



Military Despatches

Vol 69 March 2023

Battlefield Domination

Ten weapons of the SADF during the Border War

Jimmy Dervish

Britain's first black African soldier

Kurt Student

German WWII paratrooper general

Fighter Ace

The fighter aces of World War I



For the military enthusiast



**Military Despatches
YouTube Channel**



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Military Despatches



Paratrooper Wings Quiz

Paratrooper Wings Quiz

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

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

Military Despatches




Military Firearms Quiz

Military Firearms Quiz

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

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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.

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Elite Military Units Quiz

Elite Military Units Quiz

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

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

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Who said that?

Famous military quotes quiz

Who said that?

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

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



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Please remember to subscribe to our channel.

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



Editor's Sitrep

So February is done and dusted and it's already March. Well at least I've got St. Patrick's Day to look forward to on 17 March.

Not long ago I was feeling fairly smug because about three years ago I invested in a pretty powerful inverter. So whenever Eskom decided to do their load shedding thing, I could still carry on as normal.

These days I'm not feeling quite as smug. Currently we are on Stage 6 load shedding. This means that at least once a day, sometimes twice, the power is off for just over four hours. And another period of load shedding will then take place four hours later.

This means that the batteries in the inverter do not have enough time to recharge fully. Obviously this is not good for the batteries. After about two years you find that you need to buy new batteries. And trust me, they do not come cheap.

The best of all is that Eskom and the powers that be do not seem to have any solution to the problem.

They talk up a storm, appoint a new minister of electricity, and

declare a state of disaster. All well and good, but can someone please tell me when, if ever, this load shedding crap is going to end?

And if that's not enough, every time you go to do a bit of grocery shopping, the prices seem to have gone up again.

I realise that businesses are losing money because of load shedding, but do they have to make me pay for it?

I've always been someone that tries to stay positive and look on the bright side of things. I must, however, confess that it's becoming more difficult.

I've always tried to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Although these days the light at the end of the tunnel is usually an oncoming train.

Oh well, all I can do is start training for St. Patrick's Day. I trust that you will have a good month and, for 17 March at least, you can all be Irish and join me in having a whisky.

Until next time, stay safe and stay healthy.

Matt

Hipe! media

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Front Cover

A G6 cannon. This locally designed and produced weapon is still regarded as one of the best self-propelled artillery produced.

It first saw action during Operation Hooper in Angola.



Top Ten weapons of the SADF

Formed in 1957, the South African Defence Force (SADF) comprised the armed forces of South Africa. They were regarded by many as one of the best forces on the African continent.

The South African Defence Force (SADF) (Afrikaans: *Suid-Afrikaanse Weermag*) comprised the armed forces of South Africa from 1957 until 1994.

Shortly before the state reconstituted itself as a republic in 1961, the former Union Defence Force was officially succeeded by the SADF, which was established by the Defence Act (No. 44) of 1957.

The SADF, in turn, was superseded by the South African National Defence Force in 1994.

Initially the SADF was made up of three branches: South African Army, South African Navy, and South African Air Force.

In July 1979 the South African Medical Services (SAMS) was established as the fourth branch of the SADF. The establishment combined the medical services of the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

Between 26 August 1966 and 15 January 1990, the SADF was involved in what became known as the Border War.

In October 1975 the SADF launched a military incursion into Angola. This was given the codename Operation Savannah.

After the Portuguese had given Angola independence, a civil war broke out between three

factions, all trying to seize power.

There was the Marxist MPLA led by Agostinho Neto, the FNLA under Holden Roberto, and UNITA led by Jonas Savimbi.

The MPLA were supplied with weapons by the Soviet Union, who also sent around 1,000 military advisors to Angola. East Germany also provided around 3,000 military advisors.

Cuba would send between 4,000 and 6,000 troops, supported by T-34 and T-55 tanks and 122 mm guns.

Operation Savannah lasted from 14 October 1975 to January 1976. The South African Defence Force acknowledged 28 dead and 100 wounded during Operation Savannah.

It was during this operation that the SADF realised that much of their weapons and equipment was outdated.

Previously countries such as France and Britain had provided arms to South Africa. On 7 August 1963 the Security Council adopted Resolution 181 calling upon all States to cease the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition, and military vehicles to South Africa. The arms embargo was made mandatory on 4 November 1977.

South Africa came to the conclusion that it would have to de-

velop and upgrade its own arms industry. At the forefront of this was Armscor.

The Armaments Corporation of South Africa (Armscor) was originally established in 1968 as a response to Resolution 191.

Armscor pursued both covert arms deals and black market purchases in an effort to acquire restricted defence technologies as rapidly as possible. The experience of the embargo encouraged South African efforts in diversifying suppliers while assuming indigenous production of some paraphernalia.

Availability of Western-style equipment and spares from Israel in particular helped compensate for the military effects of the UN embargo. Armscor officials used aggressive covert techniques to acquire technology, bartering through other public sector enterprises, front companies, foreign agents, and even civil organisations.

Generally Armscor proceeded by studying specimens of foreign equipment, sometimes through one of its third parties, then applying these skills to their improvement.

By the 1990s it could boast of being "a world leader" in the field of upgrading obsolete weapons. Thus, Armscor's Olifant Mk1As were rebuilt from elderly British Centurion tanks

purchased from India and Jordan.

Its Atlas Cheetah interceptors were based on Mirage III airframes and inspired by the IAI Kfir. A French armoured

personnel carrier, the Berliet VXB, inspired the six-wheeled Ratel IFV; Armscor also developed the Eland Mk7, a larger and more sophisticated variant of the Panhard AML armoured

car.

In this month's 'Top Ten' we look at ten weapons that played an important part in the Border War. They have been placed in alphabetical order.

10. Alouette III

The Aérospatiale Alouette III is a single-engine, light utility helicopter developed by French aircraft company Sud Aviation.

The Alouette III served for over 44 years in the South African Air Force (SAAF). It is believed that 121 examples were acquired between 1962 and 1975 for the service from France.

During 1966, by which point the SAAF had built up a fleet of around 50 Alouette IIIs already, it was decided to dispatch several of the type to support ground troops stationed in South West Africa attempting to contain the emerging South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO); this would be the beginnings of what would become the lengthy South African Border War.

The type saw considerable action during the conflict; while initially used for more passive operations such as aerial reconnaissance, from July 1967 onwards, Alouette III participated in active combat missions as well.

It was frequently employed as a support platform for performing South African counterstrike operations inside South West Africa and Angola. The Alouette was often fitted with either



a single 7,26 mm Browning machine gun or a GA 1 20mm Cannon.

The Alouette III was also used for casualty evacuation (Casevac), resulting in many lives being saved.

By 1990, there were a total of 70 Alouette III helicopters remaining in active service. Throughout the course of its service life with the SAAF, the Alouette III fleet was recorded as having accumulated more than 346,000 flight hours.

During June 2006, the last Alouette III was officially withdrawn from SAAF service at a ceremony held at AFB Swartkop, near Pretoria.

Reportedly, a total of eight Alouette IIIs had been listed as having been lost over the conflict zone by the end of the war.

General Characteristics

- Crew: 2
- Capacity: 5 passengers
- Length: 10.03 metres
- Height: 3 metres
- Empty weight: 1,143 kg

- Gross weight: 2,200 kg
- Powerplant: 1 × Turbomeca Artouste IIIB turboshaft, 649 kW (870 hp) derated to 425 kW (570 hp)
- Main rotor diameter: 11.02 metres
- Main rotor area: 95.38 m²

Performance

- Maximum speed: 210 km/h at sea level
- Cruise speed: 185 km/h
- Range: 540 km
- Service ceiling: 3,200 metres
- Rate of climb: 4.3 m/s

9. Buffel

The Buffel (Buffalo) was the first truly effective landmine-protected armoured personnel carrier to enter service anywhere. The South African Army began deploying it in the operational area from 1978.

The Buffel was not a wholly South African built vehicle, but made use of the chassis, engine and some other components of the Mercedes-Benz U416-162 Unimog, which were fitted with a domestically designed armoured driver's cab and separate armoured troop compartment.

The cab was situated on the left with the engine compartment on the right. Later models replaced the original Mercedes-Benz OM352 engine with copies built under license by Atlantis Diesel Engines.

Land mine protection was



provided by the V-shaped hull underneath these compartments, which quite effectively deflected the blast.

The troop compartment contained two plastic tanks in the vee beneath the floor: a 200-litre fuel tank and a 100-litre water tank. The water tank provided drinking water to the occupants by means of a tap at the rear of the vehicle.

Specifications

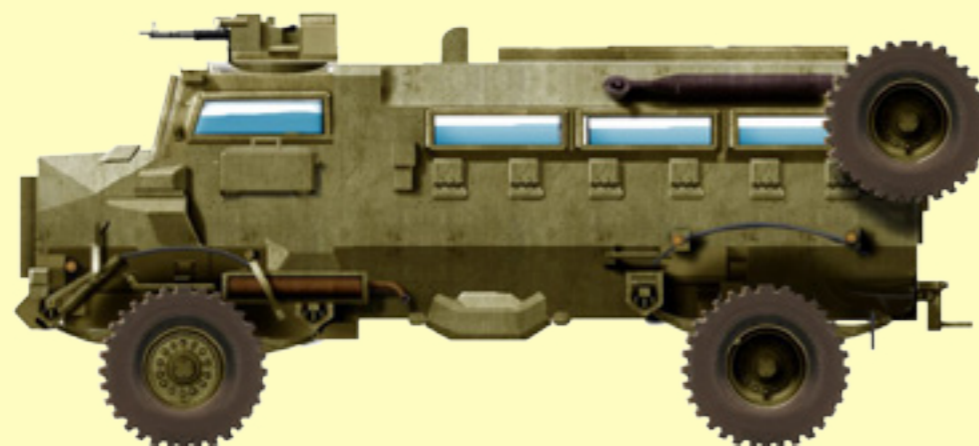
- Mass: 6.14 t
- Length: 5.1 metres
- Width: 2.05 metres
- Height: 2.95 metres
- Crew 1+10
- Suspension: 4×4 wheeled
- Operational range: 1,000 km
- Maximum speed: Road 96 km/h; Off-road 30 km/h

8. Casspir

The Casspir is a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle that has been in use in South Africa since the 1980s. It is a four-wheeled, four-wheel drive vehicle, used for transport of troops. It can hold a crew of two, plus 12 additional soldiers and associated equipment.

It was initially designed specifically for conditions encountered in the South African Border War and was at first extensively used by South African Police counterinsurgency unit (Koevoet) in northern Namibia.

It was later used by the South-West Africa Territorial Force's



101 Battalion and the SA Army's 5 Reconnaissance Regiment.

Specifications

- Mass: 10.88 t
- Length: 6.9 metres
- Width : 2.45 metres
- Height: 2.85 metres
- Crew: 2+12
- Main armament: various: 3 × 7.62 mm MG or 20 mm cannon
- Engine: Atlantis Diesel Engines OM352A turbo-charged diesel 124 kW
- Suspension: 4×4-wheeled
- Operational range: 770 km

7. G5 howitzer

The G5 is a South African towed howitzer of 155 mm calibre developed in South Africa by Denel Land Systems.

The G5 design was based on the Canadian GC-45 155mm gun which was highly modified to suit southern African conditions.

The G5 howitzer saw action in Angola and Namibia in the South African Border War between 1986 and 1989, where it was in service with the South African Defence Force. The G5 was used operationally for the first time during Operation Alpha Centauri in 1986.

During the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale (Operations Modular, Hooper, and Packer) between August 1987 and March 1988, the G5's were used with devastating effect against FAP-

LA, the Angolan Army.

At the time the G5 was regarded as the best howitzer in the world, and is still highly rated.



Specifications

- Mass: 13,750 kg
- Length: 9.5 metres
- Barrel length: 6.975 metres
- Width: 3.3 metres
- Height: 2.1 metres
- Crew: 8 soldiers
- Shell: high explosive
- Breech: Semi-automatic interrupted screw
- Carriage: Split trail
- Elevation: -3° to +75°
- Traverse: Up to 15°: 82°; Above 15°: 65°
- Rate of fire: 3 rounds/minute
- Muzzle velocity: 897 m/s
- Maximum firing range: Standard: 30 km; Base bleed 40 km; VLAP 50 km
- Feed system: Breech-loaded

6. G6 howitzer

The G6, sometimes denoted as the G6 Rhino, is a South African mine-protected self-propelled howitzer. It was developed as a turreted, self-propelled variant of the G5 howitzer series, mating the gun to a six-wheeled armoured chassis.

In October 1987, the South African government ordered all the G6s deployed to Angola for combat trials as part of Operation Hooper.

One suffered an engine failure, so only three actually reached Angola, where they operated as an independent battery, the three G6s were instrumental in the bombardment of the strategic Angolan airfield at



Cuito Cuanavale.

Specifications

- Mass: 46 tonnes
- Length: 9.20 metres
- Width: 3.40 metres
- Height: 3.20 metres
- Crew: 6
- Main armament: 155mm G5 howitzer (47 rounds)
- Secondary armament: 12.7mm M2 Browning machine gun (900 rounds)
- Engine: Magirus Deutz Model FL 413 F/FR air-cooled diesel 525 hp (391 kW)
- Operational range: 700 km
- Maximum speed: 90 km/h

5. Olifant Mk1A MBT

The Olifant (Elephant) Mk1 was a South African development of the British Centurion tank. In 1981 the development of the Olifant Mk1A had begun.

The new Olifant Mk1A upgrade of the Olifant Mk1 was ready for service from 1985 onward and featured a stabilized and upgraded locally produced 105mm GT3B canon (L7), which gave a bigger and more accurate punch than the Centurion Mk.5A's 84mm.

The fire control system was improved and passive night vision sight on a night elbow was installed as well as a laser range-finder. Other external differences saw the addition of storage racks at the rear of the turret for camouflage netting etc.

During the Battle of Cuito



Cuanavale the SADF had been using the Ratel 90 against the FAPLA T-54/55 tanks. In late 1987 two squadrons of Olifant tanks (Mk1 & Mk1A) were sent to Angola to strengthen the Ratel 90s there and to face off against 150 Soviet-supplied T-54/55s.

Specifications

- Weight: 56 Tons
- Length: 7.56 metres
- Width: 3.39 metres
- Height: 2.04 metres
- Crew: 4

- Main Armament: 105mm GT3 semi-automatic quick-firing gun (L7)
- Secondary Armament: 1 × 7.62mm co-axial Browning MG; 1 x 7.62mm turret Browning MG
- Engine: Continental 29 litre turbo-charged air-cooled V12 diesel engine 750hp
- Suspension: Six Horstmann suspension units (three per side)
- Top speed: Road - 45 km/h; Off-road - 30 km/h
- Maximum range: 350 km

4. SA 330 Puma

The Aérospatiale SA 330 Puma is a four-bladed, twin-engined medium transport/utility helicopter that was designed and originally produced by the French aerospace manufacturer Sud Aviation.

The Puma was regarded as the workhorse of the South African Air Force.

From 1972 onwards, Pumas operated by the SAAF were deployed on extended operations in South West Africa and Angola during the Border War.

The Puma was involved in normal trooping; rapid deployment during "follow up" operations; acting as radio relays; evacuation of casualties; rescuing downed aircrew; insertion



of Special Forces; and large scale cross border operations such as Savannah, Uric, Protea, Super, and Modular.

General characteristics

- Crew: 3
- Capacity: 16 passengers
- Length: 18.15 metres
- Rotor diameter: 15.00 metres
- Height: 5.14 metres
- Disc area: 177.0 m²
- Empty weight: 3,536 kg

- Max takeoff weight: 7,000 kg
- Powerplant: 2× Turbomeca Turmo IVC turboshafts, 1,175 kW (1,575 hp) each

Performance

- Maximum speed: 257 km/h
- Cruise speed: 248 km/h
- Range: 580 km
- Service ceiling: 4,800 metres
- Rate of climb: 7.1 m/s

3. R series rifles

When South Africa was looking for a modern automatic service rifle, they chose the Belgian FN FAL battle rifle. The FAL was produced under licence in South Africa by Lyttleton Engineering Works, where it was known as the R1.

It was formally adopted into service in 1960 and would continue to remain in service until it was replaced by the R4 in the early 1980s.

The R4 is a 5.56×45mm assault rifle designed in 1979 based on the IMI Galil rifle. It entered service as the standard service rifle of the SADF in 1980. The R4 replaced the R1.

It was produced by Lyttleton Engineering Works (LIW, "Lyttleton Ingenieurswerke"), now Denel Land Systems.

The R4 is a licensed variant of the Israeli IMI Galil assault rifle with several modifications; both the stock and magazine are now made of a high-strength polymer and the stock was lengthened, adapting the weapon for the average South African soldier.

Other detailed differences



R1 rifle



R4 rifle

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

R1 Specifications

- Mass: 4.45 kg
- Length: 1,100 mm
- Barrel length: 533 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51mm NATO
- Action: Gas-operated, tilting breechblock
- Muzzle velocity: 823 m/s
- Effective firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 20-round detachable magazine
- Sights: Iron sights

R4 Specifications

- Mass : 4.3 kg
- Length : 1,005 mm stock extended ; 740 mm stock folded
- Barrel length: 460 mm
- Cartridge: 5.56×45 mm NATO
- Action: Gas-operated, closed bolt
- Rate of fire: 600–750 rounds/min
- Muzzle velocity : 980 m/s
- Effective firing range: 300–500 metres sight adjustments
- Feed system: 35 round detachable Galil magazine
- Sights: Flip rear aperture and hooded forward post are standard but various optical sights can be mounted

2. Ratel

The Ratel is a South African infantry fighting vehicle. It was the first wheeled infantry fighting vehicle to enter service worldwide.

It was generally regarded as an influential concept which incorporated a number of novel features, such as a mine-protected hull, an extended operat-



Ratel 20

TOP TEN

ing range of 1,000 kilometres, and a 20mm auto-cannon fitted with what was then a unique twin-linked ammunition feed, allowing turret gunners to rapidly swap between ammunition types during combat.

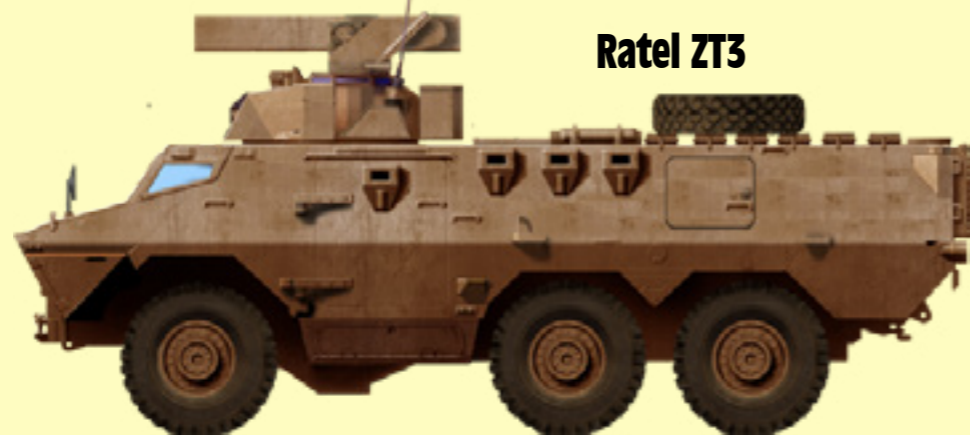
A number of variants of the Ratel were built, including the Ratel 20, Ratel 60, Ratel 90, Ratel ZT3, Ratel Command.

Specifications Ratel 20

- Weight: 18.5 tonnes
- Length 7.21 metres
- Width: 2.5 metres
- Height 2.39 metres
- Crew 3 (commander, gunner, driver) + maximum 9 passengers
- Main armament: 20mm auto-cannon
- Secondary armament: 7.62 mm Browning M1919 co-



Ratel 90



Ratel ZT3

- axial machine gun; 7.62mm Browning M1919 machine gun on rear ring mount
- Engine: Büssing D 3256 BTXF six-cylinder turbo-charged diesel 205 kW (275 hp)
- Fuel capacity: 530 litres
- Operational range: 1,000 km
- Maximum speed: 105 km/h

1. Valkiri MRL

The Valkiri is a South African self-propelled multiple rocket launcher. It is a 127mm system with a wheeled launcher vehicle, and fire control equipment developed by Armscor.

The Valkiri-22 Mk 1, the original version, had 24 launch tubes mounted on a Unimog light 4x4 truck.

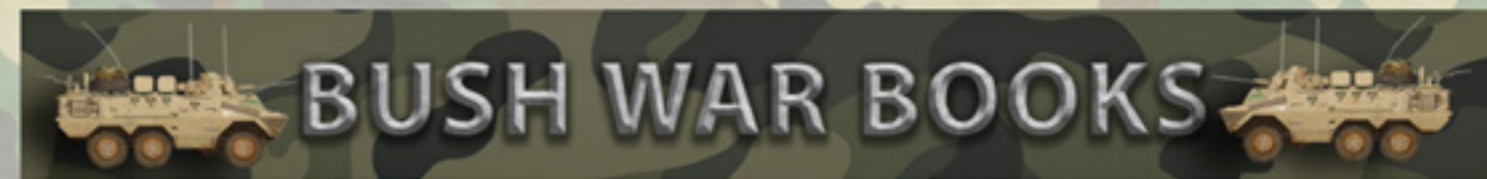
They were used to great effect at the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

Specifications

- Mass: 6,400 kg
- Length: 5.35 metres
- Width: 2.3 metres
- Height: 2.32 metres
- Crew: 2
- Calibre: 127 mm



- Barrels: 24
- Effective firing range: 36 km
- Operational range: 400 km
- Maximum speed: 90 km/h (road)



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

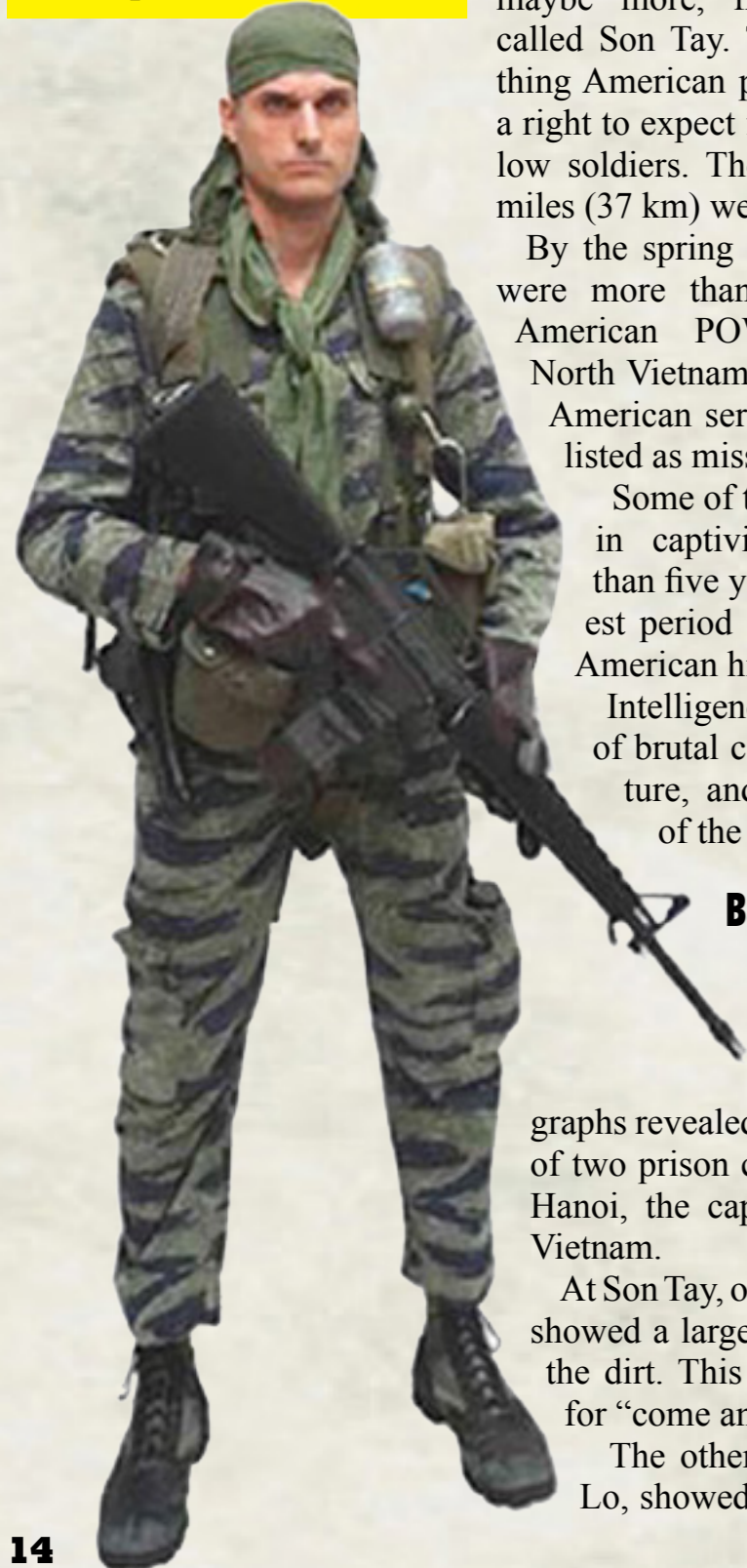
Click [here](#) to visit their website.

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

Operation Ivory Coast

On 21 November 1970, US Special Forces attacked Son Tay, a camp only 37 kilometres from Hanoi, that was believed to house American prisoners of war.

- **Date:** 21 November 1970
- **Location:** Son Tay, Vietnam
- **Units involved:** 6th and 7th Special Forces Groups; US Army Air Corps; US Air Force



The briefing given by US Special Forces Colonel Arthur “Bull” Simons was simple, but straight to the point.

“We are going to rescue 70 American prisoners of war, maybe more, from a camp called Son Tay. This is something American prisoners have a right to expect from their fellow soldiers. The target is 23 miles (37 km) west of Hanoi.”

By the spring of 1970 there were more than 450 known American POWs held in North Vietnam. Another 970 American servicemen were listed as missing in action.

Some of them had been in captivity for more than five years, the longest period in any war in American history.

Intelligence reports told of brutal conditions, torture, and even deaths of the POWs.

Background

In May 1970 aerial reconnaissance photographs revealed the existence of two prison camps west of Hanoi, the capital of North Vietnam.

At Son Tay, one photograph showed a large ‘K’ drawn in the dirt. This was the code for “come and get us”.

The other camp, at Ap Lo, showed a photograph

of the letters SAR (Search and Rescue) spelled out by the prisoner’s laundry. An arrow with the number ‘8’ indicated the distance the men had to travel to the fields they worked in.

Air Force Brigadier General LeRoy J. Manor and Army Colonel Arthur D. “Bull” Simons began to plan an operation to rescue the prisoners from Son Tay.

Reconnaissance photos taken by SR-71 “Blackbirds” revealed that Son Tay “was active”. SR-71 reconnaissance aircraft took most of the Son Tay target photos from above 24,000 metres while streaking over North Vietnam at more than three times the speed of sound.

Planning and training

There were numerous obstacles that had to be considered. The camp itself was in the open and surrounded by rice paddies. In close proximity was the 12th North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment totalling approximately 12,000 troops.

Also nearby was an artillery school, a supply depot, and an air defence installation.

500 metres south was another compound called the “secondary school”, which was an administration centre housing 45 guards. To make matters more difficult, Phuc Yen Air Base was only 32 kilometres north-east of Son Tay.

