from 6 SAI were Killed in Action when their patrol was ambushed around mid-morning near Nkongo by PLAN Insurgents using heavy calibre weapons, mortars and RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rockets. The casualties were: Rifleman Michael Derek Loubser (20). Rifleman Jacobus Johannes Maritz (20). Rifleman Jacobus Johannes van der Star (20).
- **1980** - Rifleman Anthony Michael Scholtz from 41 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN Insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 17.
- **1981** - Corporal Daniel Johannes van Wyk from Sector 20 Headquarters was killed in a military vehicle accident near Rundu. He was 19.
- **1982** - 2nd Lieutenant Douglas Raymond Fincham from

82 Mechanised Brigade accidentally drowned in the Vaal River at Barkley West. He was 24.

- **1983** - Private Jan Gabriel Johannes van der Berg from 201 Battalion SWATF was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned during follow-up operations in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1986** - Private Ronnie Marx from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed instantly when he was struck by lightning during a thunderstorm. He was 18.
- **1987** - Sapper Shawn Engelbrecht from 25 Field Squadron was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a landmine in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1988** - Two members of 101 Battalion Romeo Mike were Killed in Action near Mupa in Southern Angola when their Casspir drove into an ambush and was struck by a Czechoslovakian RPG-75 Anti-Tank Rocket. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Michael Sean McCann (21). Sapper Michael Colin Suter (20) from 25 Field Engineer Squadron attached to 101 Battalion Romeo Mike.
- **1988** - Two members of the South West Africa Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K (Koevoet) were Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Special Sergeant S.

Kandyongu (29). Special Sergeant V. Noemuweda (32).

- **1989** - The Citizen reveals that Miss Olivia Forsyth who arrived at the British Embassy in Luanda, Angola, seeking sanctuary from the ANC, which, she alleged, has kept her in confinement for months and severely tortured her, was indeed a South African spy. Her claim to be a SA agent was formerly rejected by SA authorities.
- **1990** - Nine Israeli tourists and two Egyptian guards are killed and twenty tourists wounded when masked assailants open fire on a bus en route to Cairo.

#### 5 February

- **1840** - Hiram Stevens Maxim, inventor of the first practical machine gun, is born on this day.
- **1900** - General Redvers Buller conquers Vaalkrans at the Tugela river, but shelling from both sides continues and the British forces have to evacuate their positions two days later.
- **1915** - General Louis Botha leaves for South West Africa to take control of the Union troops who would conquer the area from Germany.
- 1918 - Stephen W Thompson becomes the first US pilot to down an enemy airplane.
- **1935** - Johannes Jacobus Geldenhuys (Jannie), former Chief of the South Af-

rican Defence Force, is born in Kroonstad.

- **1943** - Germans deport 12,000 Jews from Bialystok to death camps.
- **1958** - A B-47 & F-86 collide at 36,000 feet off the Georgia coast, causing the loss of an H-Bomb, which is still missing.
- **1970** - Captain Johannes Jacobus Lombard from 4 SAI was deliberately shot dead by a disgruntled soldier in the mess at Katima Mulilo. He was 29.
- **1973** - Funeral for Lt Col William Nolde, last US soldier killed in Vietnam.
- **1976** - The Defence Amendment Bill, making provision for the employment of South African conscripted troops anywhere outside South Africa, is approved.
- **1976** - Sapper Jonathan Aschman from 21 Field Engineer Squadron, South African Engineer Corps was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Central Angola during Operation Savannah. He was 19.
- **1976** - Trooper Willem Johannes Cronje from Regiment Oranje Rivier was Killed in Action in Central Angola during Operation Savannah. He was 26.
- **1980** - Two members from 6 SAI were Killed in Action when their Temporary Base at Nkongo was attacked by PLAN insurgents. The casualties were: Rifleman Christo Swanepoel (19). Rifleman

- Bruce Edward Schultz (20).
- **1981** - Police announce the arrest of a number of Whites in connection with sabotage acts for which the Wit Kommando has claimed responsibility on 15 August 1980 and on 12 December 1980.
- **1981** - Rifleman Bernard Jacobus Leach from 1 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents while on patrol near the Cut-line. He was 21.
- **1982** - Two members from 4 SAI were killed at their Base at Ohiki, 18km North of Omauni when they tried to make a skyrocket by using a tent pole. They were: Rifleman Evert Phillipus Du Toit (20). Rifleman Robert Glenn Dunn (19).
- **1983** - Former Gestapo official Klaus Barbie brought to trial in Lyon, France.
- **1985** - Rifleman Paul Ismael from 101 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces. He was 24.
- **1987** - Rifleman Peter Benz Reynolds from 5 Recce Regiment was killed when the Kwêvoel vehicle he was driving, overturned when he tried to avoid cattle in the road between Ondangwa and Tsumeb. He was 22.
- **1991** - Lieutenant Johannes Francois Neuhoff from 85 Combat Flying School was killed when his Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I, Serial No. 604 crashed near Pietersburg. He was 25.
- **1992** - Rifleman Daniel

Stephanus Hendrik Du Toit from the Regiment Botha was killed when he accidentally slipped at a waterfall and fell 30 metres to his death, while on Patrol at the Table Mountain in Natal. He was 33.

- **1993** - Up to 200 Somali youths hurl rocks at US forces and set tyre barricades ablaze in the belief that American troops shot to death a Somali man.

### 6 February

- **1838** - At the farewell function following the signing of Retief's treaty, Piet Retief, seventy of his men and thirty mounted servants are killed on the orders of Zulu King Dingane at Ungungundlovu. The Trekkers are bound and taken from the enclosure to a spot where they are spiked and clubbed to death.
- **1899** - Spanish-American War officially ends.
- **1901** - The battle of Chrissiesmeer (Lake Chrissie) takes place during the Second Anglo-Boer War.
- **1941** - Battle of Beda Fomm: British complete destruction of Italian Tenth Army.
- **1941** - British troops capture Bengazi, Libya.
- **1945** - Battle for Manila begins.
- **1945** - Over 4,000 American POWs are freed from prison camps on Luzon.
- **1970** - Israelis sink a 700-ton Egyptian minelayer in the Gulf of Suez in reprisal for the sinking of two Israeli

ships at Elath.

- **1977** - Rhodesian security forces launch a full-scale search for a gang, which massacred seven White Roman Catholic missionaries three Jesuits and four Dominican nuns at St Paul's Mission at Musami, near Mrewa.
- **1978** - Chad breaks links to Libya in protest to their support of Muslim guerrillas currently fighting in northern Chad.
- **1981** - Rifleman L Kavari from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1982** - Rifleman Hirite Vilho from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1982** - Rifleman Ningileyimo Kondjeni Meulemo from 101 Battalion SWATF was killed during operations in Southern Angola. He was 22.
- **1984** - Rifleman Xavier Arico from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1984** - Special Constable M. Kaibotya from Koevoet was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was

- 34.
- **1985** - Rifleman Immanuel Gabriel from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 28.
- **1985** - Trooper Hermanus Christoffel Helm from 2 Special Service Battalion collapsed and died after suffering a fatal heart attack during a physical training session at Walvis Bay. He was 18.
- **1985** - Corporal Noel Mbumba Marcel from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 30.
- **1994** - National Peacekeep-

ing Force (NPKF), Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana, says that the NPKF will probably not be ready to keep the peace during the elections in April.

- **2004** - Chechen terrorists bomb the Moscow subway, 49 die, scores injured.

### 7 February

- **1900** - British forces, under Buller, are defeated by the Boers under Botha at the end of the three-day battle of Vaalkrans.
- **1900** - The British fail for the third time to relieve the Boer siege of Ladysmith.
- **1901** - Britain sends 30 000 additional troops to South Africa.
- **1942** - The 2nd SA Division moves into Tobruk.
- **1943** - Guadalcanal: U.S.

troops advance on both coasts, as the Japanese complete the evacuation of their troops from the island.

- **1944** - Germans launch counteroffensive at Anzio.
- **1945** - General Douglas MacArthur returns to Manila.
- **1948** - Omar Bradley succeeds Dwight Eisenhower as Army Chief of Staff.
- **1964** - Somali troops invade Ethiopia to assert claim to Ogaden desert area.
- **1965** - US begins sustained air operations against North Vietnam.
- **1968** - Air Mechanic Philip Johannes Joubert from 24 Squadron was shot dead while on guard duty when he was struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 19.
- **1969** - Nigerian planes



**Douglas MacArthur**

bomb and strafe a crowded market in a village in rebellious Biafra, killing more than 200 people.

- **1973** - Two members from the Infantry School Instructor Staff were killed instantly in Oudtshoorn when a stockpile of old unstable explosives that they were preparing for demolition, accidentally detonated. The casualties were: WO Lukas Petrus Jacobus Steenkamp (45). Staff Sergeant Pieter Paul van Jaarsveld (30).
- **1978** - Gunner Abraham Hattingh from 4 Artillery Regiment was killed instantly at Potchefstroom during a violent storm when the electric floor polisher he was using to polish the barracks floor, was struck by lightning. He was 17.
- **1979** - Nazi war criminal Josef Mengele drowns in Brazil at the age of 67.
- **1987** - Trooper Johann Labuschagne from 61 Mechanised Battalion died during a two week Infantry training exercise at Oshivello.
- **1989** - Sapper Ian Steward Hanslo from the School of Engineers was killed while on guard duty at the Unit's main gate when he was accidentally run over by a 10-ton truck. He was 19.

### 8 February

- **1865** - Martin Delany becomes first black major in the US Army.
- **1881** - The Battle of Ingogo Heights, near Schuinshoogte

(also called the Battle of Skuinshoogte) is fought in the Anglo-Transvaal War. Eight Boer and 100 British soldiers are killed. In this battle the Boer force of 100 men defeats the English force of 600 who are assisted by cavalry and four cannons.

- **1943** - Burma: Orde Wingate's Chindits begin raid against the Japanese.
- **1943** - Red Army liberates Kursk.
- **1978** - Three members of 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during in a fierce fire fight with superior enemy force at Mamuandi in Southern Angola during Operation Seiljag. They were: Rifleman Lucindo Laurindo (20). Rifleman Rodrigues Augusto (19). Rifleman Antonio Mussungu (20).
- **1978** - Rifleman N. Bernarde from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during in a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola between Onhunda and Oshipala during Operation Seiljag. He was 19.
- **1979** - Gunner Pieter Du Toit from 10 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment received serious burns on 7 February while escorting a patient in an ambulance to 2 Military Hospital at Wynberg. He passed away on 8 February. He was 20.
- **1981** - Rifleman Morgan John Williams from 5 SAI was Killed when he was struck by a bullet resulting

from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.

- **1984** - Captain Sarel Jacobus Kruger from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was killed in a parachute training accident at Hoedspruit. He was 26.
- **1984** - Rifleman Hendrik Francois Taljaard from the Equestrian Centre was killed instantly when he was accidentally run over by a Samil 100 truck near Potchefstroom while on his way to stand guard at the North West Command Ammunition Dump. He was 19.
- **1984** - 2nd Lieutenant Johannes Petrus Verhoef from 8 SAI died from gunshot wounds accidentally sustained near AFB Ondangwa in Northern Owamboland. He was 21.
- **1988** - Rifleman Thomas Andries Dreyer from 5 SAI accidentally drowned while swimming in the Klip River. He was 24.

### 9 February

- **1900** - George Frederick Labram, mechanical engineer who built 'Long Cecil' for the defence of Kimberley during the siege by the Boers, is killed by a shell from a Boer 'Long Tom' only a few days before the siege was raised.
- **1904** - A predawn Japanese torpedo boat attack on the Russian Fleet outside Port Arthur, initiates the Rus-

so-Japanese War.

- **1916** - General Jan Christian Smuts is appointed commander of UK and South African troops in the East African campaign of World War I.
- **1916** - Britain adopts conscription for World War I.
- **1916** - The Cape Corps, consisting of thirty-two officers and 1022 soldiers, leaves for East Africa during the First World War.
- **1918** - U.S. Army Chaplains' School is established on this day.
- **1941** - The German troops of General Erwin Rommel move from Italy to North Africa.
- **1943** - During World War II in the Pacific, U.S. troops captured Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands after six months of battle, with 9,000 Japanese and 2,000 Americans killed.
- **1945** - Germans blow up dams on the Ruhr.
- **1977** - Rifleman Frederick Francois Oosthuizen from Meyerton Commando died from a gunshot wound resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while his patrol was busy preparing an ambush position north of Oshakati. He was 20.
- **1978** - South Africa is to make its own missiles. Kentron (Pty) Ltd, a newly formed subsidiary of ARM-SCOR (the South African Armaments Corporation) will produce these.

- **1987** - Corporal Marius Viljoen from 2 Special Service Battalion was killed at the Rooisloot Training Terrain at Zeerust when his Eland armoured car overturned during training exercises. He was 19.
- **1990** - Rifleman Gerhard Paul Heine from 5 SAI was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Umhlanga Rocks. He was 19.
- **1991** - Oupa Gqozo, head of the Ciskei, claims to have put down the second coup attempt in the space of two weeks, with the assistance of South African forces.
- **1992** - After two days of fighting between Islamic fundamentalists and security forces in Algeria, a state of emergency is declared.
- **1996** - WW II Luftwaffe ace Adolf Galland dies at the age of 83. He was the youngest man in Europe to become a general since Napoleon.
- **1999** - An Ethiopian plane bombs an Eritrean village full of homeless people, killing at least five civilians and escalating a border dispute.