The raiders would have to get in and out very quickly, before



6th Special Forces Group

anyone could react to the situation.

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, the new JCS Chairman, designated Manor as commander and Simons as deputy commander of the mission task force. Ivory Coast was the organization, planning, training, and deployment phase of the operation. Manor set up an Air Force training facility at Eglin’s Duke Field and brought together a 27-member planning staff that included 11 from the prior feasibility study.

Simons recruited 103 personnel from interviews of 500 volunteers, most Special Forces personnel of the 6th and 7th Special Forces Groups at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

USAF planners selected key Air Force commanders, who then picked personnel for their crews. Helicopter and A-1 Skyraider crews were put together from instructors at Eglin and personnel returned from Southeast Asia.

Two crews for C-130E(I) Combat Talons were assembled from squadrons in Germany and North Carolina.

All were then asked to volunteer for a temporary duty

assignment without additional pay and without being told the nature of the mission.

103 Army and 116 Air Force personnel were selected for the project, including ground force members, aircrewmembers, support members, and planners.

The 219 man task force planned, trained, and operated under the title of the “Joint Contingency Task Group” (JCTG).

The planning staff set up parameters for a night time raid, the key points of which were clear weather and a quarter moon at 35 degrees above the horizon for optimum visibility during low-level flight.

From these parameters, two mission “windows” were identified, 18–25 October and 18–25 November.

Training proceeded on Range C-2 at Eglin using an exact but crudely made replica of the prison compound for rehearsals and a \$60,000 1.5 x 15 metre scale table model (codenamed “Barbara”) for familiarization.

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Air Force crews flew 1,054 hours in southern Alabama, Georgia, and Florida conducting “dissimilar (aircraft) formation” training with both UH-1H and HH-3E helicopters at night

and at low-level (a flight profile for which procedures had to be innovated by the two selected crews), and gaining expertise in navigation training using forward looking infrared (FLIR), which, until Ivory Coast, had not been part of the Combat Talon’s electronics suite.

A vee formation in which the slower helicopters drafted in echelon slightly above and behind each wing of the Combat Talon escort aircraft was chosen and refined for the mission to give the helicopters the speed necessary to keep pace with the Talons flying just above their stall speeds.

Special Forces training began on 9 September, advancing to night training on 17 September and joint training with air crews on 28 September that included six rehearsals a day, three of them under night conditions.

By 6 October, 170 practice sessions of all or partial phases of the mission were performed on the mock up by the Special Forces troopers, many with live fire.

On that date, the first full-scale dress rehearsal, using a UH-1H as the assault helicopter, was conducted at night and included a 5.5-hour, 1,106 km flight of all aircraft, replicating the timing, speeds, altitudes, and turns in the mission plan.

The rehearsal spelled the end of the option to use the UH-1 when its small passenger compartment resulted in leg cramps to the Special Forces troopers that completely disrupted the timing of their assault, more than offsetting the UH-1’s only advantage (smaller rotor radius) over the larger HH-3.

Two further full night rehearsals and a total of 31 practice landings by the HH-3E in the mock-up's courtyard confirmed the choice.

Manor issued the formal launch order at 15:56 local time 20 November, while the raiding force was in the final stages of crew rest, and brought together the entire ground contingent for a short briefing regarding the objective and launch times.

Following the briefing, Manor and his staff flew by T-39 Sabreliner to Da Nang, where they would monitor the mission from the USAF Tactical Air Control Center, North Sector (TACC/NS) at Monkey Mountain Facility.

Three theater lift C-130s previously staged at U-Tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield arrived at Takhli to transport the Army contingent and helicopter crews to Udorn RTAFB and the A-1 pilots to Nakhon Phanom.

Mission organisation

The fifty-six Special Forces troopers selected to conduct the raid were flown from Takhli to their helicopter staging base at Udorn RTAFB by C-130 on the evening of 20 November.

The Special Forces were organised into three platoons: a 14-man assault group, code-named Blueboy, which would crash-land within the prison compound; a 22-man support group, Greenleaf, which would provide immediate support for the assault team, and a 20-man security group, Redwine, to protect the prison area from NVA reaction forces and provide backup support if needed for either of the other two groups.

Simons (using the call sign Axle) accompanied the Greenleaf group, while the ground force commander, LTC Elliott P. "Bud" Sydnor, Jr. (Wildroot), was with the Redwine group.

The 56 raiders were heavily armed, carrying a total of 51 personal side arms, 48 CAR-15 carbines, two M16 rifles, four M79 grenade launchers, two shotguns, and four M60 machine guns.

They carried 15 Claymore mines, 11 demolition charges, and 213 hand grenades and were equipped with a plethora of wire cutters, bolt cutters, axes, chainsaws, crowbars, ropes, bullhorns, lights, and other equipment (much of it acquired from commercial retail sources) to execute the mission.

The ground force was also equipped for voice communications with 58 UHF-AM and 34 VHF-FM radios, including a survival radio for each individual soldier.

116 aircraft (59 Navy and 57 Air Force) participated in the operation, with 28 aircraft (crewed by 92 airmen) assigned direct roles in the target area.

Two C-130E Combat Talons, modified with the temporary addition of FLIR sets, were assigned to navigate the mission. One was to lead the helicopter "assault formation" (Cherry 01) and the second to escort the A-1 "strike formation" (Cherry 02).

Because of the variances in cruising speeds between the helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, the forces flew separate routes, with the faster strike formation trailing the helicopter formation by several minutes and zigzagging across its



SPECIAL FORCES LEGEND: Colonel Arthur D 'Bull' Simons.

route.

Each Combat Talon crew cross-trained to assume the role of the other, but the assault formation was required to have a navigation leader with four fully functioning engines all the way to the objective.

Operation Kingpin

Operation Kingpin was the assault phase of Operation Ivory Coast.

Beginning at 22:00 on 20 November 1970, aircraft began leaving five bases in Thailand and one in South Vietnam.

Cherry 02, the Combat Talon escort for the A-1 strike formation, took off from Takhli at 22:25. Cherry 01, scheduled to take off a half hour later, had difficulty starting an engine and took off 23 minutes late at 23:18.

Cherry 01 adjusted its flight plan and made up the time lost at engine start. At 23:07, two HC-130P aerial refuelers (call signs Lime 01 and Lime 02) took off from Udorn, followed by the helicopters ten minutes later.

Shortly after midnight,

the A-1 Skyraiders lifted off four minutes early from Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base under clandestine, blacked-out conditions.

The helicopters encountered thick clouds over northern Laos at their refueling altitude and climbed to 2,100 metres AGL (Above Ground Level) to refuel from Lime 01 on the flight plan's fourth leg. Lime 01 then led them to the next checkpoint for hand-off to Cherry 01 at 01:16.

The assault formation approached from the southwest using the clutter returns of the mountains to mask them from radar detection, while U.S. Navy aircraft launched at 01:00 on 21 November from the aircraft carriers USS Oriskany and USS Ranger in the largest carrier night operation of the Vietnam War.

Starting at 01:52, twenty A-7 Corsairs and A-6 Intruders, flying in pairs at stepped-up altitudes to deconflict their flight paths, entered North Vietnamese airspace on three tracks, dropping flares to simulate an attack. The last track also dropped chaff to mimic the mining of Haiphong harbor.

Over the Gulf of Tonkin, twenty-four other aircraft in thirteen orbits provided support and protection. The operation prompted a frantic air defense reaction at 02:17 that provided a highly effective diversion for the raiders and completely saturated the North Vietnamese air defense system.

Combat assault

At 02:18 Cherry 01 transmitted the execute command "Al-

pha, Alpha, Alpha" to all aircraft as it overflew the prison and deployed four illumination flares, then performed a hard-turning descent to 150 metres to drop two battle simulators south and southeast of Son Tây.

After Apple 03 made its strafing pass with side-firing mini guns on the prison's guard towers, Cherry 01 successfully dropped one of two planned napalm ground markers as a point of reference for the A-1s, then departed the objective area to a holding point over Laos where it would provide UHF direction-finding steers for the departing aircraft.

The assault helicopters in single file encountered winds that caused them to break formation 140 metres to the right of their intended track. The pilots of Apple 03, the gunship helicopter preceding the others, observed a compound nearly identical to the prison camp in size and layout (previously labeled a "secondary school" by intelligence sources) and steered toward it, followed by the assault lift force.

However, they recognized their error when they saw the river next to the actual location and corrected their flight path. Banana, the HH-3E carrying the Blueboy assault team, descended on the wrong location and observed that the expected courtyard was much smaller than required and that the expected treeline enclosed the compound rather than crossing through it.

By that time, Blueboy (as previously rehearsed) was firing its weapons from all openings in the helicopter. Banana's pilots

also recognized the error, applied power, and quickly veered north to the actual target.

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Despite the error, and trees taller than briefed that forced a steeper descent than rehearsed, the assault team crash-landed into the courtyard of Son Tây prison at 02:19 with all weapons firing.

Although one raider, acting as a door gunner, was thrown from the aircraft, the only casualty was the helicopter's flight engineer, whose ankle was fractured by a dislodged fire extinguisher.

Army Captain Richard J. Meadows used a bullhorn to announce their presence to the expected POWs, while the team dispersed in four elements on a rapid and violent assault of the prison, killing guards and methodically searching the five prisoner blocks cell by cell.

Also at 02:19, Apple 01 (after its pilots saw Banana fire on the first location) landed the Greenleaf support group outside the south side of the secondary school, thinking it to be the target prison compound. Unaware that it was 400 meters from the objective, it lifted off to relocate to its holding area.

The “secondary school” was actually a barracks for troops that, alerted by Banana’s aborted assault, opened fire on Greenleaf as two of its elements assaulted the compound.

The support group attacked the location with small arms and hand grenades in an eight-minute fire-fight, after which Simons estimated that 100 to 200 hostile soldiers had been killed.

Two A-1s supported Greenleaf with an air strike using white phosphorus bombs on a wooden footbridge east of the area. Apple 01 returned at 02:23, and by 02:28, the support group had disengaged under fire and re-boarded the helicopter for the short movement to the correct landing area.

The pilot of Apple 02 observed the errors in navigation by the helicopters in front of him and made a hard turn towards the prison. He also observed Apple 01 unload at the secondary school and initiated Plan Green, the contingency plan for the loss or absence of

Greenleaf.

The Redwine security group, including ground force commander Sydnor, landed at 02:20 outside Son Tây prison and immediately executed the previously rehearsed contingency plan.

In the meantime, Cherry 02 arrived with the A-1 force, dropped two more napalm ground markers, and created other diversions to disguise the target area by dropping MK-6 log flares and battle simulators at road intersections that North Vietnamese reaction forces might be expected to use.

Cherry 02 then orbited in the area just west of the Black River acting as on-call support for the ground teams, jamming North Vietnamese radio communications, and providing a secure radio link to the mission command post in Da Nang.

After a thorough search that included a second sweep ordered by Meadows, Blueboy’s three teams found that the prison held no POWs.

Meadows transmitted the code phrase “Negative Items” to the command group. Pathfinders clearing the extraction LZ blew up an electrical tower that blacked out the entire west side of Son Tây including the prison area.

At 02:29, Sydnor ordered the A-1s to attack the vehicle bridge over the Song Con leading into the area and, three minutes later, called for extraction by the HH-53s idling on the ground in a holding area a mile away.

Before the first helicopter arrived, a truck convoy approached the prison from the south, but was stopped by two Redwine

security teams that each fired an M72 light antitank weapon into the lead vehicle.

The HH-53s returned singly to the extraction landing zone amidst the SAM barrage, flying well below the minimum effective level of the missiles, and Apple 01 landed first at 02:37.

It lifted off with its passengers at 02:40, followed a minute later by the landing of Apple 02, which departed at 02:45. Apple 03, the last aircraft out, was cleared to leave its holding area at 02:48.

The raid had been executed in only 27 minutes, well within the planned 30-minute optimum time. Although at first it was feared one raider had been left behind, all the troopers were accounted for. One Redwine trooper had been wounded in the leg and was the only casualty to hostile fire on the raid.

Impact of the raid

The mission was deemed a “tactical success” because of its execution, but clearly involved an “intelligence failure”. The 65 prisoners at Son Tây had been moved on 14 July because its wells had been contaminated by flooding, or possibly due to the threat of further inundation, to a camp 24 km closer to Hanoi that the POWs dubbed “Camp Faith”.

Criticism of the raid, particularly in the news media and by political opponents of the Vietnam War and the Nixon Administration, was widespread and of long duration. Not only was the failure denounced as the result of poor or outdated intelligence, but charges were made that the operation caused



GOING IN: Some of the Son Tay raiders prior to the mission. It was one of the most audacious special forces raids carried out during the Vietnam War.

increased mistreatment of the prisoners.

However, as a result of the raid, the North Vietnamese consolidated their POW camps to central prison complexes. An area of the infamous “Hanoi Hilton” formerly housing civilian and South Vietnamese prisoners became “Camp Unity”, a block of large communal areas housing 50 POWs each.

After their repatriation, many

POWs said that being in close contact with other Americans lifted their morale, as did knowledge of the rescue attempt. Some POWs said that food, medical care, and even seemingly basic things like mail delivery vastly improved after the raid.

Recognition of participants

For their actions, members of the task force received six

Distinguished Service Crosses, five Air Force Crosses, and at least 85 Silver Stars, including all 50 members of the ground force who did not receive the DSC. Manor received the Distinguished Service Medal.

The successful demonstrations of joint operating capability in Ivory Coast and Kingpin were, in part, a model for the creation of a joint United States Special Operations Command in 1987.

Son Tây raider HH-53 68-10357 (Apple 01) was subsequently converted to MH-53M Pave Low IV standard, served in Bosnia and Iraq and was finally retired in 2008 after 38 years of service, the last survivor of the five Apples.

It is now on display in the Cold War Gallery of the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio.

While the raid may have failed in its overall objective, it is still regarded as a text-book special forces operation. It was a case of excellent plan, excellent execution, poor intelligence.



Weapons of the Son Tay Raid



GAU-5/A (Colt 610 XM177)



GAU-5/A/A (Colt 649)



M79 Grenade Launcher

Getting the call

It would arrive in an inconspicuous looking envelope. On it would be your name, address, and SADF serial number. The letter would be titled "instructions to report for national service", also known as your call-up papers.

Most people will remember the day when that letter arrived. The one that had 'Amptelik' and 'Official' stamped all over it.

Inside would be a cunningly worded invitation to spend an all-expenses paid holiday with the South African Defence Force (SADF). Whether you liked it or not.

It was, of course, your instructions to report for national service, more commonly known as your call-up papers.

Yet how many of you realized that the process actually started around two years earlier, with an event that passed unnoticed and unremembered.

The "National Service Questionnaire" was a document distributed to all 16 year old white males via all "white" schools in South Africa.

The document had to be completed and returned to the SADF and it was an offence not to do so.

In the words of the accompanying DD 1806 E (Important Information for Completing your questionnaire) "By completing the questionnaire properly you are helping us to place you where you will fit in best".

Quite apart from the reality that the questionnaire apparently ensured that you were helping the SADF to place you where you would definitely NOT fit in, by completing this

questionnaire, you were submitting yourself (and giving your passive okay) to state control of your very life that would influence your opinions on a range of topics from personal relationships, through your understanding of tolerance of other opinions, to politics.

Perhaps you only now realise just how all encompassing national service was.

For over two decades national service was a type of rite of passage for white South African males. Many people do not realise that the South African Defence Force was a citizen force. Only 10% of the SADF were permanent force. The remaining 90% was made up from national servicemen busy doing their initial conscription or ex-national servicemen (Citizen Force).

National service began in 1968 when it was decided that all white South African males would be required to do a period of compulsory military service. Note carefully the use of the word compulsory. It was not a request, it was an instruction and it was backed up by an act of parliament.

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. Once you had completed your schooling

or decided to leave school, the South African Defence Force required your services.

The army claimed the lion's share of those called up for national service. A far smaller percentage was allocated to the South African Air Force or South African Navy. In fact one of the questions on your initial SADF questionnaire asked whether you wanted to serve in the army, navy, or air force. In 1979 a fourth arm, the South African Medical Services, was formed.

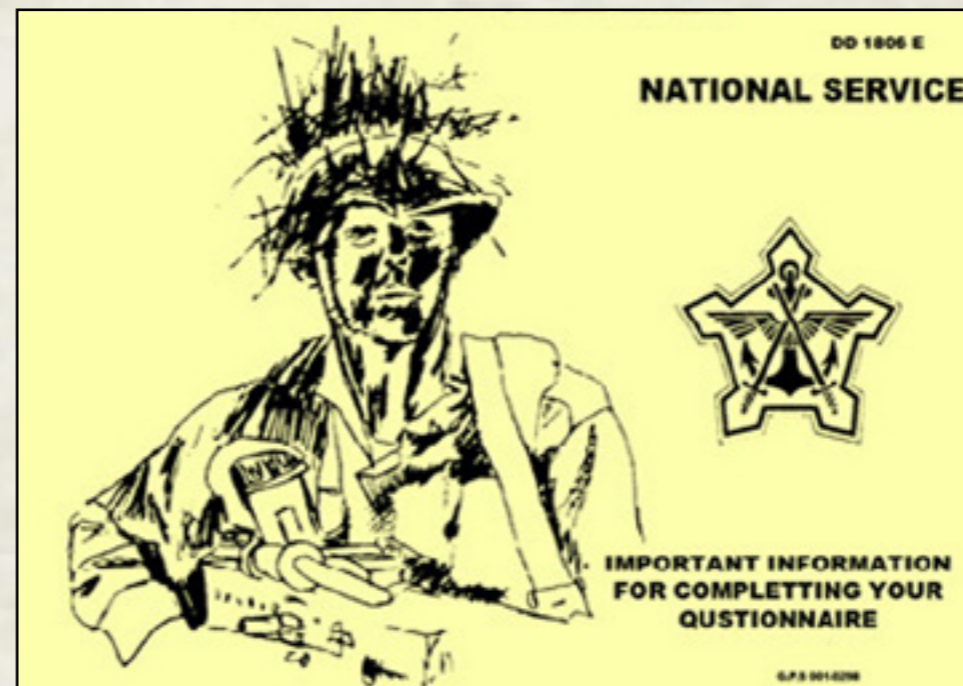
When registering you could list your first, second, and third choice. If you listed the army as your first choice you had a better than even chance of getting your wish. This was not always the case though, as Chris recalls.

When I was 16 I had to register for national service. On the form I was asked to state in which arm of the SADF I preferred to serve.

I'm a Durban boy and I grew up at the coast. All of my friends indicated that they wanted to serve in the navy. Not me, no ways.

Although I can swim well and love being in the pool, I have this pathological fear of the sea. I don't know what it is, but I am terrified, to this day, of the sea.

As a boy I would go to the beach and tan but I would never go in the water. I also have an-



RETURN TO SENDER: The DD1806 E Questionnaire that had to be completed by every white male when they turned 16.

other problem. I get seasick just looking at the ocean.

When I was in Standard Eight my brother-in-law decided to take me deep sea fishing. We went out on a fairly large boat that took about thirty people.

The sea wasn't that rough but I was hanging over the side and puking my lungs out before we even left the harbour.

So there was no ways I wanted to go to the navy for my national service. I put down the army as my first choice. The air force was my second choice and I didn't even fill in my third choice.

None of my friends who put down navy as their first choice came right. All of them were called up for the army. Where was I sent to? You guessed it right, the navy. My call up papers said that I had to report to SAS Saldanha for my basics.

After my basics and individual training I went on a Junior Leadership course and was then posted to SAS Scorpion at Salisbury Island in Durban.

At least I was close to home but believe me I would rather have been on the border. I was assigned to harbour protection and was a crew member on a Namacurra patrol boat. We would often go off shore to carry out inspections of fishing trawlers and other small craft.

I spent a good deal of time on the water and never did manage to get over my fear or my seasickness. If someone had to ask me what I did during my national service I can honestly say that I spent most of it hanging over the side of a Namacurra feeding the fishes.

Yet how did youngsters feel when they received their call up papers? We spoke to a number of veterans and asked them. Nearly everyone we spoke to had a different opinion.

Some were excited, some were scared, some were even resentful. Yet many more than care to admit it actually looked forward to their military training.

Kim was 18 when he was called up and he admits that he was rather looking forward to the adventure.

My call up papers said that I was going to 4 SAI Battalion and would serve in the infantry. I was chuffed because I wanted to go to the border and fight in the war. I was going to win a few medals and come back home a hero. Hey, I was only a kid and this was a big adventure.

I must admit though that by the end of my two years my outlook had changed. I can't say that I hated my national service, but I sure as hell didn't enjoy it.

Martin did not look forward to national service. He seriously contemplated refusing to serve but in the end he went ahead and did his year.

I grew up in a very liberal household. Both my parents were very opposed to apartheid and the National Party government. From an early age I was taught not to discriminate because of colour and was also taught that violence was not a solution.

I was called up in 1977, the year after the Soweto riots, and I was in a quandary.

There was no way I wanted to fight for the government and let's face it, that was what national service was all about. No matter how you look at it.

I went and spoke to the pastor at my church, but he wasn't much help. I even sat down and had a long chat to my parents about what I should do. They said that they would support whatever decision I made. I had two basic choices. Either I re-

ported for national service and did a year in the army. Or I registered as a conscientious objector and spend three years in prison.

Maybe I was a coward, but I chose the former option, opting to do my national service. I just couldn't face sitting in prison for three years and starting off my life with a criminal record.

To this day I still don't know if I made the right choice.

Kyle was another that actually looked forward to national service, but for different reasons than most.

I had just finished school, leaving with a standard eight certificate. I had failed both standard four and standard seven. If I had any choice in the matter I would have stayed at school until I had matric, but at the end of standard eight my father told me that I had to leave school and find a job.

Both my parents were alcoholics. As a kid my home life was hell. My dad used to work for the railways and we lived in a railway house. I still don't know how my father managed to keep his job because he was always drunk.

My mom would stay sober for a few days at a time but then she would go on a binge and then the fun at home really started.

My mom was a big woman and she used to become really aggressive when she was drunk. My father, on the other hand, was a small, skinny runt and my mom used to beat the crap out of him. No jokes my friend. On more than one night she actually laid my dad out cold.

He in turn would take his ag-



SAY GOODBYE TO CIVVIE STREET: A new intake reports at NASREC in Johannesburg. In the background are family and friends that have come to see them off.

gression out on me and at least once a week I would get the stuffing knocked out of me. He was clever though, give him credit for that. He never used to hit me in the face. He would always punch me in the stomach or kidneys. My face was never marked.

So when my call up papers arrived I was delighted. It was my chance to get out of that house. No matter what the army threw at me it could only be better than my current situation. When I left neither of my parents came to see me off.

You know, when I arrived in the army it was the first time in my life that I ate three meals a day. Some of the guys moaned about the food but to me it was heaven. In my house booze was the first thing on the shopping list. Food came a distant second. I would often go for two or three days with nothing to eat.

Gert was looking forward to being called up. Until his call-

up papers arrived.

I was from Alberton, just outside of Johannesburg. I was hoping to be called up to Voortrekkerhoogte in Pretoria. At least then I was only about an hour away from home. Where did I get sent too? They called me up to 2 SAI in Walvis Bay.

When we started to receive weekend passes what was I supposed to do. There was no way that I could go home for a weekend. Alberton was a two-day car trip away.

The nearest decent place to go was Swakopmund. But it cost money because you would have to stay in a guest house.

Most of my weekend passes I spent wandering around Walvis Bay or just sitting in camp. If you've ever been to Walvis Bay you'll know that it's not exactly the entertainment capital of the world. The first time I went home was when I got my seven-day pass.

I know a few guys who got cool postings close to home.



YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW: An intake reports for national service at the Castle in Cape Town. From here they would be sent to various units around the country. Photo from the mid-1970s.

But I also know plenty of guys who were posted to the opposite end of the country.

Pedro was not all that happy when he received his call-up papers. He would, however, change his mind about it.

When I grew up we lived in the South of Jo'burg. My home language was Portuguese and the neighbourhood I grew up in was very Portuguese.

When I finished school and was called up, I had to go to the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg. I was going to be in the Signals Corps.

The good thing was that it was only about 45 km from home. But I had wanted to go into the infantry.

The strange thing was that most of my Portuguese mates had also been called up to the Army Gymnasium.

After basics we were posted to a unit that was known as

Brush. We were sent to a place called Chirundu in Rhodesia. We didn't even know that there were SADF troops in Rhodesia.

Our job was to monitor Frelimo radio traffic in Mozambique. Of course they spoke Portuguese, which was why we were used.

It was interesting work because they always used radios to communicate and they sent everything in the clear. They never used any form of codes, so we always knew exactly what was going on. Some of the things we heard were incredible.

Towards the end of my national service, in about February 1976, we had to pull out of Rhodesia because of political pressure on the South African government.

We then moved to a place called Jozini in Zululand. It was close to the Mozambique border, so basically we carried

on monitoring radio traffic in Mozambique.

I must admit that Jozini wasn't nearly as nice as Chirundu. Still, it was interesting work and I enjoyed what we did.

Lastly we spoke to Gary. His parents had moved to South Africa from England and he completed his last two years of schooling in Natal. Then he was called up.

When I was in matric my parents applied for South African citizenship. So when I finished matric I was basically a South African citizen and was therefore called up for national service.

I was called up to 1 SAI in Bloemfontein. As you can imagine that was a lot of fun. I could hardly speak or understand Afrikaans and let me tell you something, everything in Bloemfontein was Afrikaans.

After basics and phase one training we went to the border. To be honest I actually enjoyed my time there. It was a big adventure, one that I knew I would never get to experience again. If I had to do it all again, I probably would.

So, how did you feel when you received your call-up papers?

Why not send us an e-mail to editor@hipeco.za and use 'Call up for national service' as the subject line.

If we get enough response then we will do a follow up article. We would love to hear your thoughts, and I'm sure many other readers would as well.

The 'Death's Head'

The Totenkopf or 'Death's Head', is a symbol that will forever be associated with the German Schutzstaffel (SS) of World War II. Yet why did they choose this as a symbol, and where did it originate?

Mention the word 'SS' to anyone that knows anything about World War II history and the first image that they will conjure up will normally be the infamous skull and bones symbol. In German it was known as the *Totenkopf*.

Totenkopf (literally "dead person's head") is the German word for the skull and crossbones symbol. The "skull and crossbones" symbol is an old international symbol for death, the defiance of death, danger, or the dead, as well as piracy or toxicity.

It consists usually of the human skull with or without the mandible and often includes two crossed long-bones (femurs), most often depicted with the crossbones being behind some part of the skull.