**Adolf Galland**

### 10 February

- **1840** - Commandant-General M.W. Pretorius installs Mpande as King of the Zulus after the power of Mpande's brother, Dingane, is broken at a final battle at Magongo on the Umkuzi River.
- **1901** - General Christiaan de Wet invades the Cape Colony for the second time at Zanddrif, near Philippolis.
- **1906** - HMS 'Dreadnought' is launched, initiating a naval arms race.
- **1916** - Geneneral Jan Smuts is appointed commander of the Allied forces in East Africa.
- **1942** - The first Medal of Honor during World War II was awarded to 2nd Lt. Al-



exander Nininger (posthumously) for heroism during the Battle of Bataan.

- **1943** - Britain's Eighth Army reaches Tunisian border.
- **1943** - Battle of Krasny Bor: The Soviets attempt to break the siege of Leningrad, but defending German and Spanish troops hold.
- **1962** - USSR swaps U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers for spy Rudolph Abel.
- **1964** - Australian carrier 'Melbourne' collides with the destroyer 'Voyager', which sinks, 82 die.
- **1972** - Lance Corporal James Charles Warren from 2 Squadron was killed in a aircraft ground mishap at the Squadron. He was in the process of removing an aircraft ejection seat when the drogue gun on the seat accidentally fired and he was fa-

tally injured. He was 23.

- **1983** - Rifleman Adao Salvador from 32 Battalion was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident, at Mosese. He was 22.
- **1988** - South Africa sends troops to Bophuthatswana to reinstate Lucas Mangope who was ousted by local defence force members on charge of corruption.
- **1989** - The Citizen reports that an alleged member of the SADF, Isaiah Moyo, was convicted in Lusaka, Zambia, on three counts of espionage and sentenced to fifty years' hard labour. The SADF denied any knowledge of Mr Moyo. The sentence was later reduced to thirty years.
- **1994** - Lieutenant Garth Harold Esterhuizen from 42 Squadron was killed when his Cessna 185A, Serial No. 720 crashed at Carletonville after flying into power lines during a low level cross country training flight. He was 23.

- **2017** - Lt. General Harold Gregory "Hal" Moore, Jr, hero of the Ia Drang Valley in Vietnam, dies at the age of 84.

### 11 February

- **1900** - The second British offensive begins with a British invasion of the Orange Free State when almost 50,000 men and 170 guns cross the border from Modder River and Graspan to a water-rich farm at Ramdam.
- **1935** - League of Nations debates the border dispute between Italy and Ethiopia, whilst Mussolini prepares to ship out 35,000 troops to East Africa.
- **1941** - Erwin Rommel lands in Tripoli to assume command of the Afrika Korps.
- **1963** - The defence minister, J.J. Fouché, announces in the House of Assembly that he intends to increase the strength of the permanent army by fifty per cent.
- **1971** - US, UK, USSR, others sign a treaty banning nuclear weapons on the seabed.
- **1975** - A Rhodesian government spokesman announces that elements of the South African police are withdrawing from certain forward positions on the Zambezi River, after undertakings from the Zambian government about guerrilla infiltrations there.
- **1978** - Lieutenant Johannes Hendrik Du Toit from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces during an ambush while operating in Zambia. He was 23.
- **1980** - Private Gert Petrus

Gerber from Central Flying School Dunnottar attached to 95 Tactical Airfield Unit, suffered critical head injuries when his fuel tanker vehicle overturned near Oluno in Northern Owamboland on 5 February 1980. He succumbed to his injuries in 1 Military Hospital on 11 February 1980. He was 19.

- **1981** - Rifleman Archie Ronnie Williams from the South African Cape Corps died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while on patrol in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.
- **1982** - Sapper Phillipus Johannes De Bruin from 5 Engineer Regiment was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.
- **1985** - Eight members of 32 Battalion were Killed in Action and five more Died of Wounds when Charlie Company Patrol was operating in the vicinity of the Bale River in Southern Angola during Ops Forte. The eight casualties that were killed in the initial contact were: Lieutenant David Gordon Light (26). Rifleman Jakob Eduardo Jamba (31). Lance Corporal Jose Alfredo Sachilombo (27). Rifleman Petrus Kalitoko Kahete (31). Rifleman Alberto de Almeida (19). Rifleman Paulo Jose (27). Rifleman Kausanga Galonga (27). Rifleman Jose Chihamba (30). After sunset while the casualties were being evacuated

to a temporary emergency base, another four of the wounded men, all suffering from massive chest wounds as a result of Rifle Grenades and RPG-7 Rockets, succumbed to their injuries. They were: Riflemen Joao Fernando (29). Rifleman Mateus Joaquim (26). Rifleman Zeferino Chipoya (22). Rifleman, Mateus Antonio Kinguelele (32). Rifleman Musose Muema (32) succumbed to his injuries the following day.

- **1990** - The South African Defence Force (SADF) admits the existence of a secret unit called the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB), which was also allegedly involved in hit-squad actions against activists. President De Klerk said in March 1990 that he had been informed about the CCB only in January 1990.