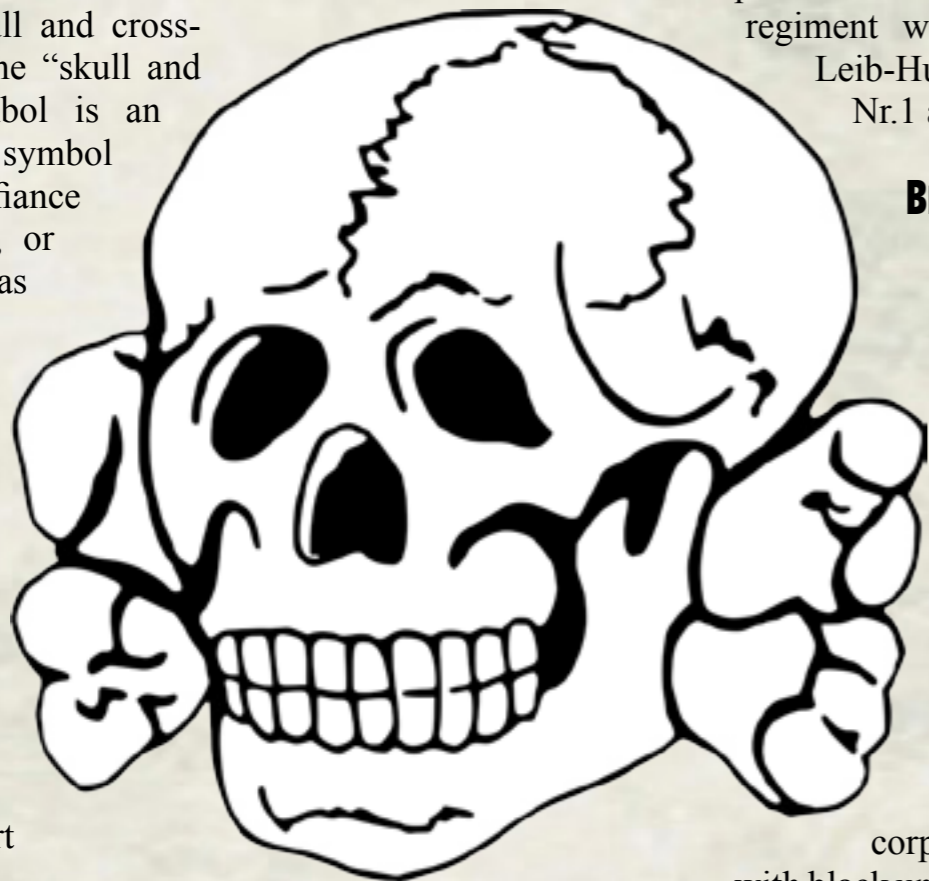
In early modern sea warfare, buccaneers used the totenkopf as a pirate flag: a skull or other skeletal parts as a death threat and as a demand to hand over a ship.

In the early days of the Nazi party the leadership, and in particular Adolf Hitler, were very concerned about their image.

They wanted the German

public to regard them as the potential saviours of Germany and the German *Volk*. So why use a symbol that is not exactly one that depicts peace, love and harmony.

To answer that question one has to go back more than 160 years into German military history. Back to the time of King



Frederick II of Prussia. A man who became known as Frederick the Great.

The Prussian Hussars

Use of the Totenkopf as a military emblem began under Frederick the Great, who formed a regiment of Hussar cavalry in the Prussian army commanded by Colonel von Ruesch, the

Husaren-Regiment Nr. 5 (von Ruesch).

It adopted a black uniform with a Totenkopf emblazoned on the front of its mirlitons (tall hat worn by hussars) and wore it on the field in the War of Austrian Succession and in the Seven Years' War.

The Totenkopf remained a part of the uniform when the regiment was reformed into Leib-Husaren Regiments Nr.1 and Nr.2 in 1808.

Brunswick

In 1809, during the War of the Fifth Coalition, Frederick William, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel raised a force of volunteers to fight Napoleon Bonaparte, who had conquered the Duke's lands.

The Brunswick corps was provided with black uniforms, giving rise to their nickname, the Black Brunswickers.

Both hussar cavalry and infantry in the force wore a Totenkopf badge, either in mourning for the duke's father, Charles William Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, who had been killed at the Battle of Jena-Auerstedt in 1806, or according to some sources, as

a sign of revenge against the French.

After fighting their way through Germany, the Black Brunswickers entered British service and fought with them in the Peninsular War and at the Battle of Waterloo. The Brunswick corps was eventually incorporated into the Prussian Army in 1866.

World War I

The skull continued to be used by the Prussian and Brunswick armed forces until 1918, and some of the stormtroopers that led the last German offensives on the Western Front in 1918 used skull badges.

Luftstreitkräfte fighter pilots Georg von Hantelmann and Kurt Adolf Monnington are just two of a number of Central Powers military pilots who used the Totenkopf as their personal aircraft insignia.

Weimar Republic

The Totenkopf was used in Germany throughout the inter-war period, most prominently by the *Freikorps*.

In 1933, it was in use by the regimental staff and the 1st, 5th, and 11th squadrons of the Reichswehr's 5th Cavalry Regiment as a continuation of a tradition from the *Kaiserreich*.

Nazi Germany

Adolf Hitler was a great admirer of Frederick the Great. So it made sense that he would be keen to adopt a symbol representative of the Prussian leader.

In the early days of the Nazi Party, Julius Schreck, the leader of the *Stabswache* (Adolf Hit-

ler's bodyguard unit), resurrected the use of the Totenkopf as the unit's insignia.

This unit grew into the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), which continued to use the Totenkopf as insignia throughout its history.

According to a writing by Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, the Totenkopf had the following meaning:

"The Skull is the reminder that you shall always be willing to put your self at stake for the life of the whole community."

The Totenkopf was also used as the unit insignia of the Panzer forces of the German *Heer* (Army), and also by the Panzer units of the *Luftwaffe*, including those of the elite Fallschirm-Panzer Division 1 Hermann Göring.

Both the 3rd SS Panzer Division of the Waffen-SS, and the World War II era *Luftwaffe*'s 54th Bomber Wing *Kampfgeschwader 54* were given the unit name "Totenkopf", and used a strikingly similar-looking graphic skull-crossbones insignia as the SS units of the same name.

The 3rd SS Panzer Division also had skull patches on their uniform collars instead of the SS *sieg* rune.

3rd SS Panzer Division

The 3rd SS Panzer Division "Totenkopf" was an elite division of the Waffen-SS. It was sometimes referred to as the Death's Head Division.

The division was formed through the expansion of *Kampfgruppe Eicke*, a battle group named – in keeping with German military practice – after its commander, Theodor Eicke.



DEATH'S HEAD: An SS officers peaked cap. The totenkopf features prominently.

Most of the battle group's personnel had been transferred to the Waffen SS from concentration camp guard units, which were known collectively as "SS-Totenkopfverbände"; others were former members of *Selbstschutz*: ethnic German militias that had committed war crimes in Poland.

The division became notorious for its brutality, and committed numerous war crimes, including the Le Paradis massacre. The remnants of the division surrendered on 9 May 1945 to American forces in Czechoslovakia.

SS-Totenkopfverbände

SS-Totenkopfverbände (SS-TV) was the Schutzstaffel (SS) organization responsible for administering the Nazi concentration camps and extermination camps for Nazi Germany, among similar duties.

While the Totenkopf was the universal cap badge of the SS, the SS-TV also wore this insignia on the right collar tab to distinguish itself from other SS formations.

The SS-TV originally created in 1933 was an independent unit within the SS, with its own command structure.

It ran the camps throughout Germany and later in occupied Europe. Camps in Germany included Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, and Buchenwald; camps elsewhere in Europe included Auschwitz-Birkenau in German occupied Poland and Mauthausen in Austria among the numerous other concentration camps, and death camps handled with the utmost of secrecy.

The extermination camps' function was genocide; they included Treblinka, Belżec, and Sobibór built specifically for *Aktion Reinhard*, as well as the original Chełmno extermination camp, and Majdanek which was fitted with mass killing facilities, along with Auschwitz.

They were responsible for facilitating what the Nazis called the Final Solution, known since the war as the Holocaust; perpetrated by the SS within the command structure of the Reich Security Main Office, subordinate to Heinrich Himmler, and the SS Economic and Administrative Main Office or WVHA.

On the Eastern Front, the mass shootings of Polish and Soviet civilians in Operation Barbarossa were the work of *Einsatzgruppen* mobile death squads and their various sub-groups called *Einsatzkommando*. These units were organized by Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich.

Royal Navy

The Jolly Roger is a symbol that has been used by submarines, primarily those of the Royal Navy Submarine Service and its predecessors. The practice came about during World War I.

Remembering comments by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson, who complained that submarines were “underhanded, unfair, and damned un-English” and that personnel should be hanged as pirates, Lieutenant Commander Max Horton began flying the flag after returning from successful patrols.

He would later go on to become Admiral Sir Max Horton.

Use by other units

In the past the skull and crossbones, or just the skull, has been used by other military units.

In fact it is still in use by many units to this day. Following are some of the units that have used the skull or skull and crossbones as a symbol.

- The uniform of the Spanish Army's Lusitania Dragoon Regiment during part of the 18th century included three skull and crossbones in the cuffs, and in 1902 the skull and crossbones insignia was authorized again to replace the regiment number on the sides of the collar.
- It was used as the emblem on the uniforms of Greek revolutionaries of Alexander Ypsilantis' Sacred Band (1821) during the Wallachian uprising of 1821.
- Armenian fedayis, during the First World War against the Ottoman Empire, used a skull with two bolt rifles under the words “revenge revenge” in their flags.
- The British Army's Royal Lancers continue to use the skull and crossbones in their emblem, inherited from its use by the 17th Lancers, a



DEATH OR GLORY: Cap badge of the British 17th Lancers.

unit raised in 1759 following General Wolfe's death in Quebec. The emblem contains an image of a death's head, and the words 'Or Glory', chosen in commemoration of Wolfe.

- In 1792, a regiment of *Hussards de la Mort* (Death Hussars) was formed during the French Revolution by the French National Assembly and were organized and named by Kellerman. The group of 200 volunteers were from wealthy families and their horses were supplied from the King's Stables. They were formed to defend against various other European states in the wake of the revolution. They participated in the Battle of Valmy and its members also participated in the Battle of Fleurus (1794). They had the following mottos: *Vaincre ou mourir*, *La liberté ou la mort* and *Vivre libre ou mourir* – Victory or death; Freedom or death; and Live free or die.
- Although not exactly a Totenkopf per se, the Chilean guerrilla leader Manuel Rodríguez used the symbol on his elite forces called

Husares de la muerte (“Hussars of death”). It is still used by the Chilean Army's 3rd Cavalry Regiment.

- The primarily Prussian 41st Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry (mustered on 6 June 1861; mustered out 9 December 1865) wore a skull insignia.
- The *Vengeurs de la Mort* (“death avengers”), an irregular unit of Commune de Paris, 1871.
- The Portuguese Army Police 2nd Lancers Regiment use a skull-and-crossbones image in their emblem, similar to the one used by the Queen's Royal Lancers.
- The Kingdom of Sweden's Hussar Regiments wore a death's head emblem in the Prussian Style on the front of the mirleton.
- Ramón Cabrera's regiment adopted in 1838 a skull with crossbones flanked by an olive branch and a sword on a black flag during the Spanish Carlist Wars.
- Serbian Chetniks wore a death's head emblem in several conflicts: guerrilla in Old Serbia, First and Second Balkan Wars, World War I (both defence and resistance) and World War II.
- Some Macedonian-Bulgarian komitas that were members of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization wore a death's head emblem, usually with crossed revolver and qama below the skull and crossbones (similar to the Serbian ones) throughout the existence of the organization in several conflicts: Mace-

donian Struggle (Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising, the Balkan Wars), World War I, during the inter-war period in Macedonia, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and in World War II. The most prominent example being Pitu Guli who wears one in his only known photo, and his son Steryu Gulev.

- The Italian elite storm-troopers of the Arditi used a skull with a dagger between its teeth as a symbol during World War I. Various versions of skulls were also later used by the Italian Fascists.
- The Russian Kornilov's Shock Detachment (8th Army) adopted a death's head emblem in 1917. Then after World War I, the unit became Kornilov's Shock Regiment as a part of the White Russian Volunteer Army during the Russian Civil War.
- The Estonian Kuperjanov's Partisan Battalion used the skull-and-crossbones as their insignia (since 1918); the Kuperjanov Infantry Battalion continues to use the skull and crossbones as their insignia today.
- Two Polish small cavalry units used death's head emblem during Polish-Ukrainian War and Polish-Soviet War – *Dywizjon Jazdy Ochotniczej* (also known as *Huzarzy Śmierci* i.e. Death Hussars) and *Poznański Ochotniczy Batalion Śmierci*.
- During 1943–1945 the Italian Black Brigades and numerous other forces fighting

for the Italian Social Republic wore various versions of skulls on their uniforms, berets, and caps.

- The United States Marine Corps Reconnaissance Battalions use the skull-and-crossbones symbol in their emblem.
- The No. 100 Squadron RAF (Royal Air Force) continue to use a flag depicting a skull and crossbones, supposedly in reference to a flag stolen from a French brothe in 1918.
- The *Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais*, a special unit within the military police of Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil, uses the skull emblem to differentiate their team from the regular units.
- South Korea's 3rd Infantry Division have a skull-and-crossbones in their emblem.
- Many United States Cavalry reconnaissance troops or squadrons utilize a skull insignia, often wearing the traditional Stetson hat, and backed by either crossed cavalry sabres, crossed rifles, or some other variation, as an unofficial unit logo. These logos are incorporated into troop T-shirts, challenge coins, or other items designed to enhance morale and esprit de corps.

So it is clear to see that the German SS of World War II were not the first to use the Totenkopf, and they were by no means the last.

Yet be that as it may, the death's head symbol will forever be associated with the infamous SS.

That's just weird

World War II saw the invention and introduction of some weapons that changed the war. But not all the weapons invented during World War II were effective. Some were strange, weird, or downright bizarre.

In the Socratic dialogue 'Republic', Plato famously wrote: "our need will be the real creator" which was moulded over time into the English proverb 'Necessity is the mother of invention'.

This saying is particularly relevant during times of war, and this was most definitely the case during World War II.

Numerous weapons were invented and introduced during World War II that would go on to become 'game-changers'. This would include weapons such as the B-17 Flying Fortress, the Soviet T-34 tank, the Spitfire and Hurricane, and, of course, the atomic bomb.

But not all the weapons invented during World War II were quite as effective. Some were strange, weird or downright bizarre.

While some were used in combat, others thankfully never progressed beyond the initial testing phase. In this article we will look at some of these weapons.

The Panjandrum

When the Allies were planning Operation Overlord, the invasion of Europe, one of the factors that caused them major concern was the Atlantic Wall.

The fortifications included colossal coastal guns, batteries, mortars, and artillery, and thousands of German troops were

stationed in its defences.

In 1943, the British Directorate of Miscellaneous Weapons Development (DMWD) was asked to develop a weapon that could penetrate the concrete defences of the Atlantic Wall.

It would have to be a device capable of penetrating the 3.0 metre high, 2.1 metre thick concrete defences of the wall.

It was further specified that the device should be capable of being launched from landing craft since it was highly likely that the beaches in front of the defences would act as a killing ground for anyone attempting to deliver the device by hand.

And so the DMWD invented the Panjandrum.

The huge contraption consisted of two wheels connected by a sturdy, drum-like axle, with rockets on the wheels to propel it forward. Packed with explosives, it was supposed to charge toward the enemy defences at speeds of up to 100 km/h, smashing into them and exploding, creating a breach large enough for a tank to pass through.

Then came the time to test the weapon on an otherwise peaceful English beach. All of the top brass were there to witness the demonstration of this awesome weapon that was going to reduce the formidable Atlantic Wall to rubble. Of course things didn't go exactly to plan.

The 70 slow-burning cordite rockets attached to the two three metre steel wheels sparked into action, and for about 20 seconds it was quite impressive - until the rockets started to dislodge and fly off in all directions.

Generals were sent running for cover or hitting the dirt. The rest was sheer chaos, as the Panjandrum charged around the beach, completely out of control.

Unsurprisingly, the Panjandrum was shelved and never saw battle.

Goliath Tracked Mine

In 1940, the German *Wehrmacht* recovered a strange, remote-controlled prototype vehicle from the River Seine. Designed by the French vehicle designer Adolphe Kégresse, this prototype inspired the Germans to develop their own remote-controlled vehicle, primarily as an anti-tank weapon.

The result was the Goliath Tracked Mine, a 30 cm tall, 1,2 metre long tracked vehicle that could carry around 60 kilograms of high explosives.

Steered remotely, it could be driven beneath enemy tanks and detonated. On paper it seemed like a good idea.

The Goliath, however, had a number of slight flaws. The remote control connection was achieved via a 640 metre long cable between the vehicle and

the driver. Enemy soldiers quickly learned they could neutralize the Goliath by cutting the cable.

It was also painfully slow at just 10 kilometres per hour, had a woeful ground clearance (meaning it could easily become stuck), and was only covered with thin armour.

Nevertheless, the Germans produced 7564 Goliaths and used the weapons in battle during the Warsaw Uprising and on the beaches of Normandy.

The vehicle wasn't deemed much of a success at the time, but it did pave the way for the development of later remote-controlled weapons.

The Windkanone

Of the numerous Nazi *Wunderwaffen* (wonder weapons) developed during World War II, the *Windkanone*, or Wind Cannon, was one of the least successful.

Rather than launching flak or other projectiles at enemy aircraft, this strange cannon was designed to disrupt low-flying enemies with a blast of air.

The Windkanone was a 10 metre cast-iron tube with a one metre diameter. When fired electrically, an ammonia hydrogen mixture exploded in the

chamber, forcing a rush of air through the cannon.

This wind was capable, in theory, of disrupting aircraft within a range of 150 meters.

In 1945, a wind cannon was mounted on a bridge over the River Elbe, but it proved rather useless. The disruption to enemy aircraft turned out to be so minor that the weapon was eventually abandoned.

Fu-Go Balloon Bombs

During World War II Japan would have loved nothing more than being able to bomb mainland America. But at a distance of 10,144 km they had no aircraft that could even come close to covering the distance.

In 1944, however, Japan came up with a nefarious but quite ingenious plan to drop bombs on the U.S.

Using the jet stream over the Pacific Ocean, they launched paper balloons carrying explosive devices, which would float silently across the ocean to their

enemies, instilling fear and panic in America. Well at least that was the plan.

They launched the first balloon on 3 November 1944, and it's estimated that between then and April 1945 about 1,000 "Fu-Go" balloon bombs reached North America.

After the war, records uncovered in Japan revealed that some 9,000 were launched in total.

Despite so many launches, only one resulted in the loss of human life. On 5 May 1945, a pregnant woman and five children were killed in the woods near Bly, Oregon, when they began playing with the large paper balloon, which exploded.

Due to the uncontrolled nature of the balloon bombs and the uncertainty of atmospheric conditions, the experimental weapon was largely unsuccessful and to this day remains relatively unknown. It is, however, widely considered to be the first intercontinental weapon system.

Bat Bombs

When Japan launched their surprise attack on the America naval base at Pearl Harbour on 7 December



Goliath

1941, the American public was outraged to say the least.

A Pennsylvania dentist named Lytle S. Adams contacted the White House with a plan of retaliation - bat bombs.

The plan involved dropping a bomb containing more than 1,000 compartments, each containing a hibernating bat attached to a timed incendiary device.

A bomber would then drop the principal bomb over Japan at dawn and the bats would be released mid-flight, dispersing into the roofs and attics of buildings over a 32 to 64 kilometre radius. The timed incendiary devices would then ignite, setting fire to Japanese cities.

Now if you think that Adams was a little bit crazy, then the National Research Defence Committee were totally crazy because they took the idea seriously.

Thousands of Mexican free-tailed bats were captured (they were, for some reason, considered the best option) and tiny napalm incendiary devices were built for them to carry.

A complicated release system was developed and tests were carried out. The tests, however, revealed an array of technical problems, especially when some bats escaped prematurely and blew up a hangar and a general's car.

In December 1943, the Marine Corps took over the project, running 30 demonstrations at a total cost of \$2 million. Eventually, however, the program was cancelled, probably because the U.S. had shifted its focus onto the development of the atomic bomb.



Stg.44 krummlauf

Exploding rats

Turning our attention from bats to rats. Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) invented a whole range of strange and often disguised devices for hiding, killing, and blowing things up during World War II. But the SOE really outdid itself with the concept of the exploding rat.

The idea was simple: Around 100 dead rats were sliced open, stuffed with plastic explosives, and stitched back up. If all went according to plan, the rats would be placed near strategically identified boilers.

Upon discovering a dead rat, someone would chuck it into the boiler, which would create a massive explosion.

However, the plan was never put to the test, as the Germans intercepted the container of dead rats. It must have given the Gestapo a few head-scratching moments.

Despite this failure, the rats had an unforeseen benefit: The Germans were now worried about the presence of exploding rats, and began to hunt high and wide for the 'enemy' rodents.

In a report, the SOE noted that "The trouble caused to [the Germans] was a much greater success to us than if the rats had actually been used."

The Krummlauf

The ability to shoot around corners without breaking cover seems like a pretty good idea.

With this in mind, the Germans developed the *Krummlauf*, a bent barrel attachment for the *Sturmgewehr 44* assault rifle. They made two types, one for infantry use and one for firing from inside armoured vehicles.

The infantry model had a 35 cm barrel, with a 10 cm straight barrel, a 14 cm curved section and another 11 cm of straight barrel at the end.

It was held like a normal assault rifle and aimed using a periscope sighting device. Due to the curvature, bullets typically broke in half when fired, making the *Krummlauf* practical only at short ranges.

And because of the stresses placed on the barrel when firing, the *Krummlauf* had a short lifespan. It became unusable after firing 150 to 300 rounds.

For these reasons, the *Krummlauf* wasn't commonly seen on the battlefield. Still, the idea made sense, and designers are still playing with the concept today.

Pigeon-Guided Rockets

It wasn't just rats and bats roped into World War II military plans. The ability to successfully aim missiles was a major concern during World

War II, and much brainpower was devoted to the task.

One possible solution came from B.F. Skinner, a respected psychologist and inventor who believed in the power of pigeons.

He had previously trained the birds to pull levers as part of his psychological research. So why not train them to guide bombs?

Despite some scepticism from the National Research Defence Committee, they nonetheless decided to give Skinner \$25,000 for the development of his idea, code-named "Project Pigeon."

Skinner built a nose cone that housed three kamikaze pigeon cockpits. Each pigeon sat in front of a tiny electronic screen that projected an image of the ground below.

The pigeons were then trained to recognize a target, and upon

seeing it, would peck the screen. When all three pecked together, cables attached to their heads would adjust the missile's flight path and guide it to the target.

As bizarre as this all sounds, a successful demonstration was carried out. In 1944, however, the still sceptical research committee terminated the project, without any of the pigeons seeing combat.

Who, Me?

In 1943, Private Ernest Crocker, a chemist who had worked on developing poisonous gases for the military, was recruited for a foul-smelling task: the creation of a military-grade stink bomb.

The plan was to supply this stink bomb to the French Resistance, who would use it to spray German officers to embarrass them and, in turn, reduce overall troop morale.

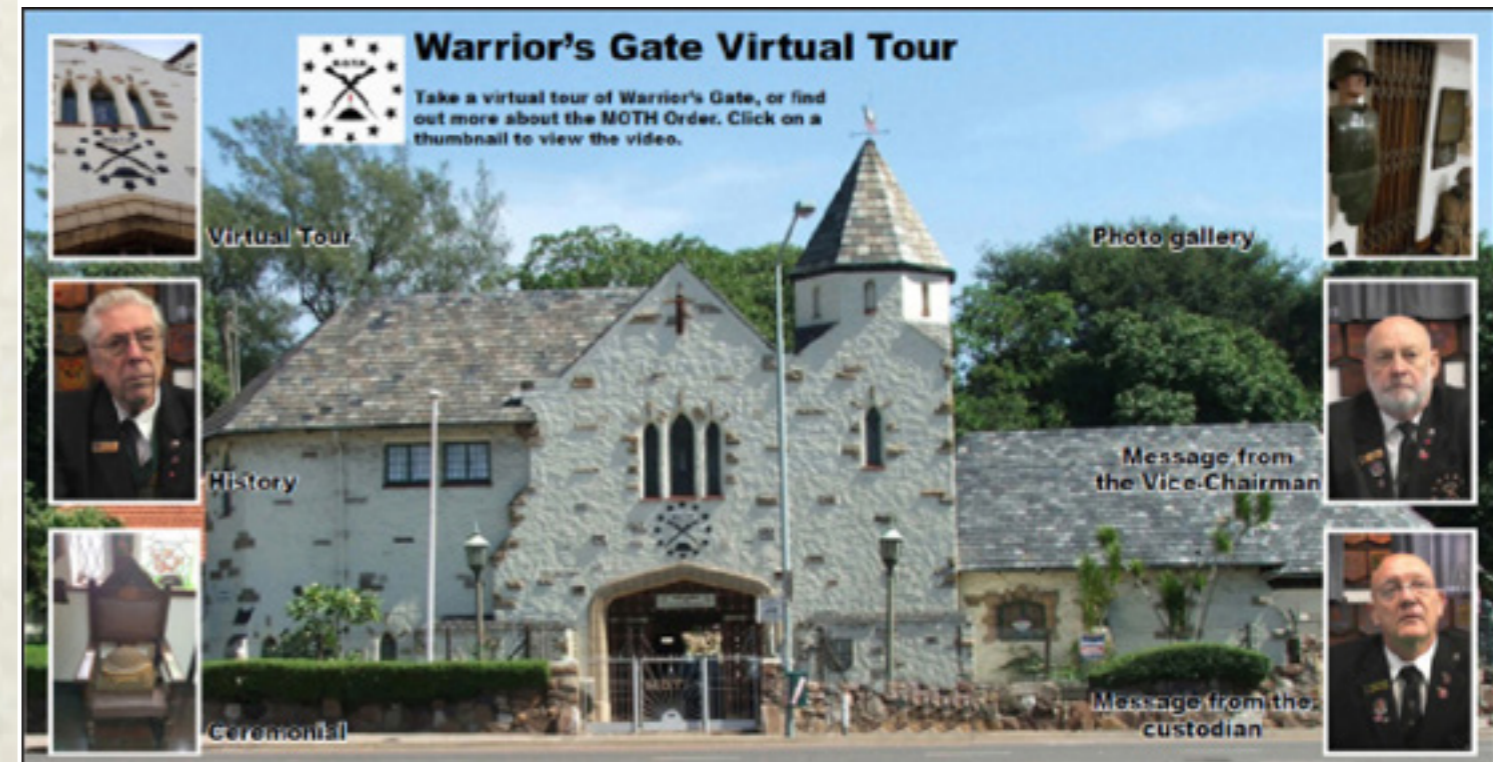
After months of testing the world's most putrid scents, Crocker finally settled upon a formula that presented a concoction of smells including vomit, rancid butter, urine, rotten eggs, foot odour, and excrement, all in one delightful spray called *Who, Me?*

The unfortunate technicians at Maryland Research Laboratories who designed the packaging for the spray often wound up covered in the stench.

Once the packaging problems had been solved, 600 units of *Who, Me?* were prepared for deployment, but the war ended before the spray saw any action. Crocker spent the rest of his career studying smells and flavours, helping to establish sensory science and food technology as scientific fields.



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



Britain's first black soldier

How a Sudanese Dervish orphan went on to become Britain's first black African soldier.

History is not always about great battles or famous leaders. Ordinary people make history too and James Francis Durham is a case in point. He participated in no battles, he won no medals for valour, but in his own small way he did make history.

The story begins at the Battle of Ginnis fought on 30 December 1885 in Northern Sudan. It was a minor battle of the Mahdist War fought between soldiers of the Anglo-Egyptian Army and Mahdist Sudanese warriors of the Dervish State. It resulted in a victory for the Anglo-Egyptian Army under Major General Francis Grenfell.

The defeated Mahdist fled south across the desert leaving

400 of their comrades dead on the battlefield. Meanwhile on the River Nile a small boat desperately tried to follow their fleeing compatriots. It was filled with battle banners, weapons and a woman with a baby boy.