### 12 February

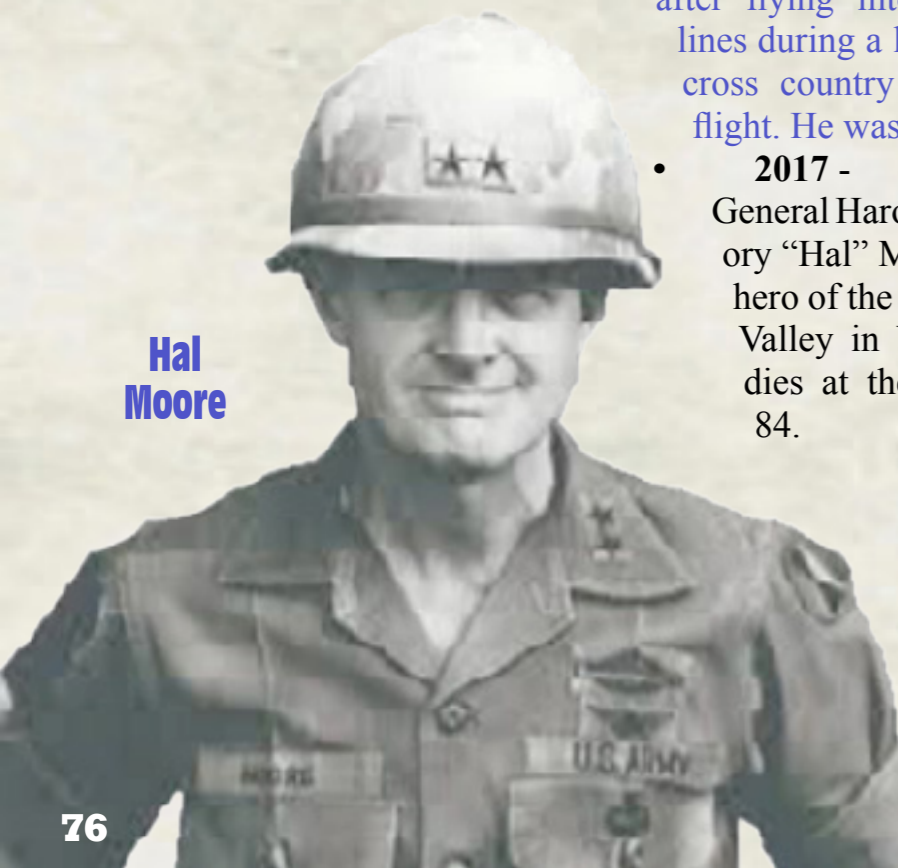
- **1942** - The "Channel Dash": German battleships 'Scharnhorst' & 'Gneisenau', & heavy cruiser 'Prinz Eugen' escape from Brest to Germany.
- **1955** - Pres Eisenhower sends US advisors to South Vietnam.
- **1976** - Rifleman Johannes Jacobus Bruwer from 6 SAI Died in 1 Military Hospital from gunshot wounds accidentally sustained while in Northern Owamboland. He was 21.
- **1979** - The State Security Council (SSC) approves

guidelines for the conducting of military operations against liberation movements in foreign countries.

- **1979** - Nationalist guerrillas in Rhodesia shoot down an Air Rhodesia airliner with a missile, killing fifty-nine people.
- **1985** - Captain Robert Raymond Rodel from 4 Squadron was Killed in Action in Northern Owamboland in Atlas MB326KC Impala Mk II, Serial No.1096. He was 26.
- **1985** - Five members from 102 Battalion SWATF and 1 SWA Engineer Regiment SWATF (attached) were Killed in Action in Western Koakoland when their Buffel Troop Carrier convoy was ambushed by a numerically superior force of approximately 40 heavily armed SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. The casualties were: Corporal Mannie Maheue (22). Sapper Willem Vallien (18). Sapper Gerhard van Wyk (19). Sapper Bartholomeus Kapindi (22). Sapper Niklaas Johannes Ferris (24).

### 13 February

- **1901** - Lord Kitchener meets with Gen. Louis Botha in an effort to end the Anglo-Boer War, but Botha finds the British conditions unacceptable. The battle of Wolwekuil is fought the same day.
- **1924** - Japanese Admiral Kenji Ide and his aide, Capt. Isoroku Yamamoto, visit the



**Hal Moore**

- U.S. Naval War College
  - **1941** - WW2: The 12th African Division, with 1st SA Infantry Brigade in command, captures Kismayu in Somaliland.
  - **1942** - Hitler finally cancels "Operation Seelöwe", the invasion of Britain.
  - **1945** - During World War II in Europe, British and American planes began massive bombing raids on Dresden, Germany. A four-day firestorm erupted that was visible for 200 miles and engulfed the historic old city, killing an estimated 135,000 German civilians.
  - **1960** - The first French atom bomb is tested in the Sahara desert.
  - **1961** - UN security council urges use of force to prevent civil war in the Congo.
  - **1972** - Patrol Officer Michael Fenton Hill, a South African National serving in the British South Africa Police stationed at Wedza, was killed in a motor vehicle accident while travelling on the Salisbury to Umtali Road. He was 20.
  - **1976** - General Murtala Ramat Muhammed, Nigerian head of state since a bloodless coup in 1975, is assassinated during a failed military coup.
  - **1980** - 2nd Lieutenant Ignatius Petrus Du Preez from 201 Battalion SWATF Died of Wounds during an operation in Southern Zambia when he accidentally triggered a booby trap while clearing a SWAPO/PLAN base. He was 21.
  - **1981** - Rifleman Jaco Marais from the South African Army was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Pretoria He was 18.
  - **1993** - Angolan government troops break into Unita rebel-held highlands in an attempt to open a supply corridor to the embattled city of Huambo.
  - **1994** - Rifleman Mbhonono Johnson Myeni from 111 Infantry Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Alexandra. He was 27.
  - **1994** - Somali gunmen kidnap two Italian aid workers and an Egyptian UN peacekeeper is killed.
  - **1997** - Rebels under Laurent Kabila take Zairian town of Faradje while advancing on country's third largest city, Kisangani.
  - **1999** - Osama bin Laden, the Saudi millionaire suspected of being behind the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, is reported to have disappeared from his base in Afghanistan.
- 14 February**
- **1900** - General Buller starts his fourth attempt to relieve Ladysmith, Natal. The British withdraw from their positions around Colesberg and regroup at Arundel Sid-ing nearby.
  - **1940** - British merchant ships are armed against Ger-

- man submarines and raiders.
- **1941** - German 5th Light Division, Rommel's Afrika Corps, arrive at Tripoli.
- **1943** - The Soviets liberate Rostov from the Germans.
- **1973** - An Israeli fighter pilot shoots down a Libyan aircraft over the Sinai Desert. Seventy-four passengers and crew members die.
- **1981** - Eight Army officers are paraded by President Samora Machel at a mass rally in Maputo and are accused of treason and complicity with South Africa in the raid on the military base at Matola, where two of them were in command.
- **1987** - Three members from 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: Lieutenant Colonel G.L. Steyn (48). Sergeant Christoffel Lodewikus Fourie (28). Constable Ryk Ludolph Erasmus (20).
- **1988** - Four Members from B Company 1 SAI including two Cousins acting as the MAG Light Machine Gunner team, were Killed in Action in South Eastern Angola during a contact with elements of the 59th FAP-LA Brigade during Operation Hooper. The casualties were: Corporal Jan Hendrik Kleynhans (19). Rifleman Andre Schalk Groenewald (18). Rifleman Pieter Hen-

- rich Groenewald (19). Rifleman Vincent Vernon Nieuwenhuizen (19).
- **1990** - Corporal Pieter Gabriel Jacobus Haasbroek from 4 Reconnaissance Regiment was accidentally killed when his parachute failed during a practice jump at the Saldanha Airfield near Vredenburg. He was 21.
- **1991** - Lance Corporal Deon Schutte from Group 33 shot dead in a shooting incident near the Mozambique border. He was 20.