As the Dervish survivors fled South, mounted British and Egyptian units hurried them on their way. One of these was a mounted unit drawn from the Durham Light Infantry led by Lieutenant Henry de Lisle. The 20 year old officer from Guernsey had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) fighting the Dervishes the previous month during the advance on Ginnis.

Two days after the battle, on 1 January 1886, they were moving up the Nile looking for Mahdist stragglers when they spotted our boat slowly making its way up the river. The boat was swarming with Dervish warriors and many more were on the banks pulling it on ropes.

With night falling the Lieutenant de Lisle ordered his men to sneak up to the river and fire two volleys at the boat before charging. Pandemonium as the men on the shore flee into the darkness of the desert, closely followed by those on board the boat.

Satisfied that the coast was

clear the lieutenant ordered his men forward to inspect the boat. In the growing darkness they saw a movement on the water's edge. It was a tiny boy possibly no more than two years of age. But despite his age he stood there defiantly pointing his fingers at the men of the Durham Light Infantry and making a firing sound.

Amused the officer approached him whereupon the little boy raised his arms, indicated that he wanted to be picked up, and the officer obliged and then give him to his NCO Colour Sergeant Stewart to look after.

Boarding the boat the British found a badly wounded Dervish warrior. He'd been hit in the volley of fire and like the young boy had been abandoned by the passengers as they fled.

Through an interpreter he told de Lisle that the boy's name was Mustafa and his mother was the wife of a Sheikh, a senior Mahdist commander killed in the battle. She was trying to reach the safety of her hometown Berber nearly 640 kilometres upriver. He had no idea of where the woman was or whether she would return for the boy.

They young British officer faced a dilemma – should he leave the toddler with a dying man in the hope that his mother or some other kind soul would find him rather than a Nile crocodile, or alternatively should he

take the boy back to the British camp.

Colour Sergeant Stewart and his men urged him not to leave the little boy behind. de Lisle agreed and so on New Year's Day 1886 young Mustafa's life was to change forever, and he was to find his own small place in British military history.

Once back at the British camp the lad was introduced to the Sergeant's Mess and he immediately became a hit. These professional, experienced, battle-hardened Victorian soldiers took the young boy to their hearts.

Sergeant James Burley and Sergeant Major James Francis took on the responsibility of looking after him. James Burley in particular formed a strong bond with the Sudanese toddler whom he used to bath every day.

Soon the sergeants had given Mustafa a new nickname in true British military fashion. They called him Jimmy Dervish.

Before the battalion headed back to Egypt some local Sudanese women looked at Jimmy's teeth and judged him to be about two years old at best.

For the next year Jimmy became a popular member of the British garrison in Cairo. But in 1887 the 2nd Battalion Durham Light Infantry were posted to India. de Lisle proposed that Jimmy be sent to an orphanage in the Egyptian capital. The sergeants were aghast. Jimmy might only be a wee lad and not from the northeast of England, but he was as far as they were concerned one of them.

They pleaded with the officer to let the boy accompany

them to India and had a whip around in their mess with every sergeant agreeing to contribute one rupee a month to Jimmy's upkeep. Their commitment to their young charge won Lieutenant de Lisle over. It wouldn't be the last time that the gritty sergeants from County Durham would take up Jimmy's cause.

Before leaving for India Jimmy was formally baptised. He took the names of his two carers – James, after Sergeant James Burley, and Francis after Sergeant Major Joseph Francis. But what would be his surname? He was the son of the regiment and so naturally he was given part of the regiment's name. Thus it was that James Francis Durham set out with the rest of the battalion to India and his appointment with history.

The 2nd Battalion Durham Light Infantry was to spend the next 15 years in India and as they travelled from post to post James Durham attended school with the other children from the regiment.

It was when the battalion was stationed in Mandalay, Burma in 1898 that James Durham who was now about 14, contemplated his future. He'd spent most of his life with the Durham Light Infantry and he considered them his family and they considered him part of their family too, and not just the regimental family. Several sergeants literally invited him to be an honorary member of their actual families such as the Robsons.

James has a big decision to make, although it was an easy decision. He wanted to join the army. There was, however, one

little hurdle – no black man had ever joined the Victorian British Army.

Of course there were plenty of black soldiers in colonial regiments like the West Indian Regiment for instance and some black men had been brought into the British Army as drummers and musicians. However, none had ever joined the British Army on the same terms as white recruits and Jimmy Durham was no exception. The doors of the military establishment slammed shut in his face.

But the military establishment hadn't reckoned on the strength of feeling in the sergeant's mess. If Lieutenant (by this time a captain) de Lisle had thought they were persuasive he hadn't seen anything yet.

Whilst Kipling a few years earlier had written about the road to Mandalay for the sergeants of the Durham Light Infantry it was about the road from Mandalay, all the way to the War Office in London.

Despite securing the support of their officers, one by one the doors in Cumberland House, the home of the War Office, were closed to their pleas. Finally in desperation the sergeants pulled in every favour they could and appealed directly to the very top – the Commander-in-Chief herself.

Many of you will know, but some of you might not, that members of all three branches of the British Armed Forces do not swear an oath of loyalty to the government or to the country their oath of Allegiance is to the Monarch.

And so those white Victorian





If the hat fits...

They say “if the hat fits, wear it.” This month we show you various headgear and you tell us what it is and where and when it’s from. Answers on page 86.

sergeants sent out a passionate letter supporting James Durham’s application to Queen Victoria and somehow they won her over.

The aging Queen Empress whose empire encompassed nearly a quarter of the world’s population approved James’ application. In July 1899 James Francis Durham was formally enrolled as Boy Soldier number 6758 in the British Army.

He was the first black man to ever join the regular British Army on the same terms as his white comrades. The good news for James was not only had he achieved his dream of joining the Army, but he was still with the 2nd Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry and he would stay with them for the rest of his military career.

The 2nd Battalion left Mandalay in December 1900 for their final posting back in India, this time at Wellington in the far South of the country. It was here that James affectionately known as Jimmy Durham started to build a reputation in the regiment as a disciplined athlete, especially as a runner. Finally in 1902 the 2nd Battalion were recalled to Britain.

They’d been away since 1884 and since then they had been to Egypt, Sudan, India, Burma, back to India again. Some of the men had spent 18 years outside Britain. It must have been an emotional homecoming for so many of those men.

It must have been a bit of an eye-opener for James Durham having lived in Africa and India all his life. Bishop Auckland in December must have been a bit of a shock. Whilst living in

England he was taken under the wing of yet another NCO, Sergeant Robson. He became such a loved member of the Robson’s family that the sergeants daughter, Stella, exchanged letters with James for the rest of their lives. In 1908, now married, Stella asked James Durham to stand as godfather to her first child.

By then James had experienced the joys of a posting with the battalion to Aldershot before, in 1905, heading to Ireland for the next four years. He was stationed at the Victoria Barracks in Cork where he seemingly became a well-known and well-liked face in the local community.

A devout teetotaler James became the battalion’s leading light in the Army Temperance Association.

Whilst in Ireland Jimmy also joined the regimental band where he played clarinet. Military bands often act as ambassadors for their regiments, performing at outside events, and it was on one of these band trips back to the northeast of England in 1908 that he met Jane Green. She was the daughter of a blacksmith. However she was also sister to a quartermaster sergeant in the Durham Light Infantry so maybe she had seen Jimmy before.

They fell in love and were married. Back in Ireland the Battalion moved 32 kilometres north from Cork to the barracks at Fermoy and it was here in May 1910 that the Durham Light Infantry held a full parade to mark the ascension of the new king, King George V.

But it was also her on 8 Au-

gust that Private James Francis Durham died of pneumonia. He was just 25 years old. He was buried with full military honours in the graveyard in the town. Many of those sergeants from Sudan and India, now long retired, travelled from the northeast of England to be there, such was their fondness and esteem for their lad.

Just three weeks after Jimmy had passed away, Jane gave birth to their baby daughter. She was christened Francis.

Exactly four years after Jimmy’s death Great Britain entered the First World War in August 1914. The 2nd Battalion Durham Light Infantry were part of the British Expeditionary Force sent to Mons.

Had he survived his pneumonia Jimmy would have probably been with them.

Lieutenant de Lisle, the officer who had lifted up the little toddler on the banks of the River Nile went on to become a general in World War I, serving on the Western Front including at the Battle of the Somme and at Gallipoli. Jimmy’s daughter, Francis, lived in Bishop Auckland until her death in 1998.



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Ready for inspection

Soldiers in any army around the world will normally have one thing in common - their intense dislike for inspections. And the old South African Defence Force seemed to love holding inspections.

For those who have never experienced a military inspection it is difficult to even try and begin explaining what it was like.

Harry (18) did his basic training at the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg during 1976. Let's hear his thoughts on inspections.

If there is one thing I will never forget from my national service then it's those bloody inspections.

Look, I've got nothing against being neat and tidy, but those inspections went totally overboard.

During basics we would have a bungalow inspection every morning. These were carried out by our corporal.

Friday mornings were the worst because those were not normal inspections, but were carried out by the company commander, the company sergeant major and our corporal. If they found something wrong on a Friday then you could bet that you would have a real bad weekend.

It's hard to explain to someone who wasn't there what it was really like.

I can remember more than one Thursday night when we didn't sleep at all. The entire night was taken up with preparing ourselves and our bungalow for inspection. There was just so much that had to be done.

First of all we had our individual equipment and clothing

to sort out. All of your clothing had to be cleaned and ironed just so. There was no such thing as dirty laundry for an inspection.

We didn't have a washing machine, so we used to do our washing in the bath. We would fill the bath with cold water, pour in some washing powder, and then climb into the bath. What you did was walk up and down, almost stamping your feet. This was done before supper so that your clothes had at least a chance of getting dry.

We had washing lines that were shared by the entire company, so you had to rush to make sure that you got a space.

We used to chain our washing to the line and lock it with a padlock. This may sound ridiculous but trust me it was necessary. If someone from another squad were missing an item of clothing, they would merely come to the washing line and replace it. If your washing was not chained to the line then you can bet that some of it would go missing.

While your washing was hanging to dry you would busy yourself with other tasks. All boots and shoes had to be polished and shinned so that they gleamed.

Then you would clean and polish the badges on your beret and step-out jacket, as well as the silver buttons on the jacket.

Next was your webbing. You had to see that it was clean and

that nothing was missing.

Cleaning your rifle was always a time consuming and dirty task. We would normally sit on the floor on a blanket or, if the weather was not too cold, sit outside the bungalow.

You would first remove the dust cover from the weapon and take out the breach-block and slide. Then you would take off the foresight, allowing you to remove the gas piston and spring.

You would then sit with a small steel brush, an old toothbrush and some cleaning fluid. I personally found that diesel was the best thing to clean your rifle with.

Every part had to be cleaned thoroughly. The gas piston was sometimes a pain in the butt to clean. Especially if you had been to the shooting range and fired the weapon. Carbon used to build up on the gas piston and it was difficult to remove. For some reason, and I think it was planned that way, we would always go shooting on a Thursday, the day before the big inspection.

Finally, when everything was spotless, you would lightly oil the weapon and then wipe off any excess oil.

By then it was hoped that your clothes would be dry. More often than not your clothes would still be damp and you would have to use an iron to iron them dry.

Ironing wasn't just a matter



RUB-A-DUB-SCRUB: A conscript tackles the job of scrubbing the bungalow floor.

of giving your clothes a quick once over. Forget that for a laugh. Creases had to be ironed into pants and shirts. You would then pack your cupboard and again this wasn't a simple matter of just folding and hanging stuff. Everything in the cupboard had to be in a specific place and hung or folded just so.

Now that your individual equipment was sorted out you had to begin work on the bungalow. Everyone was allocated a specific task such as cleaning windows, sweeping and mopping the floor, polishing the floor, cleaning the toilets and showers, and a hundred and one other tasks.

Floors had to be polished and shined. We all had two small squares of blanket and these were called 'taxies'. You put them under your boots when you walked around, or I should rather say slid around, the bungalow.

These taxis served a dual purpose. First of all you helped polish the floor and keep it shining. Secondly they prevented anyone scuffing the polished

floor with their boots.

Finally when everything was clean, and if there was still time, you got into bed for a few hours sleep.

The following morning began early, whether you had slept or not. You went and had a shower and shave and then gave the bathroom and toilets a final clean.

Then it was off to breakfast. Many a Friday morning we did not even bother going to breakfast because there was still too much work to be done. One of the last things you did was make your bed.

Now this was no simple matter of pulling the blankets straight. Making a bed in the army was a mission of its own. The part where the sheet folds over the blanket had to be a certain measurement, as did the distance between the top sheet and the bottom sheet. The blankets had to be squared at the sides and hospital corners had to be at each corner at the foot of the bed. Your blanket had to be tight enough for the corporal to bounce a coin off of it. Your towel was then folded across

the bottom of the bed.

I know many guys that used to sleep on the floor on a spare blanket rather than sleep on the bed that had taken so much effort to make. Of course if you were caught sleeping on the floor you landed in big trouble.

Finally you placed your rifle and working parts (breach-block and slide) on the bed. Then you stood next to your bed, waiting for the inspection.

Our company commander was a permanent force lieutenant and he wasn't too bad. Except when it came to inspections. Then he was like a dog on heat.

He would walk into the bungalow with the corporal and usually took no more than ten steps before he spotted something wrong.

"Corporal, is that a smudge on the window? No corporal, what's wrong with these people? Are they pigs? Totally unsatisfactory corporal, it just won't do. I suggest that tomorrow you take them for a bit of extra training."

Our corporal would take this as an affront against him and we knew that the following day we would have the dubious pleasure of extra drill or a few trips around the obstacle course.

It seemed that nothing you could do would ever please the corporal when it came to inspections. According to Colin (18) this was all part of the game plan and that no matter how much effort you put in, it still wouldn't be good enough. Colin explains his theory.

Try as you might, our corporal would always find something

wrong with the bungalow. Yet somehow I think that he would have always found something to moan about, no matter what you did. Here's a perfect example of what I'm talking about.

One Thursday night we were preparing for the Friday morning inspection.

This was the big inspection that was carried out by the corporal along with our company commander and company sergeant major. We would always go full out for that one because if we had a bad inspection we knew that we would be in deep trouble.

Anyway we cleaned like crazy and I must say that the bungalow was looking good. At about eight that evening the corporal walked in, took one look at the place, and went crazy.

"Look at this place," he shouted. "It looks like a bloody pigsty. Now I'm going to come back in about two hours time and this place had better be clean!"

We were disappointed because we had really worked hard getting the place clean. Muttering and mumbling we started to clean again. We redid the windows, polished the floors again, and redid everything that had been done earlier.

True to his word, he came back just after ten that night. His reaction was even worse.

"Rubbish!" he ranted and raved. "This is rubbish. Do you call this clean? This place looks like a whore's handbag. You troops are looking for me. I'm going to give you one last chance. I will come back at midnight and if this place is not clean then you and me will



ANOTHER INSPECTION BED: How the beds were laid out differed from unit to unit.

talk at the obstacle course this weekend."

He stormed out, slamming the bungalow door behind him.

We were so disheartened. Personally, I thought that the bungalow was looking cleaner than it ever had.

"Screw that," one of the guys said, and lay down on his bed. As if on a signal we all lay down on our beds and did absolutely nothing for the next two hours.

Just before midnight one of the guys who was waiting outside came running in and said that our corporal was on his way. We stood up and grabbed a cloth, a broom, anything to look busy.

He walked into the bungalow and looked around.

"Yes," he proclaimed with a smile. "That's one hundred times better. Now this bungalow is looking ready for inspection. Why can't you get it right first time? Okay, you can get some sleep now."

The lying, low-down piece of slime! Between ten o'clock and midnight we had not lifted a finger. The bungalow was exactly the same as it was when

he told us that it looked like a whore's handbag. Yet suddenly he thought it was one hundred times better.

It was then that I started to understand a little bit about beating the system.

Yet even though conscripts hated inspections with a passion, there were always one or two bizarre or funny moments. Mark (17) recalls one of them.

Every Friday morning was our big inspection. If we had a bad inspection our corporal would have no hesitation in cancelling our weekend pass.

So we used to work damn hard on a Thursday night to make sure that everything was up to standard.

One particular Thursday night we were polishing the floors and cleaning the windows. One of the guys cleaning the windows asked someone to throw him the bottle of window cleaner.

The bottle came sailing through the air and the guy that had asked for it somehow managed to miss his catch. The bottle crashed straight through the



ANOTHER INSPECTION BED: How the beds were laid out differed from unit to unit.

window.

We were in a flat panic. The window was one of those that had four separate panes of glass divided by a frame and one of these panes had been shattered. There would be no way that we could replace it before inspection the next morning.

We wracked our brains until one of the guys in the bungalow came up with a suggestion.

"Let's break out the remaining three panes of glass in the frame. At least then it won't look so obvious."

He took one of his army boots and, using the heel as a hammer, broke the three remaining panes of glass. We picked up all the glass and threw it away.

The following morning the company commander, with our corporal in tow, carried out the inspection. I was certain that he would notice that one of the windows had no glass in it.

He completed the inspection and we breathed a collective sigh of relief. Just as he was about to leave he turned to us

and nodded his head.

"Do you see that window," he pointed straight at the broken window and our hearts sank. "Next week I want to see all the windows looking as clean as that."

Given the fact that conscripts came from all walks of life, you would always get those from the wrong side of the line. Those that just couldn't seem to follow rules and regulations.

Martin (18) recalls one of the troops in his squad that always seemed to be in trouble.

We had a guy in our squad by the name of Manny. He was Portuguese and from the south of Johannesburg. He was trouble with a capital T.

I actually liked Manny. He had this dry sense of humour and always had something to say. Our corporal hated him with a passion.

We had our first weekend pass and when Manny came back he had brought a bottle of brandy with him.

Now this was against all rules and standing orders. First of all as national servicemen we were not allowed to drink spirits. Secondly you were not allowed to keep alcohol in the barracks. And you were not allowed to drink in your bungalow.

Manny was saving his bottle for the following weekend so he could sneak a few drinks.

On the Friday morning it was the inspection from the company commander and company sergeant major.

Your bed had to be made with just one blanket but, because it was winter, we were issued with three blankets. For inspection two of the blankets had to be folded and stored on the top shelf of your cupboard.

While inspecting Manny's cupboard the sergeant major noticed that the blankets were not straight. So he ripped them from the cupboard.

The only problem was that Manny had hidden his full bottle of brandy between the folds of one of the blankets.

The bottle came flying out at a speed and hit the sergeant major right between the eyes before falling to the floor and breaking.

It knocked the sergeant major straight onto his bum and he sat there on the floor and for at least five minutes cursed at the top of his voice. A sailor would have paid a month's salary to learn language like that.

Manny was charged with a whole list of offences and given a summary trial that same day. He ended up being sentenced to seven days in detention barracks.

And it took us weeks to get

rid of the smell of brandy.

Some troops were not even fortunate enough to stay in a bungalow during basic training. Wayne (17) spent his basic training in a tent along with seven other troops.

There weren't enough bungalows to accommodate our intake, so about 80 of us were housed in tents.

We had a canvas groundsheet that covered the floor, so one big advantage was that we didn't have to polish the floor. All we had to do was make sure that it was swept.

There were serious disadvantages though. First of all it was winter and at night it was freezing inside the tent.

Even with the tent flaps closed I would often wake up shivering in the early hours of

the morning. I just couldn't get warm.

The other thing was the dust. It was very dry and there was no grass where our tents were, just this red dirt. When the wind used to blow, which it seemed to do all the time, everything would get coated with this fine layer of dust.

We would get ready for inspection in the mornings and our tent would be perfect.

By the time the corporal arrived for inspection, however, everything would be covered with dust and we would fail inspection. It used to drive us mad.

Many troops would come up with some bright idea or short cut to make inspections easier. Then again, the corporals knew all the short cuts and had prob-



NEAT & TIDY: Everything had to be packed just so.

ably seen them all before. As Tony (18) discovered.

One evening I was busy polishing something with some stuff called Dri-Brite. I spilled some of it on my boot and I

took a cloth and wiped it off.

To my surprise, and delight, it left the part that I had wiped clean looking all shiny. I couldn't believe that someone hadn't noticed this before.

So the next morning, just before inspection, I poured some Dri-Brite on my boots, left it on for a few minutes, and then wiped it clean with a cloth. My boots had never looked that clean and shiny before.

We were standing next to our beds at attention and our corporal had just walked in. He started his inspection and, as usual, he was not in the best of moods.

For some reason I glanced down at my boots and nearly had a heart attack. My boots had turned from a shiny colour to something that looked as if someone had spilt curdled milk on them. It appeared that once

the Dri-Brite dried it left this sickly looking white residue on the boots.

There was nothing I could do. I mean I couldn't suddenly grab some boot polish and begin cleaning my boots.

When the corporal got to my bed he looked me up and down and said with a smirk, "Ja Mister Dri-Brite."

Of course he knew exactly what I had done. Now I knew why no-one else tried the fantastic short cut I had discovered.

That evening, after supper, I received a one hour 'oppie'.

Inspections usually got the day off to a bad start and from there it became progressively worse. When asked to sum up his basic training, Harry (18) had the following thoughts.

If you had to ask me for a

phrase or saying that I remember best from basics it would have to be "Staan lanks julle beddens gereed vir inspeksie." (Stand next to your beds ready for inspection).

And if I thought that the inspections during basics were bad, it was nothing to what was to come.

I was selected to do JLs (Junior Leaders Course) and the inspections there made basics look like child's play.

They said that if we were going to become officers and NCOs then we would have to set an example.

Those inspections were over the top. I'm not joking when I say that you could have eaten off the floors in our bungalow.

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.



SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

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

Click on the logo above to visit the SAAFA website

Situation Report

South African Military Veteran Affairs, Outeniqua MOTH Shellhole, George, Southern Cape - Saturday 18 February 2023. By **General (Ret) Roland de Vries**.

The South African Defence Force Association hosted a Veterans social event at the Outeniqua Shellhole in George on 18 February 2023.

General (Ret) Roland de Vries attended as guest speaker and shared “His “ distinguished military story around the braai fire.

True to an exemplary leader he published a SitRep report on the event, attached for inclusion herewith.

Roland excelled in many facets of the military, one of these being the Design, Development and Build Program of the Ratel .

Over and above its ability this vehicle was ahead of its time from a technological point of view produced by South Africans for a SA Bushwar that was unique .

Roland retired as the Deputy Chief of SA Army in 1999.

Below is a copy of his address.

Honoured veterans of the former South African Defence Force (SADF) ... keep our people together more so now than ever before especially in these difficult times.

Thank you for doing just that and in caring for each other!

This was the central message Pieter Viljoen of the South African Defence Force Association shared with us when he addressed our informal gathering at the Outeniqua MOTH Shellhole yesterday: “It does not matter to what veteran organisa-

tion you belong in the Southern Cape, our Shellhole is a haven to all, we stand together and care for each other as a kinship”!

These words were echoed by our Chaplain Johan Bruwer, when he opened with a sermon and prayer.

Thank you so much for the invitation to could have attended yesterday’s gathering of our veterans, their families and friends in George. It was a huge privilege and honour to do so and to participate in the storytelling.

Many of you had served in the so-called bush war from 1966 until 1989. Not too long ago you belonged to one of the best military forces in the world.

The South African Border War, also referred to as the Namibian-Angolan-South African Border War, still serves as a primary benchmark for military studies throughout the world, for example at the Defence College of the Australian Defence Force in Canberra.

The South African Border War was an armed struggle which typically evolved into a transnational conflict over time and brought about all the imaginable political, diplomatic, military and social ramifications and complexities of African warfare.

It featured low- as well as high-intensity engagements across the full spectrum of warfare, all played out within a vast geographical expanse over an extended period – all elements

containing valuable lessons to be learned.

It is also important to grasp the impact of the fighting in southern Africa on the development of counterinsurgency warfare and for that matter mobile conventional warfare, as practiced successfully by the South Africans at the time.

In recent years much has been written on insurgency and counterinsurgency from the American and British perspectives, but as Dr. Michael Evans of the Australian Defence College in Canberra observes: “Only a quarter-century ago, the southern African region was one of the world’s leading laboratories for the theory and practice of counterinsurgency”.

Evans believes that much can be learned from the Border War by scholars of strategic studies and military practitioners.

John W. Turner, an internationally renowned military author, who has also written about insurgency wars in Africa, believes that “the counterinsurgency war by the SADF against the Southwest People’s Organisation (SWAPO) in northern SWA (also called Namibia) in 1966-1989 is the only case of a clear-cut victory by security forces against a communist-backed insurgency with considerable foreign support based in supposedly invulnerable positions across the Angolan border”.

He adds that “it is unfortunate

that many lessons learned by the South Africans during their counter-insurgency effort still remain relatively little-known” (Turner, John, W: Continent Ablaze - The Insurgency Wars in Africa 1960 to the Present, Jonathan Ball Publishers (Pty) Ltd, Johannesburg (Originally published 1998 by Arms and Armour Press an Imprint of the Cassel Group), 1998, p. 34.).

Remember all of this well veterans and be proud of your military history. Stand tall!

That is why it is also wonderful to see the many books on our proud military history, historical exhibits and military memorabilia displayed at the Outeniqua Shellhole.

In most vital organisations there is a common bond of interdependence, interlocking contributions, mutual interests and simple joy. This is true to our respective veteran organisations in the Southern Cape as well ... for that matter in South Africa.



SITUATION REPORT: From left: Pieter Viljoen (South African Defence Force Association), General (Ret) Roland de Vries, Old Bill Barry Shackleton.

This is exactly what I experienced at our gathering yesterday ... not to waver or falter or fear, but simply to form centres of strength and be strong in Faith.

South Africa should be a haven for people living together in peace and prosperity in a country that ensures the survival and safety of all citizens, who wish to co-exist peacefully for present and future generations. This is

what we had fought for. We can achieve this ideal once again!

Remember these principles well, and that the morale is to the physical as tree is to one, stand fast, stand together and be counted!

We are in the hope creation business!

Thank you and Bless you!

Strength, honour, kinship and above all Faith!

Final resting place

Large Charles Ross of the South African Legion and editor of the Springbok Newsletter wrote:

I enjoyed the article ‘For Valour’ in the February edition.

On my first visit to the Maitland Cemetery in Cape Town as the head of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission office in South Africa I was intrigued by the headstone of ‘Conducted Glasscock’. Sometime later I received a copy of Ian Uys’s book on VC’s during the Anglo-Boer War and was I able to read about how he was awarded

the VC. After that, I made a point of looking for the graves of recipients of the VC who are buried in South Africa.

On the initiative of Adv David Scholtz of the Johannesburg Branch of the SA Military History Society, a memorial was erected near the spot where Captain Arthur Martin-Leak was awarded his first VC. I attended the unveiling of the memorial in September 2014. I attach a photo of the memorial.



Fighter Aces of World War I

Historically a fighter ace, is someone that has shot down five or more enemies in combat. Some air forces would credit a pilot with a share in a kill. In other words if two planes shot down the same enemy aircraft, each pilot

would receive half a kill. In this article we will be looking at the top fighter aces of World War I. We have, however, decided to up the ante. Instead of looking at aces that scored five kills, we are instead looking at aces that had 20 or

more kills. We will be looking at the top five aces from each country, their number of confirmed kills, the total number of aces with 20 or more kills, and the number of those aces that were killed in action.

World War I

Germany

Before October 1916 the *Fliegertruppen des deutschen Kaiserreiches* (Imperial German Flying Corps) was the air arm of the German Army. In October 1916 this name changed to the *Deutsche Luftstreitkräfte* (German Air Force).

Germany had 74 aces with more than 20 kills, the most of any country in World War I. Of these 22 were killed in action. The top five German aces of World War I were:

- Manfred von Richthofen (80 kills). He was the top ace of World War I and was nick-

named 'The Red Baron'. He was killed in action on 21 April 1918.

- Ernst Udet (62 kills). He survived the war and went on to become a general in the German Luftwaffe in World War II. He committed suicide on 17 November 1941.
- Erich Löwenhardt (54 kills). He was killed in action on 10 August 1918.
- Joseph Jacobs (48 kills).
- Werner Voss (48 kills). He was killed in action on 23 September 1917.



Manfred von Richthofen

ber of kills. After the war he became the Inspector of French fighter forces from 1937 to 1939.

- Georges Guynemer (53 kills). He was killed in action on 11 September 1917.
- Charles Nungesser (43 kills). After the war he mysteriously disappeared on an attempt to make the first non-stop transatlantic flight from Paris to New York.

The French air force during World War I were known as *Aéronautique Militaire*.

The French ended the war with 14 aces with more than 20 kills. Four of these were killed in action.

The top five French aces of World War I were:

- René Fonck (75 kills). He was the top Allied ace of World War I as well as having the second highest num-



- Georges Madon (41 kills). He survived the war but was killed in an aircraft crash in Tunis, Tunisia on 11 No-

Canada

The Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was the air arm of the British Army before and during the First World War, until it merged with the Royal Naval Air Service on 1 April 1918 to form the Royal Air Force (RAF). As Canada was a Commonwealth country, their pilots flew for the RFC and later the RAF.

Canada had 22 aces with more than 20 kills. Three of them were killed in action.

The top five Canadian aces of World War I were:

- Billy Bishop (72 kills). He was awarded the Victo-

United Kingdom



Edward "Mick" Mannock

Second only to the Germans, the United Kingdom had a total of 43 aces with 20 or more kills. It is interesting to note that

- Maurice Boyau (35 kills). Before the war he played six tests for the French rugby

ria Cross. After the war, in 1929, he became Chairman of British Air Lines.

- Raymond Collishaw (60 kills). During the Second World War, Collishaw attained the rank of Air Vice Marshal and was awarded a Companion of the Order of the Bath during his service.
- Donald MacLaren (54 kills). After the war he helped found the Royal Canadian Air Force.
- William George Barker (50 kills). With a VC, DSO & Bar, MC & Two Bars, he became the most decorated



Billy Bishop

serviceman in the history of Canada.

- Alfred Atkey (38 kills).

their top four aces were all killed in action. Sixteen of their aces did not survive the war.

The top five UK aces of World War I were:

- Edward Mannock (61 kills). Born in Ireland, he was given the nickname "Mick". He was awarded the VC, DSO & Two Bars, MC & Bar. He was killed in action on 16 July 1918.
- James McCudden (57 kills). Awarded the VC, DSO & Bar, MC & Bar, MM, he was killed in action on 9 July 1918.
- George McElroy (47 kills). Born in Donnybrook, County Dublin, Ireland, he first served in the Royal Irish Regiment. He was shot down by ground fire and killed on 31 July 1918.

- Albert Ball (44 kills). He was another ace that was awarded the Victoria Cross. At the time of his death on 7 May 1917 he was the United Kingdom's leading flying ace.

- Tom F. Hazell (43 kills). He was the fifth most successful British "flying ace" of the war, and the third most successful Irish-born pilot, behind Edward Mannock and George McElroy, as well the only pilot to survive the war from both groups. In 1944, at the age of 52, Hazell became the commander of "D" Company, 24th (Tettenhall) Battalion, South Staffordshire Home Guard during the later part of the Second World War.

South Africa

South African pilots in World War I flew for the Royal Flying Corps and later the Royal Air Force.

They had six pilots that achieved 20 or more kills and one of them was killed in action.

The top five South African aces of World War I were:

- Andrew Beauchamp-Proctor (54 kills). He first served as a signalman with the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles in the German South-West Africa campaign. He was given an honourable discharge, but joined up again in August 1915 with the Royal Flying Corps. He was awarded the VC, DSO, MC & Bar, and DFC.
- William Lancelot Jordan (39 kills). He first served with

the Royal Naval Air Service and then the Royal Air Force.

- Samuel Kinkead (32 kills). He first saw service with the Royal Naval Air Service before moving to the Royal Air Force. He volunteered to serve with 47 Squadron after war's end, when they were sent into Russia to intercede in the Russian Civil War.
- Thomas Sinclair Harrison (22 kills). Not only did he survive the war, he returned to military service during World War II as an intelligence officer in the South African Air Force.
- Douglas John Bell (20 kills). He was one of the first fighter pilots to successfully engage an enemy multi-engine

Australia



Robert A. Little

Australian pilots flew for either the Royal Naval Air Service, Royal Air Force, or Australian Flying Corps (AFC).

This was established in 1912, but did not begin flight training until 1914.

Australia had eight pilots with 20 kills or more, three of which were killed in action.

The top five Australian aces of World War I were:

- Robert A. Little (47 kills). Australia's most successful ace of World War I, he was killed in action on 27 May 1918.
- Roderic Dallas (39 kills). He was killed in action on 1 June 1918.
- Harry Cobby (29 kills). He was the leading fighter ace of the Australian Flying Corps



Andrew Beauchamp-Proctor

bomber. He was killed in action on 27 May 1918.

during World War I. At the outbreak of World War II he rejoined the air force and ended the war with the rank of Air Commodore.

- Elwyn King (26 kills). Having survived the war, he joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1939 with the rank of squadron leader. He died unexpectedly of cerebral oedema on 28 November, aged 47.
- Alexander Pentland (23 kills). Better known as "Jerry", he saw action at Gallipoli in 1915. The following year he joined the Royal Flying Corps. He reenlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force in World War II with the rank of squadron leader.

Belgium

Belgium had only one ace with more than 20 kills during World War I.

He was Willy Coppens and he achieved 37 kills. He flew for the *Luchtcomponent* (Belgian Air Component) which was founded in 1909 and is one of the world's oldest air services.

He was wounded on 14 October, less than a month before the war ended. This wound resulted in his left leg being amputated.

In September 1928, despite his disability, he parachuted from 6,005 metres, setting a world record that stood for four years.

He died on 21 December 1986 at the age of 94.



Willy Coppens

Italy



Francesco Baracca

Italian pilots flew for the *Corpo Aeronautico Militare* (Military Aviation Corps) which was formed as part of the part of the *Regio Esercito* (Royal Army) on 7 January 1915.

Five Italian pilots went on to achieve more than 20 kills, with their top ace being killed in action.

The top Italian aces of World War I were:

- Francesco Baracca (34 kills). He was killed in action on 19 June 1918. The emblem on ei-

ther side of his plane of a black horse prancing on its two rear feet was the inspiration behind the Ferrari logo.

- Silvio Scaroni (26 kills). He transferred from the artillery in March 1915 and joined the Military Aviation Corps. During World War II, he commanded the Italian air forces in Sicily.
- Pier Ruggero Piccio (24 kills). He would go on to become a Lieutenant General and the founding Chief of Staff of the Italian Air Force.
- Flavio Baracchini (21 kills). After the war he worked as an inventor, working in the areas of aviation communications and explosives.
- Fulco Ruffo di Calabria (20 kills). In World War II he became a senator under the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini



Baracca's emblem



Ferrari logo

Austria-Hungary

Pilots from Austria-Hungary flew for the *Kaiserliche und Königliche Luftfahrtruppen* (Imperial and Royal Aviation Troops).

They had three pilots that achieved 20 or more kills and all but one of them survived the war.

The three Austria-Hungary aces of World War I were:

- Julius Arigi (32 kills). After the war he became an ardent Nazi and, in 1928, he joined the NSDAP Party and was

involved in espionage for the Third Reich. In 1938 he became a *Luftwaffe* fighter instructor.

- Benno Fiala Ritter von Fernbrugg (28 kills). During World War II, he served in the *Luftwaffe* as a *Hauptmann* (Captain).
- Franke Linke-Crawford (27 kills). He was killed in action on 30 July 1918.



Julius Arigi

USA



Eddie Rickenbacker

dent but temporary branch of the U.S. War Department during World War I by two executive orders of President Woodrow Wilson

Because of their late arrival in the war, only two US pilots achieved 20 or more kills.

The two American aces of World War I were:

- Eddie Rickenbacker (26 kills). He was awarded the Medal of Honor during World War I. After the war he became involved in numerous business ventures that included starting the Rickenbacker Motor Company, purchasing Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and becoming president of Eastern Air Lines. Under Rickenbacker's direction Eastern Air Lines, along with other air lines such as Pan American, provided the means of war to British forces and flew munitions and supplies across the Atlantic.

America officially entered World War I on 6 April 1917.

Prior to that many American pilots flew for the *Lafayette Escadrille* (Lafayette Squadron) which was established in 1916 under French command. The volunteers had come to France to help during World War I.

The US Army Air Service was established as an indepen-

- Francis W. Gillet (20 kills). He joined the Aeronautical Division of the U.S. Signal Corps as a cadet in April 1917. On 31 May 1917 he entered the School of Military Aeronautics at the University of Illinois for preliminary flight training, but obtained an honourable discharge on the grounds of dependency on 25 July 1917. He then enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps Canada using the name Frederick Warrington Gillet. He used this name to avoid losing his American citizenship. He then went on to fly for the Royal Air Force where he won the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar. He was also awarded the Belgian *Croix de Guerre*.

New Zealand

Pilots from New Zealand flew for the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Air Force.

Two New Zealand pilots went on to score 20 or more kills. Both of them survived the war.

The two New Zealand aces of World War I were:

- Keith Caldwell (25 kills). Not only was he New Zealand's top fighter ace in World War I, in World War II he rose to the rank of Air Commodore in the Royal New Zealand Air Force.
- Keith Park (20 kills). He first served in the artillery and took part in the Gallipoli Campaign. He then

transferred from the New Zealand Army to the British Army. He then joined the Royal Flying Corps. During World War II he became an Air Vice Marshall and later Air Chief Marshall in the Royal Air Force. He was in operational command during two of the most significant air battles in the European theatre in the Second World War, helping to win the Battle of Britain and the Battle of Malta. He was knighted and became Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Rodney Park, GCB, KBE, MC & Bar, DFC.



Keith Caldwell

Russia

The Imperial Russian Air Service was formed in 1912 and operated for five years. It only saw combat in World War I before being reorganized and renamed in 1917 following the creation of Soviet Russia.

It formed what would later become the Soviet Air Forces. They had one ace, Alexander Kazakov, who achieved 20 kills. He originally flew for the Imperial Russian Air Service but on 1 August 1918 he became

a major in the Royal Air Force and was appointed to be commanding officer in charge of an aviation squadron of the Slavo-British Allied Legion made up of Sopwith Camel planes.

The Top Ten Aces of World War I

1. Manfred von Richthofen (Germany) - 80 kills.
2. René Fonck (France) - 75 kills.
3. Billy Bishop (Canada) - 72 kills.
4. Ernst Udet (Germany) - 62 kills.
5. Edward Mannock (United Kingdom) - 61 kills.
6. Raymond Collishaw (Canada) - 60 kills.
7. James McCudden (United Kingdom) - 57 kills.
8. Andrew Beauchamp-Proctor (South Africa), Erich Löwenhardt (Germany), and Donald MacLaren (Canada) - all with 54 kills.

It's also interesting to compare the World War I fighter aces against the aces of World War II.

During this conflict an incredible 536 pilots went on to

achieve 20 or more kills.

Of these 536 aces, no fewer than 427 of them were from the German *Luftwaffe*.

An even more sobering fact is that the top 120 fighter aces

of World War II were from the *Luftwaffe*. Between them, the top five German aces accounted for 1,543 kills.



Kurt Student

The highest ranking member of Germany's parachute infantry, Student commanded the Fallschirmjäger throughout World War II.

Kurt Student was born into an upper-middle class family in the city of Birkholz on 12 May 1890.

He wanted to become a doctor, but his family could not afford the cost of the education needed.

His mother died when he was 11 and his father sent him to the Royal Prussian Cadet School in Potsdam in 1901. Here he could train for a career in the military.

Discipline at the school was strict. Much emphasis was placed on sport and loyalty to the emperor and nation. Student did well at school, except in mathematics.

On graduating he became a *Fähnrich* (Officer Candidate) in the Imperial German Army in 1910 and was commissioned a lieutenant in March 1911, initially serving with a light infantry battalion.

In 1913 Student transferred to the German Army Air Service and underwent training as a pilot.

During World War I he served as a pilot and in July 1916 he became a charter member of the *Fokker Scourge*, when he scored his first confirmed victory, forcing Nieuport 11 no. 1324 to land behind German lines.

He then served in aerial units of the Third Army on the Western Front, including *Jagdstaffel 9* (Jasta 9), which he command-

ed from 5 October 1916 – 2 May 1917, when he was wounded.

He scored six air-to-air victories over French aircraft between 1916 – 1917, with two coming after his wound. He left Jasta 9 on 14 March 1918.

After the war Student was assigned to military research and development. Due to the strict terms of the Treaty of Versailles, German was not allowed to develop an air force.

Gliding, however, was not forbidden by the treaty and Student became involved in researching the use of military gliders.

He also attended the Red Army Air Forces manoeuvres, where he first came into contact with the idea of airborne operations. This would play a big part in future thinking.

After Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, the *Luft-*

waffe was secretly reestablished. Student transferred from the Army to the air force and was appointed by Hermann Göring to be the head of its training schools. In July 1938, he was named commander of airborne and air-landing troops, and in September commanding general of the 7th Air Division, Germany's first paratroop division.

A parachute training school was established at Stendal, 150 km from Berlin. All paratroopers were volunteers.

The division played no part in the invasion of Poland. In one sense, the overwhelming power of the German military meant that it was not really needed.

The main reason, however, was Hitler's desire to keep such a new unit secret until the *Blitzkrieg* was



OF COURSE IT HURT: A German paratrooper shows General Student where he was wounded. The troops loved Student and gave him the nickname "Papa".

unleashed against Western Europe.

In their first action, Student's troops failed to achieve even the least of their objectives in the Battle for the Hague on 10 May 1940, taking and losing three airfields on the first day of the battle. The *Luftwaffe* also incurred huge losses.

German paratroopers were used with success in the campaigns in Norway, Belgium and Holland.

In Belgium, Student's paratroopers, under the command of *Oberleutnant der Luftwaffe* Walter Koch, captured the famous fortress of Eben-Emael. They landed gilders on the unprotected top of the fortress.

Student was decorated with the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for his leadership and bravery in the operation.

Following the Battle of Rotterdam in Holland, Student was

almost taken prisoner.

It was in Rotterdam that Student was shot in the head. The round that almost ended his life was fired by a sniper of the *SS Leibstandarte*.

Still conscious but partly paralysed, Student was taken to the bomb-damaged hospital in Rotterdam where he was operated on by 36 year old Dutch brain specialist, Doctor Cornelis van Staveren.

Student would later thank van Staveren with the words, "*Sie haben mir das Leben gerettet*" (You saved my life).

Further operations were carried out in Berlin by Professor Wilhelm Tönnes, but it was only eight months later, in January 1941, that Student resumed active duty.

The input of Student's paratroopers in Western Europe had done a lot to convince Hitler that they were an important aspect of

his military.

In January 1941, Student was promoted to *Generaloberst* (Colonel General) and named commanding general of the *XI Fliegerkorps* (Air Corps), the newly formed command for the expanding German airborne forces.

In this capacity Student directed *Unternehmen Merkur* (Operation Mercury), the airborne invasion of Crete in May 1941.

Crete was taken, but with high losses to both sides. The Allies suffered 4,123 dead an unknown number wounded, and 17,479 captured. A number of ships were also sunk or damaged, including an aircraft carrier.

The German losses included 1,195 dead, 2,000 wounded, and 1,759 missing. A total of 284 *Luftwaffe* aircraft were destroyed or written off and several hundred were damaged.

One major disadvantage for the *Fallschirmjäger* was that individual weapons were dropped in canisters, due to their practice of exiting the aircraft at low altitude.

The Germans used colour-coded parachutes to distinguish the canisters carrying rifles, ammunition, crew-served weapons and other supplies.

This was a flaw that left the paratroopers armed only with knives, pistols and grenades in the first few minutes after landing.

Poor design of German parachutes compounded the problem; the standard German harness had only one riser to the canopy and could not be steered.

Even the 25 percent of paratroops armed with sub-machine guns were at a disadvantage, given the weapon's limited range. Many *Fallschirmjäger* were shot before they reached weapons canisters.

The high casualties caused Hitler to forbid future airborne operations.

Acting as the temporary commander of the island, immediately after the surrender of Crete on 31 May 1941, on Göring's order Student issued an order for a launching of a wave of brutal reprisals against the local population with the Massacre of Kondomari and the Razing of Kandanos being typical examples.

His actual order read:

"It is certain that the civilian population including women and boys have taken part in the fighting, committed sabotage, mutilated and killed wounded soldiers. It is therefore high time to combat all cases of this kind, to undertake reprisals and punitive expeditions which must be carried through with exemplary terror. The harshest measures must indeed be taken and I order the following: shooting for all cases of proven cruelty, and I wish this to be done by the same units who have suffered such atrocities. The following reprisals will be taken:

1. Shooting
2. Fines
3. Total destruction of villages by burning
4. Extermination of the male population of the territory in question

My authority will be necessary for measures under 3 and 4. All these measures must, however, be taken rapidly and omit-



BRAND NEW WEAPON: General Kurt Student is given a demonstration of the new FG 42 (*Fallschirmjärgewehr 42*) that was designed specifically for the German paratroopers.

ting all formalities.

In view of the circumstances the troops have a right to this and there is no need for military tribunals to judge beasts and assassins."

In 1943, Student ordered Major Harald Mors to plan *Unternehmen Eiche* (Operation Oak), the successful raid conducted by a special *Fallschirmjäger* unit and a small team of Waffen-SS Commandos led by *Hauptsturmführer* (SS captain) Otto Skorzeny to free Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

They landed with gliders and STOL (Short Take Off and Landing) aircraft on a hilltop. Student received the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for his role in the operation.

Student was transferred to Italy and later to France, where he was involved in the battles of Normandy in 1944.

He was put in charge of the First Paratroop Army and took part in countering the Allied Operation Market Garden, near Arnhem.

After a brief time at the Eastern Front in Mecklenburg in 1945, he was captured by British forces in Schleswig-Holstein in April of that same year, before he could take command of Army Group Vistula.

In May 1947, Student was put on trial on eight charges of mistreatment and murder of prisoners of war by his men in Crete (but not his crimes against the civilian population of Crete, like those at Kondomari, Alikianos and Kandanos).

He was found guilty of three charges, but avoided a stern punishment owing to the testimony of Brig. Inglis, commander of the 4th NZ Brigade. Student was sentenced to five years of imprisonment but was given an early discharge in 1948 for medical reasons.

Kurt Student died on 1 July, 1978 in Lemgo, West Germany, at the age of 88. He was the last surviving *Luftwaffe Genera- loberst*.

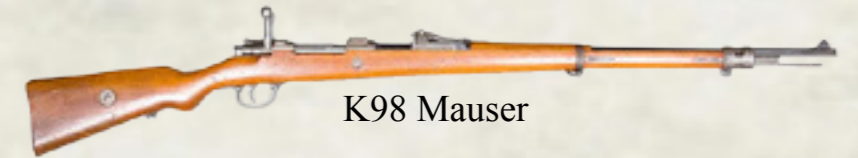
Fallschirmjäger Kit



Jump boots



M38 Helmet



K98 Mauser



MP-40



FG-42



Walther P-38



Gravity knife



Fallschirmjäger jump badge

M24 Stielhandgranate



Göffel (Fork and spoon)



MP-40 ammo pouches



Jump gloves



Knee pads



Mess Kit



Canteen



Trenching tool

The Green Devils

WWII German Fallschirmjäger

Each month "Forged in Battle" looks at weapons, equipment or units that have been tried and tested on the battlefield. This month we look at the Fallschirmjäger, the WWII German paratroopers.

Nicknamed "Green Devils" by the Allies, the Fallschirmjäger were the paratrooper branch of the German Luftwaffe (Air Force).

The name Fallschirmjäger is made up from the German word for parachute, *Fallschirm*, and from the name for the elite light infantry of the Prussian Army, *Jäger* or hunter.

It was the Americans that first explored the concept of inserting a large body of troops inside enemy territory by means of parachute. Actually it was the commander of the US Air Corps in France during World War I, General Billy Mitchell, that first proposed the idea.

During the period after World War I there had been rapid developments in aircraft and aviation technology.

The Allied command, however, were forced to abandon

Mitchell's idea as they were wholly unprepared for such an undertaking, both logistically and in materiel.

It was the Soviet Union and Italy that were among the first to recognise the potential of airborne forces.

One of the problems with deploying a sizeable force by parachute was they would have to be dropped from a sufficient height to give them enough time to

open their parachutes.

The parachutes used at that stage were rip-cord types and had to be opened manually by each individual parachutist.

The height they would have to jump at meant that they were vulnerable to ground fire.

They would also be spread

out over a distance when they landed.

These problems were solved when the Italians developed the static-line parachute in the 1920s.

Static-line parachutes are attached to the inside of the aircraft and deploy automatically once the parachutist jumps from

the aircraft.

This technique allowed the jumps to take place at a much lower altitude, limiting exposure to ground fire, and providing tighter drop zone groupings.

Early Developments

It was the Soviets that first demonstrated the military pos-





a detachment of 14 officers and 400 men in just two days.

On 22 December 1933 the unit was renamed *Landespolizeigruppe General Göring*.

Although they carried out conventional police duties, it was always Göring's intention to produce a unit that would match the *Reichswehr*, the regular German Army.

The Fallschirmjäger are born

After Adolf Hitler introduced conscription on 16 March 1935, *Landespolizei General Göring* was transformed into *Regiment General Göring (RGG)* on 1 April 1935.

On 1 October 1935 the unit was incorporated into the newly formed Luftwaffe and training commenced at Altengrabow.

Göring ordered that a group of volunteers be drawn for parachute training. These volunteers would form a core *Fallschirmschützen Bataillon* (parachute soldiers battalion), a cadre for future *Fallschirmtruppe* (parachute troops).

It is interesting to note that one of the early Fallschirmjäger volunteers was Max Schmeling, the German boxer who was heavyweight champion of the world between 1930 and 1932.

The 1st Jäger Battalion/RGG was formed in January 1936 under the command of Bruno Bräuer. The 15th Engineer Company/RGG was also formed and both units were transferred to training area Döberitz for jump training while the rest of the regiment was sent to Altengrabow.

The parachute arm was officially inaugurated on 29 Janu-

ary 1936 with an Order of the Day calling for recruits for parachute training at the Stendal Parachute Training School located 96 km west of Berlin.

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

Formation

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

These included the 1st Parachute Army, the 1st and 2nd Parachute Corps, and 13 Parachute Divisions. There were also three independent regiments and brigades - *Ramcke Parachute Brigade*, *Luftlande-Sturm-Regiment*, and *Fallschirmjäger-Regiment Hübner*.

The Germany Army also had three parachute formations - The *Brandenburger Regiment*, 22nd Air Landing Division, and 91st Air Landing Division. The Waffen-SS had two parachute formations - the 500th and 600th Parachute Battalions.

World War II

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

The first opposed airborne attacks took place during the

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

On 10 May 1940 the Fallschirmjäger proved their worth when they captured Eben Emael in Belgium. (*See this month's Battlefield*). Eben Emael was considered to be one of the most powerful fortification in the world.

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

They did cause considerable disruption behind the Dutch lines and they successfully captured bridges at Moerdijk and Dordrecht. Yet they suffered heavy casualties in taking Dordrecht. They also captured airfields at Valkenburg, Ockenburg, Waalhaven, and Yprenburg.

Yet they failed to capture Hague and force the Dutch to surrender. The 22nd Airlanding Division was forced to land many of its aircraft on exposed motorways because the 7th Air Division had failed to secure designated airfields. Most aircraft ended up being shot up by Dutch infantry and artillery fire.

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

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

Invasion of Crete

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

The Fallschirmjäger captured a critical bridge that crossed the canal in the Isthmus of Corinth so German forces could pursue Allied forces further in the Greek mainland.

Due to carelessness, demolition charges were accidentally detonated, causing heavy casualties and damage to the bridge. Heavy enemy ground fire also took a toll. One group of paratroopers were accidentally dropped into the sea where they all drowned.

They did manage to capture British anti aircraft positions which forced the surrender of the local town, resulting in the capture of 12,000 Commonwealth and Greek troops.

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

One of the reasons for the heavy casualties was because of the design of the parachute. The parachute harness attached with a single strap to the body and the paratrooper had to land on his hands and his knees in a forward roll.

This meant that they could not safely jump with rifles or submachine guns. These, along with crew-served weapons, were

dropped in a separate container.

Armed only with pistols and hand grenades, the Fallschirmjäger first had to find the container and retrieve their weapons. Many were killed before they could arm themselves.

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

Action on all fronts

During the invasion of Russia in 1941 the Fallschirmjäger acquitted themselves well in operations in the Leningrad area.

They were specifically deployed to the east of Leningrad on the River Neva to confront a Red Army effort to relieve the city. In October 1941, the German paratroopers were involved in heavy fighting against the Soviets and were successful in holding off Soviet attacks.

In July 1942, the Ramcke Parachute Brigade was deployed to North Africa to assist the Axis war effort there. In late October the Brigade participated in the 2nd Battle of El Alamein.

On 12 September 1943, the Fallschirmjäger conducted a successful rescue mission of Italian Prime minister Benito Mussolini at the Gran Sasso.

From 17 January to 18 May 1944, the Fallschirmjäger participated in the Battle of Monte Cassino.

The World War II-era German Fallschirmjäger, Brandenburgers, and especially the 22nd Airlanding Division glider borne paras laid the foundation for modern day Air Assault operations.

sibilities of airborne infantry.

They held a series of manoeuvres in 1935 and 1936 when they dropped 1,000 troops and then delivered another 2,500 with heavy equipment via air landings. They assembled forces then proceeded to carry out conventional infantry attacks with the support of heavy machine guns and light artillery.

The actual jumps were far from perfect. The Soviet paratroopers had to exit their slow moving Tupolev TB-3 transport aircraft through a hatch in the roof and then position themselves along the wings and jump together.

One of those present at these exercises was a foreign observer by the name of Hermann Göring.

Göring was obviously impressed by what he witnessed and he became personally committed to the creation of Germany's own airborne arm.

As Prussian Minister of the Interior, Göring had ordered the formation of a special police unit in 1933, with the objective being to protect Nazi party officials. They were officially named *Landespolizeigruppe Wecke*, after Polizeimajor Walter Wecke, who had assembled

Fort Eben Emael was considered to be one of the most powerful fortifications in the world. According to experts, it would be impossible to assault. The Germans, however, had other ideas.

On 10 May 1940 the Germans launched *Fall Gelb* (Case Yellow), an invasion of the Low Countries.

The ultimate goal was France. The German *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (High Command of the Armed Forces) believed that by attacking through the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium they could outflank the formidable French Maginot Line.

The Germans could then advance through southern Belgium and into northern France, cutting off the British Expeditionary Force and a large number of French forces and forcing the French government to surrender.

The Germans needed to capture several important bridges over the Albert Canal. The easterly roads led into the Belgian heartland and the rest of the Low Countries.