**15 February**

- **1898** - In Havana, the U.S. Battleship Maine was blown up while at anchor and quickly sank with 260 crew members lost. The incident inflamed public opinion in the U.S., resulting in a declaration of war against Spain on April 25, 1898, amid cries of "Remember the Maine!"
- **1900** - General French relieves Kimberley after a siege of 123 days. The town has suffered only 134 casualties among armed defenders and twenty-one civilians, but some 1,500 people, mostly Coloureds and Blacks, have died of famine and disease. The British lost at least 2,237 men of the relieving force.
- **1900** - The British threaten to use natives in the Boer War fight.
- **1915** - "Sepoy Mutiny" at Singapore: About 800 Indian troops run amok until subdued by loyal troops and
- police.
- **1942** - Singapore surrenders to the Japanese; greatest disaster in British military history.
- **1944** - The Allies commence bombing & shelling the Monastery of Monte Cassino.
- **1970** - Air Chief Marshal Hugh Caswall Tremenheere Dowding, who led "The Few" during the Battle of Britain, dies at the age of 87.
- **1970** - Corporal Stephanus Abraham Johannes Latsky from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Old Pretoria / JHB Road, near Valhalla when his Kombi skidded on the wet road and overturned. He was 19.
- **1979** - Major Frederick Wilhelm Christiaan Brits from 3 Squadron was killed when his Mirage F1CZ Serial No.200, crashed near Cullinan during a training flight. He was 32.
- **1989** - Soviet Russia completed its military withdrawal from Afghanistan after nine years of unsuccessful involvement in the civil war between Muslim
- **1990** - Captain Cecil de Jong from 17 Squadron was killed when his Alouette III, Serial 637 crashed at Murrayhill near Hammanskraal during a confined space landing/

- take-off. He was 29.
- **1992** - Two members from the School of Armour were killed when the military vehicle in which they were traveling as passengers, burst a rear tyre near Verkeerdevlei and overturned. They were: Trooper Grant James Koekemoer (18). Trooper Gert Johannes Grobler (18).

**16 February**

- **1940** - 'Altmark' Incident: HMS 'Cossack' violates Norwegian territoriality to free British prisoners held aboard a German tanker.
- **1941** - Remaining Italian forces are expelled from the Sudan.
- **1945** - Venezuela declares war on Nazi Germany.
- **1959** - Fidel Castro becomes premier of Cuba after the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista. Cuban intervention in the Angolan war started during his office.
- **1982** - Rifleman Daniel Cloete from 911 Battalion SWATF accidentally drowned in a flooded shona/river bed. He was 18.
- **1983** - Rifleman L.K, Kam-bathi from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 21.
- **1986** - Two members from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike SWATF were Killed in Action when their Casspir was hit by an RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket during a contact with



enemy forces in Southern Angola. They were: Corporal Nandago Thomas (22). Rifleman R. Boas (19).

- **1986** - Special Constable Abel Utewga from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.
- **1986** - French warplanes bomb Libyan airfield in northern Chad used as support centre for rebels in their offensive against President Hissene Habre's government.
- **1988** - An attempted coup by the Bophuthatswana Defence Force is crushed by the S.A. Defence Force.

### 17 February

- **1900** - General Piet Cronje is trapped against the Modder River on the farm Wolwekraal in the Paardeberg vicinity, and the next day the battle of Paardeberg, which was to last ten days, starts.
- **1909** - Apache Chief Geronimo died while in captivity at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He had led a small group of warriors on raids throughout Arizona and New Mexico. Caught once, he escaped. The U.S. Army then sent 5,000 men to recapture him.
- **1916** - British and French forces complete capture of Germany's African colony of Cameroon during World

War I.

- **1980** - Staff Sergeant Michael Johannes van der Linde from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 39.
- **1981** - Signaler Walter James Griffin from 2 Signal Regiment attached to 237 Troop (BRUSH) in Grootfontein, was accidentally killed while returning to Grootfontein when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Otjovasandu in Sector 30. He was 19.
- **1984** - Rifleman Hendrik Jacobus Smith from 1 Parachute Battalion was Reported Missing near the Epupa Falls in Kaokoland. The Cunene River was flowing strongly and making whirlpools between the rocks. One of his boots fell into the river and he jumped in to retrieve it. He never re-surfaced and despite an intensive search by the members of the patrol, he was never located and remains unaccounted for. He was 20.
- **1987** - Two members from 202 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action when their Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a landmine in Southern Angola. The casualties were: Lance Corporal L. Aukhumb (22). Rifleman G.H. Edwards (19).
- **1987** - Rifleman K.S. Kambonde from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with

SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 23.

- **1988** - Staff Sergeant Aubrey Nelson Borchers from 101 Battalion SWATF died in 1 Military Hospital after suffering a fatal heart attack. He was 49.
- **1988** - Lance Corporal William Arthur Frederick Price from 1 SAI, attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was Killed in Action in Southern Angola during Operation Hooper. He was 19.
- **2017** - Three members of the South African Navy died while trying to rescue three members from the Department of Public Works who were working in a sewage pit repairing the valve. The casualties were: Leading Seaman Amrithlall Tothara Ramdin (41). Able Seaman Francois William Mundell (26). Seaman Henro Ter Borg from the Maritime Reaction Squadron (21).

### 18 February

- **1884** - British forces under General Charles Gordon reach Khartoum in Sudan.
- **1900** - The Battle of Paardeberg, which was to last up to 27 February, starts with an attack by the British under Maj General Lord Kitchener on the Boers under General Cronje.
- **1915** - Germany proclaims a blockade of England.
- **1941** - Mega, the Italian headquarters in southern

Abyssinia, falls to SA forces.

- **1977** - Rifleman Willem Andries Haarhoff from 3 SAI was accidentally killed when a pole fell on him. He was 18.
- **1980** - Gunner Samuel Deon van Aswegen from the Potchefstroom University Regiment was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier was hit by an RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket during an enemy night ambush at Omindamba in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1982** - Rifleman Mark Mason from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a friendly fire incident when their patrol was engaged by SWATF forces near the Cut-Line. He was 18.
- **1982** - Tragedy struck the South African Navy when the Frigate SAS President Kruger was involved in a collision with the fleet replenishment ship SAS Tafelberg during exercises in the South Atlantic Ocean. The force of the collision buckled the plates and crushed Mess 12 on the President Kruger where the Petty Officers sleeping quarters were located, killing or trapping those inside. After the order to abandon ship was given, the following 16 ratings were Reported Missing and remain unaccounted for: Chief Petty Officer Johannes Petrus Booysen. Chief Petty Officer Hartmut Wilfried Smit. Chief Pet-

ty Officer Willem Marthinus Gerhardus Van Tonder. Chief Petty Officer Donald Webb. Petty Officer Stephanus Petrus Bothma. Petty Officer Graham Alexander Frank Brind. Petty Officer Robin Centlivre Bulterman. Petty Officer Granville Williams De Villiers. Petty Officer Evert Koen. Petty Officer Hjalmar Lotter. Petty Officer Roy Anthony McMaster. Petty Officer Roy Frederick Skeates. Petty Officer William Russel Smith. Petty Officer Michael Richard Bruce Whiteley. Petty Officer Coenraad Johannes Wium. Able Seaman Gilbert Timothy Benjamin.

- **1982** - Private Daniel Johannes Jakobus Rossouw from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed in a military vehicle accident at Asab. He was 19.
- **1983** - Constable Anton Delpoort from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was mortally wounded during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1983** - Sergeant Paul Petrus van Zyl from Western Air Command, Windhoek, was killed in a private motor vehicle accident at Olifantshoek while travelling back to Pretoria to take up his new posting at Air Force Headquarters. He was 23.
- **1983** - Sergeant Tema Kanheto from 201 Battalion

SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents at Elundu in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.

- **1984** - Rifleman Kim Inglis from Hotel Company, Infantry School was accidentally killed after being struck in the heart by a small piece of mortar bomb shrapnel during a live ammunition fire and movement attack training exercise at Omutiya. He was 19.
- **1985** - Corporal Leon van Buisbergen from 6 SAI was accidentally killed in Southern Angola by friendly fire from another South African Infantry Unit. He was 20.
- **1987** - Rifleman C.V. Kavita from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.

### 19 February

- **1937** - Italian troops commence with raids into Addis Abeba, capital of Ethiopia.
- **1942** - Japanese Vice-Adm Nagumo's aircraft raid Darwin, NW Australia, inflicting heavy casualties.
- **1945** - US Marines land on Iwo Jima.
- **1963** - The minister of defence announces the re-establishment, as of 1 April 1963, of the 'Cape Corps' of Coloured to be employed in non-combatant roles.
- **1976** - The MPLA government in Angola is recognised

by most countries of the world. Foreign intervention is condemned, and the withdrawal of Cuban and South African troops demanded.

- **1978** - Two members from the South African Air Force and one civilian passenger were Killed in Action while returning from Katima Mulilo to Air Force Base M'pacha after attending a Sunday Church Service. The casualties were: Commandant Liam Myles Poole (44). Major Andries Petrus Els (54). Mr David Jacobus De Lange (47).
- **1978** - Rifleman Raymond O'Brien Hunter from 2 SAI was Killed in Action at Elundu. He was 20.
- **1978** - Rifleman Johan Lemmer Caparus Ferreira from 2 SAI was captured along with Sapper Johan Van der Mescht just before sunrise on 19 February 1978 during a surprise attack by a group of approximately 47 SWAPO/PLAN insurgents on their TB at Elundu. Unlike Van der Mescht, Ferreira refused to go along with his captors and was subsequently murdered. He was 20.
- **1979** - Sapper Rudolf Francois van Heerden from 52 Battalion was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion at Mahanene in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1980** - The South African Defence Force has taken over from the police the security of Northern Natal since the area is becoming a

third front in Security Force action against guerrilla infiltration.

- **1981** - Rifleman Shaun Reginald Jessop from 1 SAI was killed when his Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicle overturned during military exercises at Kimberley. He was 21.
- **1985** - Rifleman Jan Petrus van Niekerk from Infantry School died from an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head while in Sunnyside, Pretoria. He was 22.
- **1987** - Rifleman Nicholas Andrew Stubbs from the Equestrian Centre was killed in a military vehicle accident at the Reitz Show Grounds. He was 19.
- **1987** - Detective Sergeant Pieter Johannes Collen from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 29.
- **1988** - Rifleman Lambert Hendrik Fick from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor cycle accident while on his way to Potchefstroom. He was 22.

### 20 February

- **1902** - Colonel C.W. Park, commanding three columns and accompanied by about 300 National Scouts and a commando of armed Blacks, surprise General Chris H. Muller in the Bothasberg,

about 60 km north-east of Middelburg and captures 153 burghers of Colonel Trichardt's commando while two burghers are killed.

- **1942** - Combined Japanese amphibious and airborne attack on Timor.
- **1943** - German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel broke through American lines at Kasserine Pass in North Africa as inexperienced U.S. Troops lost their first major battle of World War II in Europe, with 1,000 Americans killed.
- **1944** - Allied bombers begin five days of intensive air attacks on German aircraft production facilities and air bases, while their fighter escorts devastate defending Luftwaffe squadrons.
- 1966 - American Fleet Admiral Chester W Nimitz, at 80.
- **1977** - Rifleman H.M. Dos Santos from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 31.
- **1981** - Rifleman Sarel Philippus Piek from 2 Field Engineer Regiment died in the Sick Bay at M'pacha after contracting cerebral meningitis. He was 21.
- **1983** - Special Constable Johannes Joseph 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 North-

ern Owamboland. He was 23.

- **1986** - Rifleman I Tjisemo from 102 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1988** - Major Edward Richard Every from 1 Squadron was Reported Missing during an Operational sortie over Southern Angola after his Mirage F1AZ 245 was shot down by a Soviet SA-13 Gopher Surface-to-Air Missile at Cuatir near Menongue. He was 31.

### 21 February

- **1916** - Battle of Verdun in France begins with a massive German artillery bombardment. It is the longest and bloodiest battle of World War 1, with more than one million killed.
- **1917** - The troopship SS Mendi collides with the Darro near the Isle of Wright. It sinks with a contingent of Black SA troops, on their way to France to fight on the British side. "Be quiet and calm, my countrymen. What is happening now is what you came to do ... you are going to die, but that is what you came to do. Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers ... Swazis, Pondos, Basotho ... so let us die like brothers. We are the sons of Africa. Raise your war-cries, brothers, for though they made us leave

our assegais in the kraal, our voices are left with our bodies" reputed to be the last words of Rev Wauchope Dyobha on the sinking ship SS Mendi.

- **1918** - Australians capture Jericho from the Turks.
- 1919 - Mary Edwards Walker, feminist and physician, Civil War Army contract surgeon, the only woman ever awarded a Medal of Honor, dies at the age of 86.
- **1944** - Prime Minister Tojo takes over direct control of the Japanese Army as Chief of Staff.
- **1978** - Lieutenant Phillip Joseph Castle from Regiment Windhoek, SWATF was Killed in Action in Northern Owamboland during a close-quarter battle with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents at Olusjandja Dam after his Patrol was ambushed just before sunrise. He was 20.
- **1979** - Rifleman Francis William John Snyman from 7 SAI was Killed in Action when the Bedford he was driving, detonated a land mine outside Oshakati. He was 19.
- **1980** - South Africa warns Mozambique it will not hesitate to strike back if Mozambique continues to shelter guerrillas conducting murderous operations and acts of sabotage against South Africa.
- **1981** - Commandant Pieter Gouws from 1 SWA Squadron SWATF was Reported Missing when his Civilian

aircraft, a Cherokee 6 PA32-300, Registration ZS-EXG, disappeared without trace while flying an aerial reconnaissance sortie up the South West African Coastline. He was 49.