There was, however, a major obstacle that faced them. The Fort of Eben Emael, considered to be one of the most powerful fortification in the world.

Construction

Constructed between 1931 and 1935, it was reputed to be impregnable and, at the time, the largest fortress in the world.

It was designed to defend Belgium against a German attack across the narrow belt of Dutch territory in the region.

When designing the fort, the Belgians had taken the lessons learnt during World War I into account. The fort sat on high ground overlooking the Albert Canal. Reinforced concrete was used in place of plain mass concrete. The gun turrets were less closely grouped.

Ventilation was greatly improved, magazines were deeply buried and pro-

tected, and sanitary facilities and general living arrangements for the troops were given careful attention. The 120 mm and 75 mm guns gave the fort the ability to bombard targets across a wide area of the eastern Liège region.

In 1940, Fort Eben-Emael was commanded by Major Jottrand. There were around 1,200 Belgian troops stationed at the fort, divided into three groups. The first group was permanently stationed at the fort and consisted of 200 technical personnel (e.g. doctors, cooks, weapon maintenance technicians, administration staff).

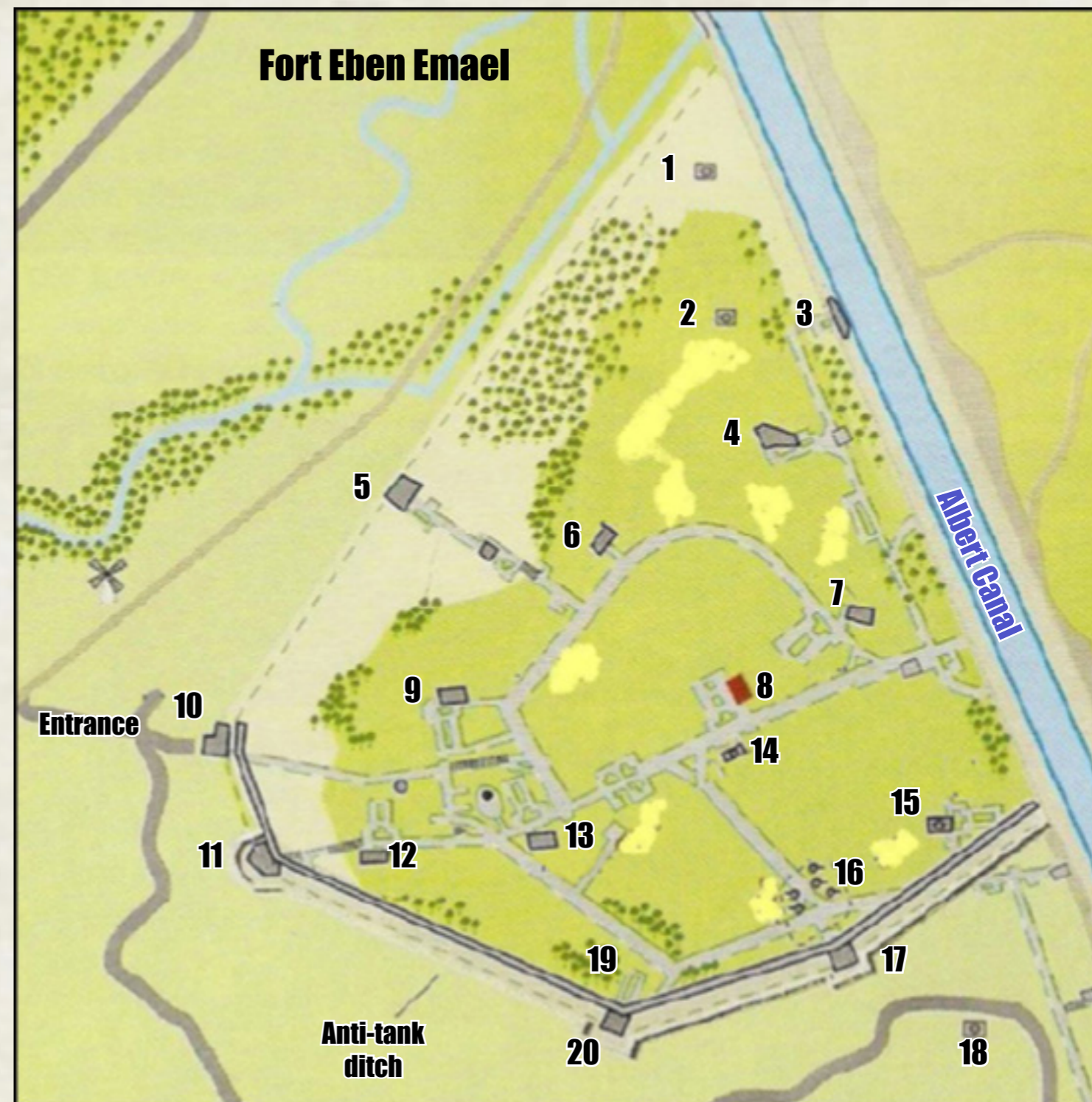
The two other groups consisted of 500 artillerymen each. In peace time one group would be stationed at the fort for one week. The other group would be in reserve at the village of Wonck, about 5 km away. These two groups would change places every week.

Except for some of the officers and NCOs, most of the men were conscripts. The majority of these were reservists and were called up after the Invasion of Poland in 1939. Infantry training was poor, since the men were considered to be purely artillerymen.

The Germans prepare

The airborne assault on Fort Eben-Emael, and the three bridges it helped protect, was part of a much larger German airborne operation that involved the 7th Air Division and the 22nd Airlanding Division.

The force tasked with assaulting the fort and capturing the three bridges was formed from elements of the 7th Air Division and the 22nd Airlanding Division, and was named *Sturmabteilung Koch* (Assault Detachment Koch) after the



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Decoy cupola | 11. Block VI- 2 x 60 mm guns & MGs |
| 2. Decoy cupola | 12. Visé II - 3 x 75 mm guns |
| 3. Canal Nord - 60 mm guns & machine guns | 13. Maastricht II - 3 x 75 mm guns |
| 4. Mi Nord - Machine gun block | 14. Cupola 120 - Twin 120 mm gun |
| 5. Block II - 2 x 60 mm guns & MGs | 15. Cupola Nord - 2 x 75 mm guns |
| 6. Mi Sud - Machine gun block | 16. Anti-aircraft position |
| 7. Visé I - 3 x 75 mm guns | 17. Block IV - 2 x 60 mm anti-tank guns |
| 8. Barracks | 18. Decoy cupola |
| 9. Maastricht I - 3 x 75 mm guns | 19. Cupola Sud - 2 x 75 mm guns |
| 10. Block I - 2 x 60 mm anti-tank guns | 20. Block V- 2 x 60 mm guns & MGs |

Fort Eben-Emael occupied a large hill just to the east of Eben-Emael village and overlooking the Albert Canal. Underground galleries extend over 4 kilometres beneath the hill, connecting the combat blocks and serving the underground barracks, power plant, ammunition magazines and other spaces. Fresh air was obtained from intake vents over the canal

leader of the force, Hauptmann Walter Koch.

Fifty DFS 230 transport gliders were supplied for use by the assault force. Then came the serious training for the mission.

Joint exercises between the parachutists and the glider pilots were carried out in the early spring of 1940, and a number of refinements made to the equipment and tactics to be used.

One of these refinements was the attachment of barbed wire to the nose-skids of the gliders. This meant that the skids would dig in, forcing the glider to a stop.

The airborne troops trained with special equipment such as flamethrowers and shaped charges.

A detailed study of the fort, the bridges and the local area was made, and a replica of the area was constructed for the airborne troops to train in.

The Plan

Hauptmann Koch divided his force into four assault groups. Group Granite, made up of eighty-five men in eleven gliders whose task would be to assault and capture Fort Eben Emael.

Group Steel, formed of ninety-two men and nine gliders, would capture the Veldwezelt bridge; Group Concrete, composed of ninety-six men in eleven gliders, would capture the Vroenhoven bridge; and Group Iron, composed of ninety men in ten gliders, who would capture the Kanne bridge.

Time was the vital component of the attack. The Germans were relying on two factors. First of all the believed that the use of gliders would not alert the Bel-



ATTACK: Fallschirmjäger exit a DFS 230 glider. This photo was posed after Fort Eben Emael had already been captured.

gians. Secondly, the lack of a declaration of war by the German government would give the attackers the element of surprise.

The Germans estimated that this element of surprise would last for sixty minutes before they reacted. It was therefore imperative that during those sixty minutes as many anti-aircraft positions, individual cupolas and casemates as possible had to be eliminated. The most important objective, however, was to put the long-range artillery covering the bridges out of action.

The destruction of these guns was expected to be completed within ten minutes; within this time the airborne troops would have to break out of their gliders, cover the distance to the guns, fix the explosive charges to the barrels of the guns and detonate them, all while under enemy fire.

The finalized plan for the assault called for between nine and eleven gliders to land on the western bank of the Albert Canal by each of the three bridges just prior to 05h30 on 10 May, the time scheduled for *Fall Gelb* to begin.

The groups assigned to as-

sault the three bridges would overwhelm the defending Belgian troops, remove any demolition charges and then prepare to defend the bridges against an expected counter-attack. Forty minutes later, three Ju-52 transport aircraft would fly over each position, dropping a further twenty-four airborne troops as reinforcements as well as machine-guns and significant amounts of ammunition.

Simultaneously, the force assigned to assault Fort Eben-Emael was to land on top of the Fort in eleven gliders, eliminate any defenders attempting to repel them, cripple what artillery they could with explosive charges, and then prevent the Garrison from dislodging them.

Having achieved their initial objectives of seizing the bridges and eliminating the long-range artillery pieces possessed by the Fort, the airborne troops would then defend their positions until the arrival of German ground forces.

The Battle

The mission didn't get off to the best of starts. The tow-rope on one of the gliders snapped



JOB DONE: Fallschirmjäger share cigarettes and swap stories after the successful attack on Fort Eben Emael.

and it was forced to land inside Germany. The pilot of another glider released his tow-rope prematurely and the glider was unable to reach its target.

Because of strict radio silence the senior commanders of the assault force could not be informed. Both gliders were from Group Granite and, to make matters worse, one of the gliders was carrying Oberleutnant Witzig, the commander of the group.

The remaining gliders were released 32 km away from their objectives at an altitude of 2,100 m. After the Ju-52's released the gliders and began turning away, Belgian anti-aircraft artillery positions detected them and opened fire. This alerted the defences in the area to the presence of the gliders.

Group Steel

All of Group Steel's nine gliders landed next to the bridge at Veldwezelt at 05h20. They managed to take the bridge without it being destroyed.

Two field-guns, located five hundred metres from the bridge, pinned them down and the group commander, Leutnant Altmann, had to call in air support. Several Junkers Ju 87 Stukas responded and knocked out the guns.

Group Steel was supposed to be relieved by 14h30, but the relief force was held up by Belgian resistance and only arrived at 21h30.

Group Steel lost eight dead and 30 wounded.

Group Concrete

Ten of the eleven gliders transporting Group Concrete landed next to the Vroenhoven bridge at 05h15, the eleventh glider having been hit by anti-aircraft fire en route to the bridge and being forced to land prematurely inside Dutch territory.

One of the gliders was hit by anti-aircraft fire and three troops were seriously wounded.

One of the gliders landed near to the fortification housing the bridge detonators. This allowed the airborne troops to rapidly as-

sault the position. They killed the occupants and tore out the wires connecting the explosives to the detonator set, ensuring the bridge could not be destroyed.

The Belgians mounted several counter-attacks in an attempt to recapture the bridge. Group Concrete held out until they were relieved at 21h40. They lost seven dead and 24 wounded.

Group Iron

Things went awry for Group Iron from the start. Nine of the gliders were able to land next to their objective, while one was dropped in the wrong area due to a navigation error.

Yet while they were able to land next to their objective and eliminate the Belgian defenders, it was too late. The bridge at Kanne had already been destroyed.

Unlike the garrisons of the other two bridges, the Belgian defenders at Kanne had been forewarned. The German mechanized column heading to the bridge to reinforce Group Iron had arrived twenty minutes ahead of schedule.

With the element of surprise lost, the defenders had enough time to set off the demolition charges on the bridge.

Group Iron had secured the area by 05h50, but they came under strong counter-attack and had to call in air support.

They were only relieved on the morning of 11 May.

Group Iron suffered the heaviest casualties of all three assault groups assigned to capture the bridges with twenty-two dead and twenty-six wounded.

One of the airborne troops assigned to the Group was taken

prisoner by the Belgians. He was later freed by German forces at a British prisoner of war camp at Dunkirk.

Group Granite

Nine of Group Granite's gliders successfully landed on the roof of Fort Eben Emael. They gliders used arrester-parachutes to bring them to a quick halt.

The airborne troops quickly exited their gliders and headed for their individual objectives. The prime objectives were the artillery pieces that could target the bridges.

Objective No. 18, an artillery observation casemate housing three 75mm artillery pieces was damaged with a light demolition charge and then permanently destroyed with a heavier charge, which collapsed the casemate's observation dome and part of the roof of the Fort itself.

A traversing turret holding two artillery pieces, Objective 12, was destroyed by troops who then moved on to Objective No. 26, a turret holding another three 75 mm weapons. Another pair of 75 mm guns in a cupola was disabled, as was a barracks known to house Belgian troops.

Objective 24 proved to be a problem. The twin turrets with heavy-calibre guns mounted on a rotating cupola, was too large for airborne troops from a single glider to destroy on their own, forcing troops from two gliders to be used.

Shaped charges were fixed to the turrets and detonated. While they shook the turrets, they did not destroy them. Troops were forced to climb the turrets and smash the gun barrels.

In the northern section of the

fort, similar actions were taking place.

Objective No. 13 was a casemate housing multiple machine-guns whose arcs of fire covered the western side of the Fort; to destroy the casemate, the airborne troops used a flamethrower to force the Belgian soldiers manning the weapons to retreat, and then detonated shaped charges against the fortification to disable it.

Objective No. 23 was a retractable cupola housing two 75 mm guns. It had been thought that these would not be a threat to the airborne troops. They were proved wrong when the weapons opened fire, forcing the airborne troops in the area to go to cover.

They were pinned down and had to call for air support. A Stuka squadron bombed the cupola and although the bombs did not destroy the cupola, the explosions did force the Belgians to retract it throughout the rest of the fighting.

The airborne troops had achieved their initial objective of destroying or disabling the artillery pieces that the fort could have used to bombard the captured bridges, but they still faced a number of small cupolas and emplacements that had to be disabled. A number of these included anti-aircraft weapons and machine-guns.

As these secondary objectives were attacked, a single glider landed on top of the Fort. It carried Oberleutnant Rudolf Witzig.

After his glider had landed in German territory, he had radioed for another tug. The Ju-52 landed in the field with a replacement

glider.

Witzig's troops had quickly broken down fences and hedges obstructing the aircraft and the new glider was towed through anti-aircraft fire to the objective - Fort Eben Emael.

Having achieved their primary objectives of disabling the artillery pieces possessed by the fort, the airborne troops then held it against Belgian counter-attacks, which began almost immediately.

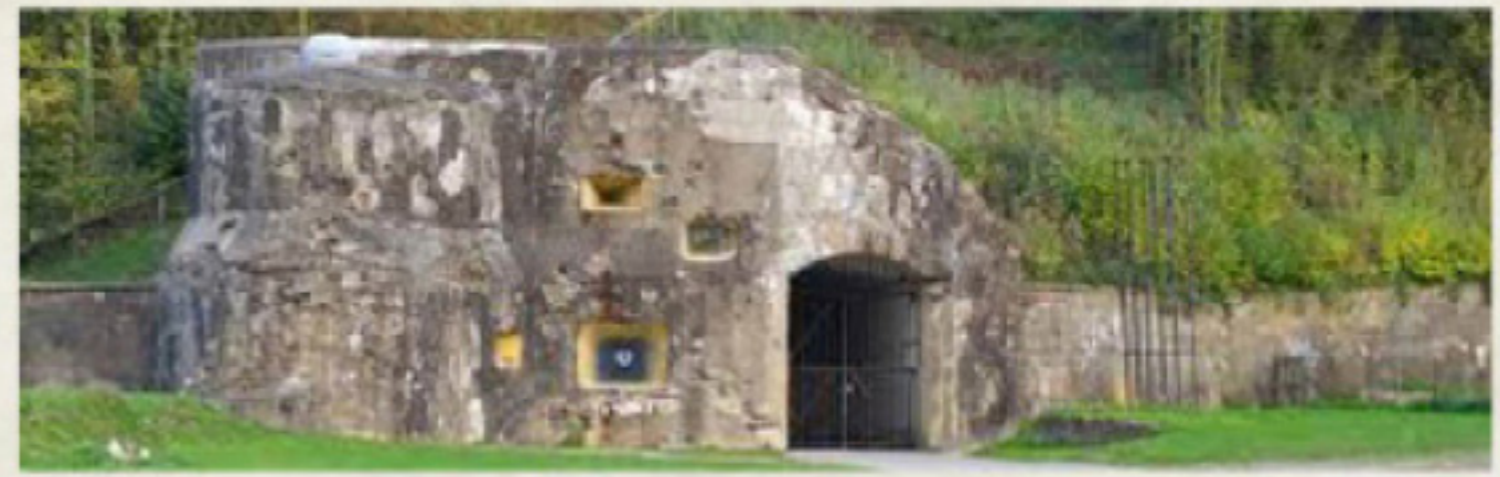
These counter-attacks were made by Belgian infantry formations without artillery support and were uncoordinated. This allowed the airborne troops to repel them with machine-gun fire.

Patrols were also used to ensure that the garrison stayed in the interior of the fort and did not attempt to emerge and mount an attempt to retake the fort.

Group Granite was not relieved until 07h00 on 11 May by the 51st Engineer Battalion. Once the airborne troops had been relieved, the battalion, in conjunction with an infantry regiment that arrived shortly after the engineers, mounted an attack on the main entrance to the fort.

Faced with this attack, the garrison surrendered at 12:30, suffering sixty men killed and forty wounded. The Germans captured more than a thousand Belgian soldiers. Group Granite suffered six killed and nineteen wounded.

The capture of the bridges, and the neutralization of the artillery pieces in the Fort allowed infantry and armour from the 18th Army to bypass other Belgian defences and enter the heart of Belgium.



Fort Eben Emael

Fort Eben-Emael is now open to the public. While still military property, it is administered by the Association Fort Eben-Emael, which provides tours and activities. If you're ever in Belgium, be sure to visit this amazing museum.



CUPOLA: One of the fort's cupolas.



MAZE: Part of the underground bunker system.



GLIDER: One of the models.

DAMAGED: The damage caused by a shaped-charge is still visible to this day.



OF DUTY: Part of the defenders sleeping quarters.

IMPRESSIVE: The exhibits at the Fort Eben Emael Museum are really top class.





Officer Matt O' Brien is back on the SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) Team. This is something that his team mates are not too happy about. While they may talk about "No Plan B", O'Brien doesn't even have a Plan A.

In a past issue of Military Despatches I did a review of a game called 'Door Kickers'. You controlled a SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) team and had to carry out various assignments.

Further down the line I reviewed 'Door Kickers 2: Task Force North'. This was similar to the original game. This time, however, you controlled a military team rather than police officers.

I've been hoping that someone would come up with another game similar to the above two.

Well Indie developers GFX47 have come to the rescue with 'No Plan B'.

Game overview

The game was released in early access on 1 December 2021. Since then a lot of updates and improvements have been made to the game.

Assemble your squad, gear up, and lead your ops in a gripping tactical game with no room for failure. Plan the best course of action and watch it play out through brutal rogue-like campaigns and community-made missions.

One of the things that makes this game unique is that you do all the tactical planning before the action actually begins.

You take control of a squad of attackers who have to breach and clear an area which is filled with traps, defenders, and obstacles.

The good news is that you have a ton of tactics and tools at your disposal. The bad news is that you only get one go and getting things right - hence the name of the game, No Plan B.

Another thing I like about the game is that you get to play as one of four factions.

First of all you can play as SWAT. Here the missions primarily comprise of clearing bad guys from a building.

Playing as FBI HRT (Hostage Rescue Team) you will not only have to clear a building of bad guys, you will also have to rescue any hostages. So not only do you have to take out the bad guys, you have to ensure the safety of any hostages.

The good news is that you can also play as the bad guys. As the Robbers you focus on planning and executing robberies - be it a bank or a bar.

Finally you can take control of a team of gangsters. Here the objective is to take out a group of rival gangsters.

The first thing you should do when playing the game for the first time is complete all of the

tutorial missions. Here you will learn various tactics need for the game. This includes movement, tactical planning and execution of your plans.

I strongly suggest that you do these tutorials before you even consider tackling the game.

Planning is vital

As I mentioned earlier, all the tactical planning is done up front before the action begins.

This means that every single step of your plan has to be done from start to finish.

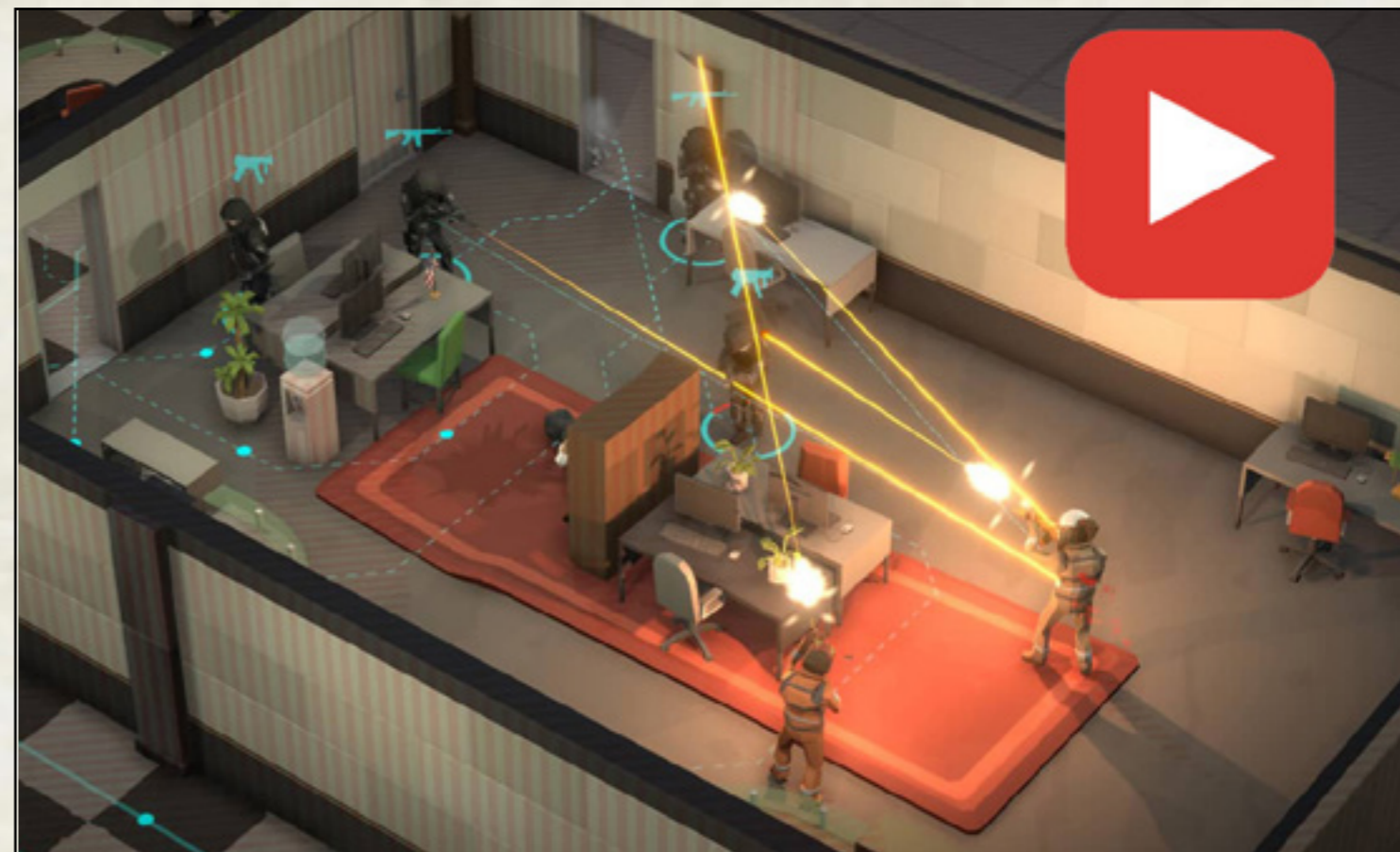
You can use any faction to play single missions. This is a good way of getting yourself used to the game before going on to try the campaign mode.

In No Plan B, every choice you make, however small, may decide the fate of your team.

The first thing you will have to do is assemble your squad. You will have various personnel at your disposal and you choose your team from them. Just remember that in campaign mode if one of your squad is killed, it means that they will no longer be available.

Pick your squad's entry points and gear them up with the arsenal at your disposal.

Choose from a list of firearms, armour and grenades - each with their pros and cons -



to make sure your team has the right gear for the situation.

There are five types of weapons (23 weapons in total) and three types of grenades.

You can study a 3D map which shows the interior of the building. While you can see the exact layout of the building, you have no idea where everyone is.

You will now use the innovative timeline system to move and synchronize your team. Coordinate your movements, grenades and room entries to take the enemy by surprise.

One wrong move, one corner left unchecked, could be fatal to your mission - there's no plan B!

Once you're confident your plan is perfect, the time has come to execute your actions and press that play button.

Now you get to watch your plan being carried out. Will your mission be a success or a

failure? Will any of your team be killed during the mission?

Overall impressions

This is a pretty decent game. The good news is that you don't need a super computer to run the game. It will work on Windows 10, Windows 7, and even XP. And the price is a steal.

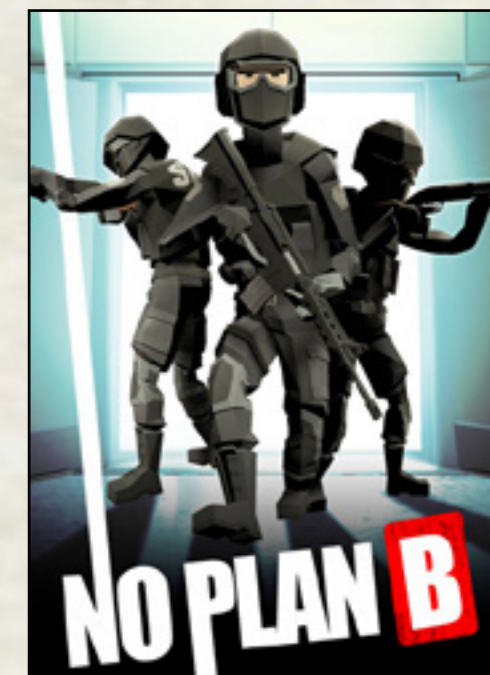
The game-play is both fun and challenging. On more than one occasion I've planned and executed a perfect mission, only to be left going "Bugger!" because I missed one sod hiding in the corner.

Some times a plan comes together, and sometimes it goes tits up. I was using a two-man team and they quietly opened a door and threw in a stun grenade - a flash-bang. What I should have done is waited for it to go off before entering the room and taking out the dazed and confused bad guys. However I went in too soon and ended up being caught in the blast.

One of the great things about

the game is the Mission Editor. You can use it to create your own buildings and missions.

Well worth the price.