- **1983** - Corporal Kallie Vermeulen from the Northern Logistical Command was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 21.
- **1984** - Rifleman Rinho Jepau from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 27.
- **1985** - Special Constable Johannes Tobias 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 25.
- 1988 - Two members from 5 Signals Regiment and one member from Infantry School were Killed in Action in Southern Angola during Operation Hooper when their position was attacked by Angolan Air Force MiG Fighter Bombers. The casualties were: Sergeant Gerhardus Marthinus Maritz (25). Corporal Van Zyl Venter (20). Signaler Jacques de Lange (19).

### 22 February

- **1915** - Germany begins "restricted" submarine warfare.
- **1940** - A Stuka of Kamp-

ffgeschwader 30 sinks two destroyers in a single attack in the North Sea off Bor-kum. Unfortunately for him the two ships, the 'Lebrecht Maas' and 'Max Schultz', are both German.

- **1967** - The Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, discloses that South Africa's northern borders are protected by a radar complex constituting an early warning system and that her coasts will be covered by the Decca navigational system costing R6m.
- **1975** - The Military government of Ethiopia announces that 2,300 guerrillas have been killed in fighting in Eritrea.
- **1977** - Lieutenant Neil Bradley Liddell from 17 Squadron was Killed in Action when his Alouette III, Serial No. 76 was shot down by concentrated small arms fire during anti-insurgent operations in Southern Zambia. He was 28.
- **1978** - Rifleman Andre Bosch from 2 SAI Died of Wounds in 1 Military Hospital after being shot while standing guard at Elundu when their position was overrun by SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 18.
- **1980** - Sapper Phillipus Jurie Wynand Swane-

poel from 25 Field Squadron, South African Engineer Corps was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.

- **1984** - Special Constable Patisiu Tobias 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 24.
- **1985** - Private Philip Nat Gould from 61 Base Workshops was critically injured when he accidentally fell off a moving vehicle. He was admitted to 1 Military Hospital where he later succumbed to his injuries. He was 18.
- **1988** - Sapper Steven Eric Lelong from 1 Parachute Battalion Combat Engineering Unit was accidentally shot dead when his team of Combat Engineers were mistakenly ambushed by a 102 Battalion SWATF Reac-

tion Force Unit in Southern Angola. He was 19.

- **1988** - Corporal Petrus Jacobus Louw from 102 Battalion SWATF accidentally drowned in the Officers/NCO's swimming pool at the Headquarters. He was 19.
- **1991** - Major Richard John Miller from 85 Combat Flying School was killed when his Atlas MB326KM Impala Mk II, Serial No. 1008 crashed while carrying out an aerobatics display at Air Force Base Pietersburg. He was 33.

### 23 February

- **1917** - Caporale Benito Mussolini, 11th Bersaglieri, is seriously wounded in a mortar accident.
- **1942** - During World War II, the first attack on the U.S. mainland occurred as a Japanese submarine shelled an oil refinery near Santa Barbara, California, causing minor damage.
- **1945** - Iwo Jima: the 28th Marines raise the flag on Mount Suribachi.
- **1978** - Captain Andries Johannes van Ellewee from 41 Battalion was critically wounded at Narubis near Keetmanshoop during a live fire exercise. He was 26.
- **1980** - Staff Sergeant Am-

Iwo Jima

erindo Maurao Da Costa PMM from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action when he detonated a booby trap after his team had walked into an enemy ambush. He was 35.

- **1981** - The Prime Minister declares that Soviet threats will not prevent South Africa from attacking ANC bases in Mozambique.
- **1983** - Private Ronald Richard Erasmus from 5 Maintenance Unit died in hospital from natural causes. He was 19.
- **1983** - Rifleman Simon Hamutenya from 101 Battalion SWATF Killed in Action during a contact with insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 23.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal William Francis Moag from 7 SAI died from gunshot wounds accidentally sustained in the Operational Area. He was 20.
- **1984** - Special Warrant Officer Lukus Likuis from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 31.
- **1986** - Special Sergeant Abel Matiasta from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 36.

• **1987** - Three members from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike Team SWATF were Killed in Action close to Vinticet in Southern Angola after their Casspir was hit by Soviet RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rockets when they drove into a SWAPO/PLAN Battalion ambush. They were: Corporal Hector Lucas Strydom (24). Rifleman Tom Job (23). Rifleman Esau Simon (24).

- **1987** - Two members from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in Action and one wounded during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Special Sergeant Mwainbange Mwanengange (23). Special Sergeant Johannes Naffral (35). Sergeant Christiaan Petrus Momberg. (Wounded and evacuated but died in 1 Military Hospital on 25 February 1987).
- **1989** - Rifleman Mhluteki Absalon Makatini from 111 Battalion died from gunshot wounds sustained in a shooting incident in Swaziland. He was 20.
- **1991** - In Desert Storm, the Allied ground offensive began after a devastating month-long air campaign targeting Iraqi troops in both Iraq and Kuwait.

### 24 February

- **1966** - A military coup in Ghana deposes President

Kwame Nkrumah while he is out of the country on his way to China.

- **1984** - Special Warrant Officer Herman Hosea 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.
- **1987** - Airman Nicolaas Wilhelmus Jacobus van Rheede van Oudtshoorn from Air Force Base Grootfontein died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while serving at the Base. He was 19.

### 25 February

- **1885** - Germany annexes Tanganyika and Zanzibar.
- **1902** - At least fifty-three British soldiers die, 130 are wounded and 500 captured in a surprise attack by Boer troops at Ysterspruit in the Klerksdorp vicinity.
- **1916** - Verdun: The Germans capture Fort Douaumont.
- **1954** - Military coup ousts Pres Adib el-Shishakli of Syria.
- **1981** - Hansard reports that on this date 289 servicemen of the SADF are in detention, of which 137 are being punished for reasons of conscientious objection.
- **1981** - Private Cornelius Tobias van Schalkwyk from the Dog Training Centre died in hospital at Oshakati after contracting Malaria in

Southern Angola while attached to an Infantry Unit as a dog handler. He was 19.