Publisher	-	GFX47
Genre	-	Simulation
Platform	-	PC
Score	-	8/10
Price	-	R145



Movie Review

The Dirty Dozen

Released: 1967
 Running time: 150 minutes
 Directed by: Robert Aldrich

The Dirty Dozen is a 1967 American war film directed by Robert Aldrich and starring Lee Marvin with an ensemble supporting cast including Ernest Borgnine, Charles Bronson, Jim Brown, John Cassavetes, Telly Savalas, and Donald Sutherland.

In March 1944, OSS officer Major John Reisman (Lee Marvin) is ordered by the commander of ADSEC in Britain, Major General Sam Worden, to undertake Project Amnesty, a top-secret mission to train some of the Army's worst prisoners and turn them into commandos to be sent on a virtual suicide mission just before D-Day.

The target is a chateau near Rennes where dozens of high-ranking German officers will be eliminated in order to disrupt the chain of command of the Wehrmacht in Northern France before the Allied invasion. The prisoners who survive the mission will receive pardons for their crimes.

Five prisoners are condemned to death while the others face lengthy sentences which include hard labour. With a detachment of MPs led by Sgt. Bowren (Richard Jaeckel) acting as guards, the prisoners gradually learn how to operate together when they are forced to build their own training camp.

However, when an act of insubordination is instigated by the

rebellious Franko (John Cassavetes), all shaving and wash kits are withheld as punishment which leads to their nickname "The Dirty Dozen."

During their training the prisoners are psychoanalyzed by Capt. Kinder (Ralph Meeker) who warns Reisman that they would all quite likely kill him if given the chance; and rapist/killer Maggot (Telly Savalas) is by far the most dangerous.

Upon the men's completion of their training, Reisman rewards them with prostitutes, which raises the ire of General Worden and his chief of staff, Brigadier General Denton. Termination of the project is considered, which would result in sending the men back to prison for execution of their sentences.

However, Reisman ferociously defends the prisoners saying each one is worth ten of Breed's best troops. Reisman's friend, Major Max Armbruster, suggests a test. During upcoming military maneuvers in southwest England, the "Dirty Dozen" will attempt to capture Colonel Breed's headquarters.

Using some devious tactics, the Dirty Dozen succeed in capturing Breed's headquarters, much to the amusement of General Worden.

The men are then parachuted into Northern France to carry out their mission.

The Dirty Dozen is a movie

well worth watching and one that has stood the test of time.

There are some great scenes, such as when the Dirty Dozen have to attend parachute training at Colonel Breed's 101st Airborne Division. Private Pinkley (Donald Sutherland) poses as a general to inspect Breed's troops.

The action scenes of the actual raid are exciting and only three members of the team escape alive - but which three. You'll have to watch the movie to discover for yourself.

If you've never seen The Dirty Dozen, it's a movie that will provide nearly two hours of entertainment.



Click on the poster to watch a trailer of the film.

Mobility Conquers

More than two years in the writing, this book is the story of the birth, career and death of the South African Defence Force's 61 Mechanised Battalion Group (1979-2005), generally acknowledged as the best fighting unit in Africa in its time.

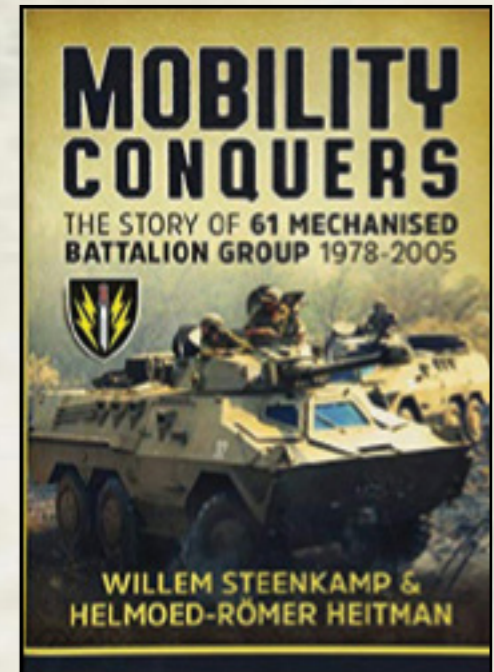
61 Mech was structured as a combined-arms unit with integral infantry, armoured and artillery components the first in Africa and arduously trained in a fast-moving mobile warfare doctrine which was not based on adapted European tactics but was specifically designed for fighting modern bush wars in the forbiddingly difficult African battle-space.

Led by some of the brightest

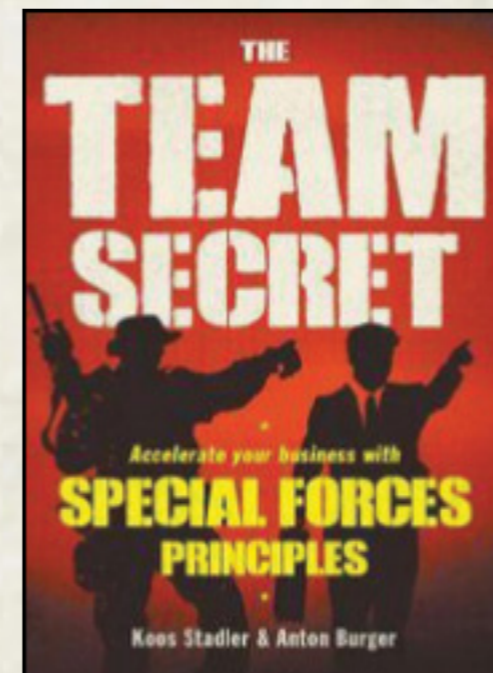
officers in the Army, 61 Mech played a major role in the often hard-fought incursions into Angola between 1978 and 1988 and won all its battles, even though the South Africans were always vastly outnumbered by the armed forces of Angola with their abundant Soviet weaponry and Russian and Cuban advisors, and usually with an unfavourable air situation.

The book includes many personal accounts by 61 Mech's officers and men, some of them in harrowing detail. It is also salted with short snippets of information which help to make it an entertaining read for people from anywhere in the world.

Written by Willem Steenkamp and Helmoed-Römer Heitman, this 1,152 page book with 61



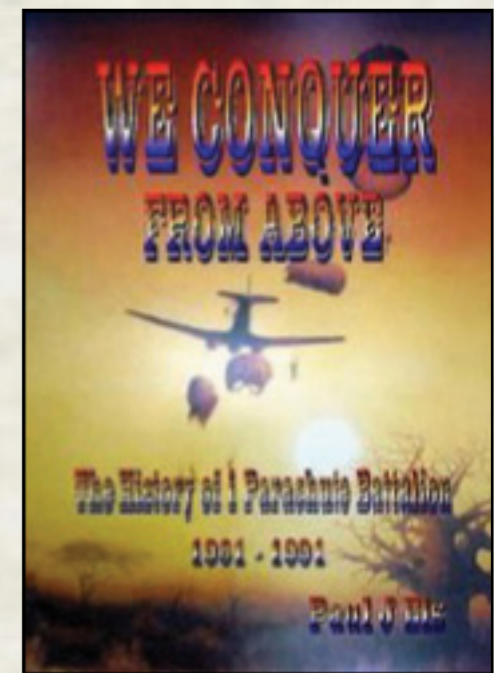
maps and 400+ photos is a must read.



Team Secret R275



We Fear Naught but God R395



We conquer from above R395

All books are available from [Bush War Books](#)

Some of the significant military events that happened in March. Highlighted in blue are the names of those members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that lost their lives during the month of March.

1 March

- **1896** - Ethiopian forces defeat Italians at Adwa, northern Ethiopia, ending Italy's quest to create a substantial African colony.
- **1941** - German troops enter Bulgaria.
- **1951** - Pilots Doug McKellar and "Dizzy" Deans of the SA Air Force's No 2 (Flying Cheetah) Squadron, assisting the UN in the Korean War, locate seven trucks hidden in hilly terrain and strike target dive-bombing with napalm a procedure used for the first time by the squadron.
- **1954** - Bikini: US detonates 15 megaton hydrogen bomb.
- **1981** - Rifleman Peter Hall from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was accidentally killed during anti-insurgent operations in the Eenhana Area. He was 19.
- **1988** - Special Constable Thomas Kanitus 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 23.
- **1990** - State President F.W. de Klerk announces plans to bring covert operations by government agents under Cabinet control.
- **1990** - Two members of the

SADF were killed while traveling as passengers in a military minibus vehicle when the vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with a truck on the Pretoria-Potchefstroom Road. They were: Private Gerhardus Stephanus De Bruin (22) from Danie Theron Combat School. Gunner Jaques Terblanche (19) from 10 Artillery Brigade.

2 March

- **1900** - A council of war at Poplar Grove, OFS, gives Danie Theron permission to form a Scout Corps consisting of about 100 men.
- **1938** - Stalin initiates the Purges.
- **1943** - During World War II in the Pacific, a Japanese convoy was attacked by 137 American bombers as the Battle of Bismarck Sea began.
- **1945** - Philippines: Japanese resistance on Corregidor ends.
- **1951** - Two pilots of the SA Air Force's Cheetah Squadron, Lieutenant D.A. Ruiters and Captain W.J.J. Badenhorst, are killed in action while assisting the United Nations in the Korean War.
- **1955** - Egypt and Syria sign a defensive alliance.
- **1962** - Coup in Burma initiates an ongoing military regime.

- **1982** - Rifleman Lewis Francesco from 31 Battalion (201 Battalion SWATF) Died of Wounds accidentally sustained in an explosion inside an ammunition bunker at Omega Base. He was 22.
- **1984** - Rifleman Hendrik Francois van der Merwe from the Vanderbijl Park Commando apparently drowned in unknown circumstances. He was officially declared dead by the State President in 1986. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 25.
- **1985** - Rifleman Hilton Isaac Jacobs from the South African Cape Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Kuils River. He was 20.
- **1986** - Sapper Daniel Wilhelmus van Schalkwyk from 11 Field Engineer Regiment was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Messina. He was 22.
- **1988** - Special Sergeant Hepute Wakumbilwa 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.
- **1999** - Eight foreigners die in a shoot-out in a Ugandan

- game reserve as soldiers try to free fifteen tourists who were kidnapped by Rwandan rebels.
- **2005** - At least fifty Congolese militiamen are killed by South African and Pakistani United Nations peacekeeping troops in a bloody gunfight in the Congolese district of Ituri. Several South African soldiers of 12 SA Infantry Battalion (12 SAI) are slightly hurt in the action.

3 March

- **1901** - The Battle of Lichtenburg takes place. The British soldiers move their horses into the Dutch Reformed Church building to shelter them from the fire of General De la Rey's troops.
- **1918** - Russia withdraws from WW I, signs Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany.
- **1945** - RAF bombs The Hague in error, 511 die.
- **1964** - Rifleman Brian Ivan Dummer from the Tygerberg Commando was killed in a military vehicle accident at Bethlehem. He was 19.

- **1976** - President Samora Machel of Mozambique closes his frontier with Rhodesia, seizes all Rhodesian assets in the country and places Mozambique on a war footing as a result of a "hot pursuit" attack by Rhodesian security forces during the previous week in which twenty-four guerrillas were killed inside Mozambique.
- **1976** - US government under President Gerald Ford discloses that it has decided to sell weapons to Egypt.
- **1980** - Rifleman Manuel Yenga from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action when he triggered a Soviet POM-Z2 Anti-Personnel Picket Mine inside an enemy bunker near Naulila during Operation Makalani. He was 25.
- **1983** - Special Constable Sam Iyambo 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 26.
- **1988** - The South West Afri-

- ca Territory Force claims to have killed sixty Swapo insurgents in various skirmishes in the previous month, bringing the total this year to eighty-six. According to the SWATF, the security forces suffered no losses.
- **1991** - Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) chief-of-staff Chris Hani says as long as the SADF continues recruitment and training, his organisation will continue recruiting members and building underground structures.
- **1993** - An American soldier is killed by a land mine in Somalia and a second dies in a truck crash, bringing to six the number of Americans killed in Operation Restore Hope.
- **2004** - Angered by the way President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced to flee his country, the 15-nation Caribbean Community says it will not provide troops for the UN peacekeeping force to Haiti. Aristide claimed that he was abducted at gunpoint by US Marines and sent into exile in South Africa.

4 March

- **1900** - Boers are defeated by Lord Roberts at Driefontein in the Free State.
- **1945** - US Army Air Force B-24s accidentally bomb Zurich.
- **1945** - Finland declares war on Nazi Germany.
- **1968** - Leading Air Mechanic James Ross Brum



Chris Hani

mer from Air Operations School Langebaanweg was accidentally killed while mounting a radio antenna on the roof of a hanger at AFB Langebaanweg. The asbestos roofing gave way and he fell to his death. He was 24.

- **1970** - French submarine 'Eurydice' explodes while submerged in the Mediterranean, 57 die.
- **1981** - Rifleman Frans Karel Petrus Burger from the Cape Town Highlanders was Reported Missing while crossing a river when on a patrol near Ruacana. He disappeared under the water and despite an intensive search, his body was never located. He was 22.
- **1982** - Two members of 31 Battalion (201 Battalion SWATF) were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line. They were: Rifleman Mahorison Rodriques (21). Rifleman Llewellyn Verwey (20).
- **1983** - Two members from 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola during Operation Snoek. They were: Sergeant Augusto Mande (30). Rifleman Joao Daniel Kativa (26).
- **1984** - Rifleman Patrick Kudumo from 902 Battalion SWATF was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier while on duty in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1986** - Private Petrus Dolf

from the Army Catering Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident, at Os-hakati. He was 24.

- **1986** - Rifleman Benjamin Tjenda from 201 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19
- **1990** - Ciskei's President Lennox Sebe is overthrown in a coup. The homeland's new military leader, Brigadier Oupa Gqozo, announces that his government's ultimate goal is reincorporating the territory into South Africa. Looting and burning continue for two days and about twenty-seven people die in violence.

5 March

- **1916** - SA troops led by General Jan Smuts invade East Africa in their confrontation with German forces in World War I.
- **1936** - Maiden flight of the prototype Supermarine Spitfire.
- **1942** - Burma: British appoint Sir Harold Alexander Commander-in-Chief.
- **1942** - The US Navy Seabees are established.
- **1945** - US VII Corps captures Cologne.
- **1953** - Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin dies at the age of 73.
- **1968** - Rifleman Cornelius Andre Grobler from 6 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident in Grahams-town. He was 20.

• **1974** - Rifleman Gerhardus Johannes Jacobus van Rhyn from 6 SAI died from gunshot wounds accidentally sustained at Bwabwata, Western Caprivi. He was 18.

- **1980** - Rifleman Johannes Jacobus Maass from Regiment Erongo was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1980** - Rifleman Eric Norman van Reenen from 52 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line in Northern Owamboland. He was 29.
- **1990** - SA sends troops to Ciskei to suppress mob attacks on factories and shops after military coup under Brigadier Gqozo ousted authoritarian President Sebe.
- **1993** - Lance Corporal Sydwell Boer from 3 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident on the N3 at Keyridge. He was 25.

6 March

- **1836** - Fort Alamo fell to Mexican troops led by General Santa Anna. The Mexicans had begun the siege of the Texas fort on 23February, ending it with the killing of the last defender. "Remember the Alamo" became a rallying cry for Texans who went on to defeat Santa Anna in the Battle of San Jacinto in April.
- **1881** - Armistice negotia-

tions are concluded during the First Anglo-Boer War.

- **1944** - USAF begins daylight bombing of Berlin.
- **1971** - Private Francois Nel from the Army Service Corps was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Pretoria. He was 16.
- **1976** - Sergeant Trevor Walter August Booyesen from Regiment Westelike Provinsie was accidentally killed at Ruacana when he fell off the back of a moving vehicle. He was 29.
- **1980** - Lance Bombardier Matthew Johannes Naus from 14 Artillery Regiment died from a gunshot wound that was apparently self-inflicted. He was 19.
- **1983** - Two members from 1 Medium Battery, 4 Artillery Regiment that were attached to 61 Mech Battalion, were Killed in Action while on guard duty on a farm near Tsumeb that was located well below the "Red Line". A small group of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents attacked the farm and shot them both at point blank range. The casualties were: Gunner Christo Francois Bezuidenhout (20). Gunner Jameson Bosse (19).
- **1984** - Martin Niemöller, WW I U-boat skipper, anti-Nazi clergyman, at 92.
- **1985** - Special Constable Matheus Oukongo from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action dur-

ing a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 28.

- **1986** - Private Dawid Johannes Retief from 6 Maintenance Unit accidentally drowned in the operational area when his Military vehicle skidded off the road and landed in a river, leaving him trapped inside the vehicle. He was 19.
- **1986** - Corporal Pieter Jeremias Smith from the Specialist Unit died in the Tygerberg Hospital from multiple shrapnel wounds sustained in an accidental mortar bomb explosion. He was 21.
- **1993** - Unita rebels capture Angola's second largest city, Huambo, after a two-month battle with government troops.

7 March

- **1876** - During the second invasion of Abyssinia by Egypt, the Egyptian forces are defeated at Gura by the Ethiopians under King Yohannes.
- **1900** - The Battle of Poplar Grove (or Modderrivierspoort) takes place. President Paul Kruger escapes with the help of General De Wet.
- **1902** - General De la Rey defeats and captures General Methuen in the Battle of Tweebosch (or De Klipdrift) in Western Transvaal, the last important battle won by the Boer forces. Methuen

and more than 870 soldiers are captured.

- **1936** - Hitler breaks the Treaty of Versailles, sends troops into the Rhineland, and the Allies fail to act.
- **1941** - WWII: British troops invade Italian-occupied Abyssinia, now Ethiopia.
- **1941** - Gunther Prien, daring submarine captain of 'U-47', is killed in action at the age of 34.
- **1942** - First black cadets graduate from the USAAF flying school at Tuskegee.
- **1943** - Japanese refuse a German request to join war against Russia.
- **1945** - Troops of the US 9th Armored Div, commanded by German-born Lt. Karl Timmerman, capture the Ludendorff Bridge over the Rhine at Remagen.
- **1952** - Job Masego, WW2 veteran who sunk a German supply boat while a prisoner of war after the capture of Tobruk, dies in Springs, Tvl. A street and a school in Kwa Thema have been named after him and in 1997 the SAS Kobie Coetzee was renamed SAS Job Masego.
- **1977** - The Defence Amendment Bill, first published on 31 January 1977, becomes law. Under it the State President is empowered to invoke powers of censorship and of commandeering premises. Service in defence of the Republic now includes anti-terrorist operations as well as the prevention and suppression of internal dis

order and there can be greater flexibility and speed in mobilisation.

- **1980** - Three members from 13 Field Engineer Squadron were Killed in Action at the Chandelier near Elundu when a booby-trapped landmine coupled together with other improvised explosive devices, exploded while they were in the process of defusing it. The casualties were: Sergeant Deon van der Vyver (21). Corporal Antonie Oberholzer (22). Sapper Willem Johannes Steenkamp Prinsloo (22).
- **1982** - Six Front Line States meet in Maputo and decide to coordinate further their military and economic policies to counter South Africa's economic and military aggression.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal Owen Christopher Williams from 5 SAI, attached to 101 Battalion Romeo Mike was accidentally killed in a Rifle Grenade explosion while on operations in Southern Angola. He was 21.
- **1985** - Corporal Deon van Niekerk from the Northern Transvaal Command Provost Unit was Reported Missing in Clubview, Pretoria while on official traffic control duty during a military exercise. A large truck filled with tons of builders gravel jack-knifed on the Old Johannesburg Road and overturned in the area where he had been doing duty. His body was only dis-

covered two days later when the builders gravel was removed. He was 20.

- **1986** - The State of Emergency imposed on 21 July 1985, is lifted.
- **1991** - 2nd Lieutenant Steven van Rooyen from the Dog Training Centre accidentally drowned in the Blyde River at Belvedere. He was 19.
- **1993** - Angola says its troops have withdrawn from Huambo after two months of fighting with rebels that left 10,000 dead.
- **1993** - The SADF's 31 Battalion, composed primarily of the San (Bushmen) battalion who fought in the war in Namibia and has lately been deployed in South African townships, is disbanded at a public ceremony in the Cape province. The 1,000 soldiers will be transferred to other units in the northern Cape and will help patrol the border to Namibia.
- **1994** - Multinational African army installs new government in Liberia.
- **2004** - Zimbabwe seizes a US-registered cargo plane carrying sixty-four suspected mercenaries and military equipment. Simon Mann, of the mercenary outfit Executive Outcomes, is arrested along with five others on the tarmac, after the Zimbabwean authorities have been tipped off by the SA government.

8 March

- **1902** - General De la Rey releases General Lord Methuen after his wounds are treated.
- **1916** - Battle of Dujaila: The Turks beat off a British attempt to relieve the siege of Kut.
- **1942** - Netherlands Indies surrender to the Japanese.
- **1950** - USSR announces they have developed the atomic bomb.
- **1963** - Air Mechanic Pieter Jacobus Hattingh from 35 Squadron was killed in a Ferret Armoured car accident while carrying out in-lying Picket duty patrol of the Security Fence at Air Force Base Ysterplaat. He was 20.
- **1964** - General of Infantry Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, dies aged 83.
- **1965** - First US combat troops (3,500 Marines) arrive in Vietnam.
- **1972** - Trooper Hubert Terrance Caddy from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed at Zeerust when his Eland Armoured Car overturned during a training exercise. He was 20.
- **1973** - Maritime headquarters at Silvermine is opened.
- **1977** - Corporal Abraham Liebergh Pelsler from 7 SAI saved the lives of his fellow soldiers on the afternoon of 08 March 1977. Some of the troops used to straighten the pins on the hand grenades, making them easier

to extract and then hook the grenades into their webbing via the grenade handle. Unfortunately, when Abraham took off his webbing after returning to Nkurukuru Base from a patrol, his thumb caught on the grenade pin and pulled it out. The armed M26 grenade fell onto the floor in the middle of the tent and without hesitation, he dived onto the grenade and absorbed the full force of the explosion that killed him instantly but saved the lives of all the others in the tent. He was 21.

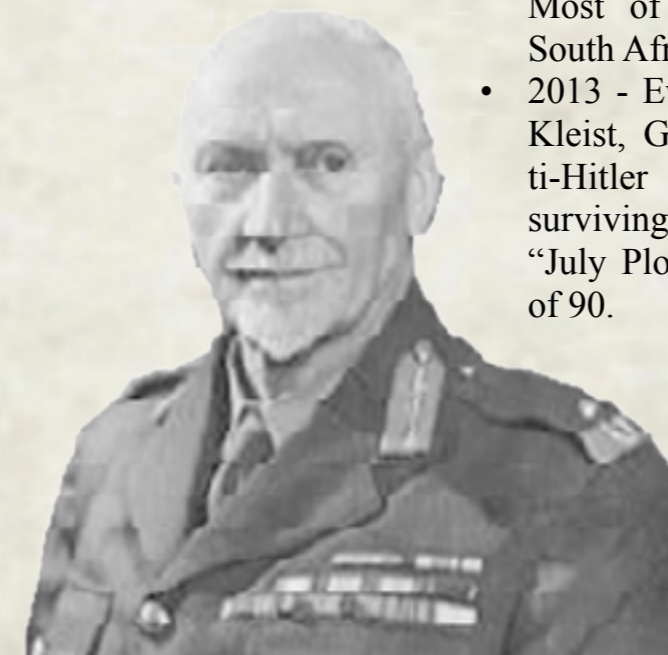
- **1983** - Rifleman Adriaan Jacobus Booysen Thirion from the Boksborg Commando was accidentally killed in a mortar bomb explosion in Southern Angola. He was 24.
- **1987** - Two members from 54 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents at Elundu. They were: Corporal Irvine Manuel Daniels (28). Rifleman Henry Jo-

hannes Metcalfe (27).

- **1987** - Private Allen Alberto Mariano from 101 Field Workshops was accidentally killed at Omauni in Owamboland while loading a damaged vehicle onto a low-bed. The crane lift chain broke and the vehicle fell onto him, killing him instantly. He was 19.
- **1988** - Trooper Mark Steven Bannell from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed whilst doing riot patrol on the outskirts of East London when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned. He was 19.
- **1994** - President Lucas Mangope calls out troops as unrest flares in Bophuthatswana.
- **1996** - Lt Col John "Mad Jack" or "Fighting Jack" Churchill, DSO, MC, who fought WW II with a longbow, claymore, & bagpipes, dies at the age of 89.
- **2004** - Fifteen suspected mercenaries are arrested in Equatorial Guinea, including the alleged leader of the advance party, Nick du Toit. Most of the suspects are South African.
- **2013** - Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist, German officer, anti-Hitler conspirator, last surviving veteran of the "July Plot", dies at the age of 90.

9 March

- **1831** - The French Foreign Legion is founded in Algeria to serve in the French colonies in Africa.
- **1864** - Ulysses S. Grant was commissioned as a Lieutenant General and became commander of the Union armies.
- **1916** - Germany declares war on Portugal.
- **1922** - General Jan Smuts declares martial law in the Transvaal after mobilising the active citizen force in a bid to quell the dispute of striking mineworkers.
- **1945** - US B-29s drop 1,665 tons of incendiaries on Tokyo, creating a firestorm; by dawn on the 10th between 80,000-120,000 have died, the highest toll in a single air raid, exceeding even the atomic bombs
- **1969** - Lt General Moneim Riad, chief of staff of Egypt's armed forces, is killed during Israeli-Egyptian gun battle across Suez Canal.
- **1977** - Lieutenant Gerrit Keulder from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action whilst on patrol in Henombe area of Southern Angola. He was 21.
- **1977** - Rifleman P. Katanga from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a Contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 19.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Errol Carl Moolman from the



Jan Smuts

Rand Light Infantry was accidentally drowned in a rowing boat accident while serving in the Operational Area. He was 20.

- **1982** - Rifleman John Verrooy from the South African Cape Corps attached to Wenela Base was accidentally drowned when he fell off a pont near Wenela Base in Eastern Caprivi. He was 21.
- **1984** - Rifleman W.K. Matende from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 20.
- **1985** - Two members from 6 SAI were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Grahamstown. The casualties were: Rifleman Shaun Patrick Atkins (21). Rifleman Orlando de Portugal Goncalves (19).
- **1985** - Rifleman Eduardo Jonas from 101 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 23.
- **1987** - Corporal Matthew William Wallace McGregor from 2 Field Engineer Regiment attached to 25 Field Squadron was critically wounded in Action during operations in South Western Angola.
- **1988** - Special Constable Fransiskus Lukas 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.

- **2007** - Chief of the SA Air Force (SAAF) Lieutenant-General Carlo Gagiano announces Waterkloof air force base the country's most prominent air force base is closing for all flying operations for eighteen months in order to upgrade the base's main runway. Work is to start in July and should last about eighteen months.

10 March

- **1880** - The Salvation Army was founded in the United States. The social service organization was first founded in England by William Booth and operates today in 90 countries.
- **1900** - The British under Lord Roberts defeats the Boers in the battle of Driefontein.
- **1922** - Angry White workers, on strike since 28 December, storm and occupy police stations, railway installations and mines on the Rand. They also attack the city's main post office and power station in a mass protest that has, in a few hours, turned into open rebellion against the state. Within four days the revolt is crushed. 153 people, including 72 of the state forces, lie dead, 534 are injured.
- **1944** - Severe restrictions

are imposed on all private travel in the UK, in preparation for D-Day.