- **1986** - Captain Brian Du Preez from 116 Battalion was killed in a military motorcycle accident at Messina. He was 27.
- **1987** - Sergeant Christiaan Petrus Momberg from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was wounded in the head during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland on 23 February 1987. He was evacuated to Eenhana where he later lapsed into a coma prior to being evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria. He remained on life support until declared brain dead on 25 February 1987. He was 23.
- **1988** - Bombardier Clinton Hendricks from 10 Anti-Aircraft Regiment, was Killed in Action in Southern Angola near Cuito during Operation Hooper while operating with a 61 Mechanised Battalion Group SAM-7 Anti-Aircraft team. He was 19.
- **1988** - Lance Corporal Leon Francis van Wyk from Regiment Molopo was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola when his Olifant Tank was knocked out by a Soviet 130mm field gun. He was 30.
- **1993** - US marines and Nigerian soldiers blast at snipers in central Mogadishu,

Somalia, in a five-hour battle that kills one Somali.

- **2005** - Militiamen kill nine United Nations Bangladeshi peacekeepers in Ituri, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, in the worst attack against the UN force in the country. Ituri is one of the DRC's worst trouble spots, where ethnic militias have killed 50 000 civilians since 1999.

### 26 February

- 1852 - An English troop carrier, the Birkenhead with Robert Salmond as captain, carrying reinforcements for the 8th Frontier War, runs aground at Danger Point. Of the 638 passengers, only 184 could be rescued, as there were insufficient lifeboats. The women and children were sent ashore first, while the men remained standing on deck until they perished under the waves.
- **1916** - German U-Boat sinks the French liner 'Provence', 930 die.
- **1935** - Germany announces the existence of the Luftwaffe under Herman Göring.
- **1942** - German battleship 'Gneisenau' disabled by a British bomb.
- **1952** - Winston Churchill announces that Britain has produced its own atomic bomb.
- **1974** - Ethiopian army units seize Asmara, second largest city in Ethiopia, and demand better pay and living conditions.

- **1976** - Corporal Jan Andries Swanepoel from 8 Signal Regiment was Killed when the Unimog vehicle he was a passenger overturned at Chitado, Southern Angola. He was 25.
- **1980** - Rifleman Jakobus Andries Petrus Bosman from Witwatersrand Rifles was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.
- **1982** - Lieutenant Commander Robert Desmond Kohne from SAS Drakensberg was killed when he accidentally fell into lift shaft on the SAS Drakensberg during construction and maintenance work on the Ship at the Shipyards in Durban.. He was 29.
- **1984** - Scout Adrian Bruce Berend from the Intelligence School in Kimberley was killed in a civilian motor vehicle accident while on weekend pass. He was 19.
- **1990** - Defence Minister General Magnus Malan says all activities of the clandestine Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) have been suspended pending the outcome of a judicial investigation.
- **1990** - Moscow begins pulling 73,000 troops out of Czechoslovakia.
- **1999** - Ethiopian troops breach Eritrean lines in a disputed border area, and Eritrea soon says it will accept an African peace plan for the ten-month war.

### 27 February

- **1881** - Boers defeat the British force at Majuba Hill, in the Anglo-Transvaal War. More than 200 British soldiers and two Boers are killed.
- **1900** - British troops under Gen. Redvers Buller break through the Boer lines during the Battle of Pietershoogte.
- **1900** - The Boer general Piet Cronje surrenders with 3 919 men (nearly 10% of the total republican fighting strength) to the British at Paardeberg on the 10th day of the battle.
- **1902** - On the same day both the oldest and the youngest prisoners of war to be deported, are captured at Dwaalspruit. They are Gideon J. van Zyl of Vrede seventy-eight years old, and Johannes van Heerden of Heidelberg, only seven years old.
- **1973** - Candidate Officer Cornelis Ferreira Oosthuysen from 1 SSB was killed in a military vehicle accident in Bloemfontein. He was 19.
- **1974** - Ethiopia's cabinet resigns as military mutiny spreads from the captured city of Asmara.
- **1980** - Rifleman Leon Grobler from 2 Parachute Battalion died from wounds sustained on 20 February. He was 19.
- **1982** - Rifleman Peter Williams Hayfeni Naikaku from 32 Battalion was killed in action. He was 29.

- **1984** - Lance Corporal George Diederick Vorster from North West Command Provost Unit was killed on the Klerksdorp-Potchefstroom Road while carrying out convoy escort duty. He was 19
- **1986** - Special Constable Thomas Amunyongi from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1987** - Sapper Norman Cecil van der Leeuw from 5 Military Works Unit, M'pacha, was accidentally killed after falling off the back of a moving truck at Katima. He was 20.
- **1988** - Rifleman Antonio Luis Cambinda from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Rundu. He was 22.
- **1988** - Special Warrant Officer Felix Creneus from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 29.
- **1991** - In Desert Storm, the 100-hour ground war ended as Allied troops entered Kuwait just four days after launching their offensive against Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces.

### 28 February

- **1844** - During a demonstration of naval fire power, one of the guns aboard the USS Princeton exploded, killing several top U.S. government officials on the steamer ship, and narrowly missed killing President John Tyler.
- **1900** - The British relieves Ladysmith after a siege of four months when reinforcements under Buller arrive.
- **1944** - Marshal of the Soviet Union Nikolai Fyodorovich Vatutin, is mortally wounded in an ambush by Ukrainian partisans and dies 15 April.
- **1977** - Private Craig Murray Irvine from 32 Field Workshop Squadron was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Bagani-Rundu Road. He was 22.
- **1979** - Sergeant Bernhard Fritz Wilhelm Kirchner from 41 Battalion was Killed in Action during a Contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 21.
- **1988** - South African commandos raid Gaborone, Botswana, in search of ANC members.
- 1994 - NATO conducted its first combat action in its 45 year history as four Bosnian Serb jets were shot down by American fighters in a no-fly zone.



# Beret and Cap Badges

1. South African Corps of Signals
2. South African Intelligence Corps
3. South African Infantry Corps
4. South African Engineer Corps
5. South African Technical Services Corps
6. South African Medical Services
7. South African Armoured Corps
8. South African Corps of Military Police
9. South African Parachute Battalion
10. South African Personnel Services Corps
11. South Africa Ordnance Corps
12. South African Catering Corps
13. South African Financial Services Corps
14. South African Artillery Corps
15. South African Reconnaissance Regiment



## 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.

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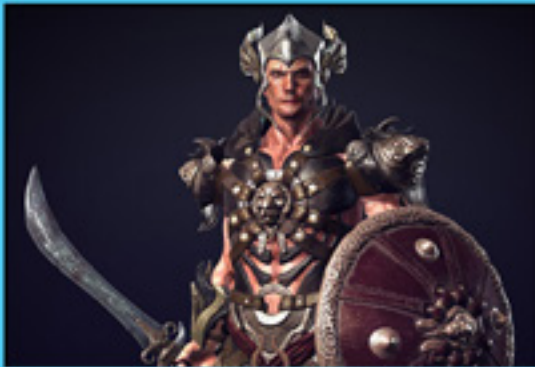
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