- **1964** - US begins reconnaissance flights over East Germany.
- **1966** - North Vietnamese capture US Green Beret Camp in the Ashau Valley.
- **1970** - Corporal Hermanus Stephanus van der Merwe from Northern Air Defence Sector, Devon was killed while travelling in a military bus as part of a convoy en route to Devon. He was 18.
- **1982** - Rifleman Joao Baptista from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident near Rundu. He was 26.
- **1982** - The trial begins in the Natal Supreme Court of the mercenaries accused of hijacking an airliner to flee from the Seychelles after a failed coup on 25-26 November 1981.
- **1986** - Rifleman Pinecas Amupolo from 101 Battalion SWATF Died of Wounds received when his Samil 100 Kwevoel vehicle was hit by a Soviet RPG-7 anti-tank rocket. He was 25.
- **1988** - Rifleman Lodewikus Johannes Moolman from Regiment Bloemspruit was killed when he was attacked and trampled to death by an elephant during a patrol near the Nwamedzi Base in the Kruger National Park. He was 29.
- **1997** - South African arms manufacturer Denel an-

nounces that it will unveil six new products at a United Arab Emirates weapons exhibition to increase its sales, especially in the Middle East.

11 March

- **1779** - The US Army Corps of Engineers is established.
- **1941** - During World War II, the Lend-Lease program began allowing Britain to receive American weapons, machines, raw materials, training and repair services. Ships, planes, guns and shells, along with food, clothing and metals went to the embattled British while American warships began patrolling the North Atlantic and U.S troops were stationed in Greenland and Iceland.
- **1942** - Paris: First deportation train leaves for Auschwitz.
- **1945** - 1,000 Allied bombers drop over 4,000 tons of bombs on Essen.
- **1979** - Rifleman Paul William Ernest Carroll from 7 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 20.
- **1984** - Staff Sergeant David John Ward from 101 Battalion SWATF was critically wounded in the hip when his team was ambushed by SWAPO/PLAN and FAPLA forces in Southern Angola. He died from blood loss be-

fore he could be evacuated. He was 24.

- **1985** - Rifleman K. Iyango from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN and FAPLA forces in Southern Angola. He was 24.
- **1987** - Rifleman E. Nangu-la from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike Team 901 SSC-RM-3 SWATF was Killed in Action in Southern Angola after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds when he triggered a Soviet POM-Z2 Anti-Personal Picket Mine. He was 22.
- **1988** - Rifleman Pieter Leon Hendrik van Dyk from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned during anti-crime operations in Mamelodi Township. He was 18.
- **1994** - Three AWB members shot and killed during the invasion of Bophuthatswana.

12 March

- **1879** - A convoy of the British 80th Regt. is over-run at Ntombe River, northern Zululand by a force of 2 000 Zulus. Of the sixty men in the camp, only fifteen escape.
- **1918** - The British submarine 'D-3' is sunk off the French coast, by a French airship which mistook her for a U-boat.
- **1938** - Nazis invaded Austria, then absorbed the country into Hitler's Reich.

• **1945** - Anne Frank, dies in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp of typhus. She was 14.

- **1951** - North Korean/Red Chinese troops driven out of Seoul.
- **1962** - Defence Minister J.J. Fouché outlines the basic principles of South Africa's defence policy and gives details of measures being taken to build up the Defence Forces and to make South Africa self-supporting in military equipment.
- **1963** - Major Anthony Dennis Michael Lawrenson AFC from Air Force Base Waterkloof was killed when his Dornier Do-27A, Serial No. 5431 crashed near Belfast while on a training flight. He was 43.
- **1968** - P.W. Botha, the Minister of Defence, reports to the Senate on the progress of the Arms Industry and defines the main aims of South Africa's defence policy.
- **1975** - Lieutenant Christopher Stuart Franklin from 7 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed near Oudtshoorn. He was 21.
- **1984** - Rifleman L. Dala from 31 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 22.
- **1987** - Rifleman J.W.L. Johannes from 5 Recce Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy

- forces. He was 24.
- **1987** - Rifleman Faustino Sikote from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with FAPLA forces near Evale in Southern Angola during Operation Kakebeen. He was 27.
- **1987** - Special Constable Simon Venusiu 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.
- **1988** - Rifleman Stephen Ebenezer Fatcher from 32 Battalion was Reported Missing after he disappeared in the Okavango River one night while swimming behind the Pont near Buffalo Base. It is suspected that he was either taken by a crocodile or a hippo. His body was never located despite an intensive search. He remains unaccounted for. He was 20.
- **1989** - Rifleman Thulani Maxwei Khuluse from 121 Battalion was killed in a shooting incident in the Community Hall at Verulam. He was 25.
- **1999** - Poland, Hungary, & the Czech Republic join NATO.

13 March

- **1900** - British forces under Lord Roberts take Bloemfontein.
- **1933** - Hitler makes Josef

Goebbels Minister of Information.

- **1942** - Julia Flikke, of the Nurse Corps, becomes the first woman colonel in the US Army.
- **1942** - The U.S. Army K9 Corps is established.
- **1943** - A plot to kill Hitler by German army officers failed as a bomb planted aboard his plane failed to explode due to a faulty detonator.
- **1954** - General Giap's Viet Minh attack That Bien Phu.
- **1977** - Rifleman Jacobus Frederick Steyn from 5 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident at the Kongola Bridge. He was 19.
- **1982** - Three members of 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during Operation Super in Southern Angola. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Petrus Johannes Stephanus Nel (HC Posthumous) (19). Corporal Phillip Thomas Stewart (23). Corporal Yombi João (32).
- **1983** - Rifleman Andrew Matthews Smit from 5 SAI was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion in Southern Angola. He was 18.
- **1986** - Corporal Victor Rodrigues Pedro from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment accidentally drowned in Durban during a training exercise. He was 31.
- **1988** - Private Carel Johannes Beneke from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed when his military vehicle

overturned near Buffalo. He was 18.

- **1988** - Lieutenant (Doctor) Herman Jan Roelof Gerding from the SA Medical Corps Headquarters was killed while travelling as a passenger in a military ambulance. He was 35.
- **2002** - The Angolan government announces a unilateral ceasefire in its 27-year civil war against Unita, to begin the next day.

14 March

- **1915** - German cruiser 'Dresden' scuttled off Chile.
- **1933** - Winston Churchill calls for better air defensive of Britain.
- **1941** - German Air Raid on Clydbank: After two night of bombing nearly every building the town is damaged or destroyed, more than 500 are dead, and over 50,000 homeless.
- **1961** - Two members from Air Force Base Zwartkop were killed when their Ferret Scout Car overturned while on a night Base Perimeter Patrol. The casualties were: Air Sergeant James George McKelvey (30). Air Sergeant Nicolaas Jacobus Neveling (23).
- **1979** - Two members of 12 Squadron deployed to Grootfontein for Operation Rekstok and Safraan were killed in action. They were: Lieutenant (Pilot) Dewald Wally Marais (24). 2nd Lieutenant (Navigator)

Owen John Doyle (21).

- **1980** - 2nd Lieutenant Phillipus Jacob Rudolph Oosthuizen from 5 SAI was Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds during an ambush on the Chandelier Road, about 10km from Nkongo Base when a Soviet 82mm High Explosive mortar bomb exploded next to him. He was 20.
- **1984** - Lieutenant Stanley Saillard Ponder from the South African Medical Corps, a Dental Practitioner attached to 2 Field Engineer Regiment, was killed at Grootfontein when his vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with a police vehicle while he was traveling to a nearby clinic. He was 25.
- **1985** - 2nd Lieutenant Guy Claude Udo Winsto Mogens De Beurges from 121 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy

forces in Southern Angola. He was 20.

- **1985** - Special Constable Joans Andungi 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 23.
- **1987** - Special Constable Ndjendjela Vilho 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 26.
- **1988** - Rifleman Zwelithini Andrias Lukhelo from 121 Battalion was killed while on patrol in the Tembe Elephant Park when he was trampled to death by an enraged elephant. He was 32.
- **1992** - Rifleman Marius Gottfreidt Uitenweerde from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Benoni. He was 26.

15 March

- **1900** - Lord Roberts issues his first proclamation, offering amnesty to burghers, except for the leaders.
- **1922** - The artillery bombards the strikers' stronghold

at Fordsburg Square during the Rand Revolt and it falls to the government. Before presumably committing suicide in this building, the two communist leaders, Fisher and Spendiff, left a joint note: 'We died for what we believed in the Cause'.

- **1943** - Third Battle of Kharkov: Germans under Manstein retake the city from the Soviets.
- **1944** - The ancient Abbey of Monte Cassino is destroyed by Allied bombing and shelling.
- **1957** - Britain becomes the third nation to detonate a nuclear bomb.
- **1972** - Rifleman Werner Albrecht from the Technical Service Corps attached to 1 Field Ambulance Unit was accidentally killed when a steam pressure cooker exploded at Elandsfontein. He was 19.
- **1982** - Rifleman Johannes Jasva from Northern Transvaal Command was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 18.
- **1986** - Special Constable Ernesto Hishidivali 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.
- **1988** - Angola releases the bodies of two SA Defence Force commandos killed in



Josef Goebbels

a raid on Cabinda oil depots in 1985, and the SADF repatriates twelve captured MPLA soldiers.

16 March

- **1802** - The U.S. Military Academy at West Point opens its doors on this day.
- **1916** - The new Dutch passenger liner 'Tubatina' is torpedoed off the Netherlands, Germany denies responsibility despite recovery of portions of the torpedo.
- **1935** - Hitler announces German rearmament, after years of covert efforts under the Weimar Republic, in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.
- **1968** - During the Vietnam War, the My Lai Massacre occurred as American soldiers of Charlie Company murdered 504 Vietnamese men, women, and children. Twenty-five U.S. Army officers were later charged with complicity in the massacre and subsequent cover-up, but only one was convicted, and later pardoned by President Richard Nixon.
- **1983** - Chief Petty Officer Nadiem Mooi from the South African Navy Provost Unit was accidentally killed while attached to 102 Battalion SWATF. He was 34.
- **1984** - Two members of the South African Cape Corps and one from the Army Catering Corps were killed after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental mortar bomb ex-

plosion at Ruacana. They were: Corporal Theo Christopeus Noel Maseti (Army Catering Corps) (21). Rifleman Charles Johannes Coram (19). Rifleman Willem Swartz (22).

- **1984** - Rifleman P.Haupindi from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 20.
- **1984** - Prime Minister P.W. Botha and President Samora Machel of Mozambique sign the Nkomati Accord at the common border on the banks of the Komati River a step hailed as a major move towards peace, stability and international co-operation in Southern Africa.
- **1987** - Two members from 5 SAI were killed when their Samil 50 vehicle overturned 10km east of Colenso while ferrying troops from Durban Airport to the 5 SAI Base at Ladysmith. They were: Rifleman Gavin Gainsford (18). Rifleman John Adriaan Marlow (18).

17 March (St Patrick's Day)

- **1900** - President Kruger and President Steyn appoint Count Georges de Villebois-Mareuil as general in Kroonstad during the South African War. He is killed three weeks later in combat in Boshof, Free State.
- **1900** - A Great combined Republican Council of War is held at Kroonstad, attended by both presidents and com-

manders of the Boer forces, during which far-reaching tactical decisions are taken about the future conduct of the war.

- **1916** - The Imperial Japanese Naval Air Service is established.
- **1942** - Belzec Concentration Camp opens.
- **1966** - US mini-sub locates a missing H-bomb in the Mediterranean off Palomares, Spain.
- **1977** - Sapper Christo Kemp from 14 Field Regiment was Killed in Action during mine clearing operations. He was 23.
- **1977** - Angolan troops invading Zaire take important copper-mining centre of Kolwezi.
- **1981** - Rifleman Petrus Jacobus Viljoen from the Pietermaritzburg Commando was Killed in Action during a skirmish with FRELIMO troops near Ponta do Ouro. He was 23.
- **1984** - A Defence Force spokesman confirms in Cape Town that South Africa is to stop supplying the United States and Britain with intelligence reports on the movements of Soviet warships around the Cape by the end of the year.
- **1987** - Two members from 101 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents in Southern Angola just north of the Cutline. The Casualties were: Rifleman Craig Douglas

Wetton (19). Rifleman M. Moses (20).

- **1997** - Denel says no deal has been reached over the sale of arms to Syria.

18 March

- **1915** - British & French lose six ships attempting to force the Dardanelles.
- **1917** - French battleship 'Danton' is sunk off Sardinia by a German u-boat, 296 die.
- **1922** - The strike by mine-workers on the Witwatersrand, also known as the Rand Revolt, ends. More than 200 people were killed during the strike, which put thousands out of work and caused a devastating loss in coal and gold production.
- **1940** - Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini hold a meeting at the Brenner Pass during which the Italian dictator agrees to join in Germany's war against France and Britain.
- **1944** - German troops seize control of Hungary.
- **1949** - The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is founded.
- **1952** - Communist offensive in Korea begins.
- **1963** - War of independence is launched against Portugal in Guinea-Bissau.
- **1969** - Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, attends the launching in France of the first of three Daphne class submarines being built for the South African Navy.
- **1975** - Herbert Chitepo, 52,

ZANU leader, is killed in Lusaka when his car blows up in an explosion.

- **1986** - Warrant Officer Class 1 Frederick Petrus Johannes Cornelius from 5 Maintenance Unit was critically wounded in Northern Owamboland when his vehicle detonated a landmine. Evacuated back to the RSA, he succumbed to his wounds in 1 Military Hospital later that evening. He was 31.
- **1987** - Israel freezes military contracts and imposes cultural and tourism sanctions on South Africa.

19 March

- **1858** - War against the Basuto is declared in Bloemfontein.
- **1945** - Adolf Hitler orders total destruction of German infrastructure.
- **1979** - Private Louis Gerhard Nel was critically injured in an aircraft ejection seat accident on the Squadron and succumbed to his injuries in 1 Military Hospital. He was 20.
- **1981** - Gunner Cornelius Johannes Janse van Rensburg from 14 Field Regiment died in 1 Military Hospital after being diagnosed with a brain tumour. He was 19.
- **1988** - Major Jan Willem van Copenhagen from 1 Squadron was Reported Missing in Action in Southern Angola when his Dassault Mirage F1AZ failed to return from a low level night diversion strike on enemy

installations at Baixa Longa in Angola with radio silence being enforced. After an intensive search, the wreckage of the aircraft together with the body of the pilot were located inside Angola, not far from the Cut Line. He was 33.

- **1989** - Maiden flight of the Boeing V-22 Osprey VTOL aircraft.
- **1994** - Rifleman Phethiso Simeon Makhatha from 115 Battalion was killed after suffering multiple head injuries when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned while on Township Patrol. He was 27.
- **2003** - The United States launched an attack against Iraq to topple dictator Saddam Hussein from power. The attack commenced with aerial strikes against military sites, followed the next day by an invasion of southern Iraq by U.S. and British ground troops.

20 March

- **1896** - The second Matabele war breaks out.
- **1902** - In the British House of Commons David Lloyd George suggests that there are as many as 30 000 armed Blacks in British military employ in South Africa.
- **1933** - The Nazis open their first concentration camp, at Dachau, near Munich.
- **1942** - General Douglas MacArthur vows "I shall return".
- **1981** - Seaman Derek Jerome Meyer of the 1st Ma

- rine Brigade, South African Marine Corps, was killed instantly in a shooting incident while participating in military exercises being held near Vryburg. He was 19.
- **1982** - Rifleman Dumba Katibelo from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action near the Cut-Line during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 23.
- **1983** - Special Sergeant Atytale Amalua from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 32.
- **1984** - Gunner Joachim Jacobus Badenhorst from 61 Mechanised Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned on a wet road at Tsumeb. He was 19.
- **1985** - Rifleman Jan Andries Coetzee from 7 SAI was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident on the Witbank Highway. He was 20.
- **1988** - Corporal Gregory MacKenzie Steward from 44 Parachute Pathfinder Company was called up for a three-month camp in March 1988. He was officially Reported Missing after participating in a Sunday night practice parachute jump at Murray Hill just north of Pretoria. An intensive search was launched

- and his body was located an hour later and recovered. He was 20.
- **1989** - Lance Corporal Philip Swartz from 52 Battalion was killed in a motor cycle accident at Oshakati. He was 28.
- **1999** - The African People's Liberation Army (APLA), armed section of the PAC, is disbanded in the Umtata stadium by Dr Stanley Mogoba.

21 March

- **1918** - During World War I, the Second Battle of the Somme began as German General Erich von Ludendorff launched an all-out drive to win the war.
- **1943** - A suicide/assassination plot by German Army officers against Hitler failed as the conspirators were unable to locate a short fuse for the bomb which was to be carried in the coat pocket of General von Gersdorff to ceremonies Hitler was attending.
- **1945** - Okinawa: Japanese use Okha suicide planes for the first time.
- **1946** - The US Strategic Air Command is established.
- **1966** - Two members from Central Flying School Dunsfottar were killed when their AT-6 Harvard crashed near Eendrag during a routine training flight. They were: Lieutenant (Pilot Instructor) Johannes Nicolaas Taljaard (22). Candidate Officer (Pupil Pilot) Ian Ashton Fraser

- (19).
- **1975** - Two members from 17 Squadron were killed when their Alouette III, Serial Number 23 struck power lines 7km North of Windhoek and caught fire. The Crew and civilian passengers were killed during the subsequent emergency landing. The Crew were: Lieutenant (Pilot) Geoffrey Herbert Clark (28). Sergeant (Flight Engineer) Christiaan Hermanus Pretorius (29).
- **1976** - Warrant Officer Class II Keith Hugh Hamilton from 250 Air Defence Artillery Group, South African Air Force died in 1 Military Hospital after developing blood clots on the lungs. He was 30.
- **1979** - Lance Corporal Johannes Gerhardus Olivier from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in South Eastern Angola near the Kavangoland Border. He was 22.
- **1979** - Rifleman John Henry van Drutten from the Lydenburg Commando collapsed and died from heat exhaustion during a Route March at Phalaborwa. He was 23.
- **1980** - Rifleman Carlos Conceicao Da Trindade from 32 Battalion Died of Wounds in the Grootfontein Hospital after being critically wounded on 13 March 1980 during Operation Makalani in Southern Angola. He was 20.

- **1981** - Major Carel Arnold Briers from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike was accidentally electrocuted at the Miershoop training base just south of Okatope. He was 27.
- **1984** - Rifleman Eugene Cedric Terblanche from 6 SAI contracted malaria and was admitted to the Grahamstown Provincial Hospital where he died on 21 March 1984. He was 19.
- **1984** - Soviet sub collides with USS 'Kitty Hawk' (CV-63) off Japan.

22 March

- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War the Portuguese government sanctions the passage of British troops and stores via Beira, Mozambique, thereby violating their previous policy of neutrality.
- **1945** - Patton's Third Army crosses the Rhine.

- **1990** - Authorities ordered an inquiry into the funding of the Civil Co-operation Bureau, a secret military unit, accused of political assassinations.
- **1997** - South African mercenaries, hired by the Papua New Guinea government to help crush a separatist rebellion, arrive back in South Africa. Executive Outcomes say that the men should not be seen as mercenaries, but as consultants.

23 March

- **1881** - During the First Anglo-Boer War a peace agreement between the Transvaal Republic and England is ratified and the final agreement is incorporated into the Pretoria Convention, which was signed on 3 August 1881.
- **1881** - The 3-months siege of British soldiers in the Old Fort in Potchefstroom ends amicably with Boer leader Piet Cronje inviting the British officers to dinner at the Royal Hotel. Twenty-five British soldiers and six Boer soldiers died during the siege.
- **1918** - Paris is shelled by German very-long range artillery.
- **1944** - RAF Flight Sergeant

- Nicholas Alkemade survives a 5,500 m fall without a parachute after his Lancaster is hit near Berlin.
- **1962** - French government uses fighter planes and tanks in attempt to end insurrection by European rightists in Algeria.
- **1965** - Two SAAF members, one from 7 Squadron and one from 8 Squadron were killed when their AT-6 Harvard crashed near Bloemfontein during a night cross country exercise. It appears that the crew may have become disorientated as the aircraft flew vertically into the ground while still under full power. The crew were: 2nd Lieutenant (Pilot Instructor) Jacobus Johannes le Roux (22). Candidate Officer (Pupil Pilot) Robin Leslie Jarman (21).
- **1965** - Gunner Leonard Edward Parsons from Eastern Province Command was accidentally electrocuted. He was 18.
- **1980** - Corporal Renier Stephanus van Zyl from Regiment Namutoni SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1980** - Rifleman Robert Frederick McShane from the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg was critically injured in a hit-and-run accident just outside Hoopstad on 18 November 1979 while hitch-hiking home to Cape



George S Patton

Town on weekend pass. He succumbed to his injuries in hospital on 23 March 1980. He was 19.

- **1982** - Rifleman Johannes Dimbo from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds from a Soviet 60mm mortar bomb explosion during a SWAPO/PLAN insurgent attack near Nkongo. He was 22.
- **1982** - South Africa is to expand its military call-up to include all White men aged between seventeen and sixty-five, almost doubling the size of its forces. Commando units are to be strengthened.
- **1985** - 2nd Lieutenant Delarey Matthee from 3 SAI was accidentally shot and killed by own forces in his own ambush at Kamanjab. He was 24.
- **1988** - Constable Jacobus Ignatius van Zyl from the SWA Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action when his Z4S Casspir was hit by a Soviet RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1990** - Commandant Henry Walter Venter from 4 Vehicle Reserve Park was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Old Warmbaths Road near Pretoria. He was 40.
- **1997** - The first wave of a US military task force moves

cautiously into central Africa, preparing for a possible evacuation of Americans from Zaire.

- **2006** - Desmond Doss, conscientious objector who had earned a Medal of Honour as a medic on Okinawa, dies at the age of 87.

24 March

- **1900** - Newly appointed Combat General Count Georges de Villebois-Mareuil leaves Kroonstad with a 'flying column' consisting of fifty Dutchmen, twenty-five Frenchmen and eleven Afrikaners, aiming to blow up the railway line south of Kimberley to disrupt British lines of communications.
- **1941** - Donald Duck entlists in the US Army, for the first of six war cartoons.
- **1944** - The Great Escape: 76 Allied officers flee Stalag Luft 3.
- **1945** - Operation Varsity: Allied airborne crossing of the Rhine.
- **1951** - Two pilots of SA Air Force's No 2 (Flying Cheetah) Squadron, assisting the United Nations in the Korean War, blast a convoy of twelve stationary and camouflaged trucks with rocket-fire and destroy ten. In another operation, two "Flying Cheetahs" wipe out nine trucks.
- **1963** - Five members of the South African Defence Force were killed when the military vehicle in which

they were traveling as passengers, overturned at Voortrekkerhoogte. They were: Private Jacobus Gerhardus Roos Runkel (18). Signaller Ivan Leslie Taylor (19). Signaller Ulrich Andre Mulder from 2 Signal Regiment (18). Signaller Jacobus Johannes Helberg (17). Signaller Abraham Lodewicus Botha (20).

- **1972** - Private Leon George Muller from the Air Force Gymnasium died from heat exhaustion in 1 Military Hospital. He was 19.
- **1974** - Uganda crushes a coup attempt against President Idi Amin.
- **1975** - Rifleman Peter John van der Walt from 4 SAI died from a gunshot wound as a result of the accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while stationed in the Caprivi Strip. He was 18.
- **1976** - Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, British field marshal during World War 2 and commander of the Eighth Army in North Africa, dies at the age of 88.
- **1982** - Rifleman Gringo Jose' Manuel from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Buffalo. He was 23.
- **1986** - Commandant Charles Vernon Hochapfel from the South West Africa Gymnasium attached to 101 Battalion SWATF, died in 1 Military Hospital from Wounds received during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 44.

25 March

- **1858** - The battle of Koranaberg takes place during the Orange Free State-Basuto War.
- **1915** - First USN submarine disaster: USS 'F-4' sinks off Hawaii, 21 die.
- **1945** - US First Army breaks out of the Remagen bridgehead.
- **1966** - Lieutenant Francois Theron Mentz from Central Flying School Dunnottar was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed after flying into rising ground during low level flying near Middelburg. He was 22.
- **1976** - Trooper Reginald Edward Smith from the Natal Mounted Rifles died in Northern Owamboland from a gunshot wound as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle. He was 23.
- **1976** - Lance Corporal Willem Christoffel Swanepoel from 2 Parachute Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents north of Oshikango. He was 30.
- **1977** - Five members from Regiment Westelike Provinsie were killed and 71 injured on when a goods train loaded with iron ore collided with their stationary troop train at the Keetmanshoop station. The Casualties were: Rifleman Gary Albert Bricknell (22). Rifleman Petrus Johannes Jacobus Holtzhausen (27). Rifleman

Wilhelm Hugo (26). Rifleman Hermanus Johannes Uys (25). Rifleman Paul Kady Donovan van Zyl (24).

- **1978** - Rifleman R. Desenga from 31 Battalion was accidentally shot and killed by a fellow soldier in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1980** - Two members from 42 Squadron were killed when their AM-3C Bosbok, Serial No. 923 crashed near Potchefstroom while carrying out low level flying. The crew were: Lieutenant Edwin Johannes le Roux (20). Lieutenant Pieter Frederick Smit (22).
- **1980** - Two crewmembers from 44 Squadron and a SAAF female Personnel Officer (passenger), were killed when their C-47 Dakota, based at Air Force Base Grootfontein, crashed between Tsumeb and Grootfontein while carrying out unauthorised low level flight. The casualties were: Lieutenant Johan Heinrich Leeuw (22). Lieutenant Cornelis Johannes Wessels (21). Candidate Officer (Miss) Elna Susan Swart (23).
- **1982** - Two members of Witwatersrand Command Headquarters were killed in a Military Vehicle Accident in Houghton. They were: Rifleman Johannes Theodorus Lombard (21). Rifleman Ivan John van Heerden (20).
- **1982** - In announcing the 1982 Defence Budget, Owen Horwood reaffirms

that the government's highest priority remains that of giving South Africa an effective defence capability and a self-sufficient arms industry.

- **1985** - Rifleman Colin Graham Dockerill from 6 SAI, detached to the Equestrian Centre, was killed instantly in Northern Owamboland while returning from a waterhole when he fell off his galloping horse and hit a tree trunk, breaking his neck. He was 20.
- **1988** - Rifleman Nicolaas Jacobus Vermeulen from 54 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 23.
- **1988** - Rifleman Simon Haindula from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 22.
- **1994** - Lance Corporal Phiti Joel Mokgolo from 7 SAI was killed in a motor vehicle accident near Rustenburg. He was 27.
- **1994** - American troops withdraw from Somalia after a 16-month humanitarian mission marred by fighting with the Somalis.

26 March

- **1917** - First Battle of Gaza: The Turks hold the British.
- **1945** - Seventh Army attacks Worms on the Rhine.
- **1957** - Two members from Central Flying School Dun

nottar were killed when their Harvard flew into rising ground near Trichardt during a night cross country flight. The aircraft disintegrated on impact and burnt out. The crew were: Lieutenant Andre Dewald de Klerk (25). 2nd Lieutenant Neil Rhodes Edward Ken-nough (23).

- **1965** - Rifleman Andrew Mark Newton-Thompson from 1 SAI collapsed from heat exhaustion while on a cross country run and died in the Groote Schuur Hospital. He was 21.
- **1965** - Rifleman Johannes Rudolf Fourie from 5 SAI died from a gunshot wound resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle during a training exercise at Ladysmith. He was 18.
- **1976** - Rifleman Hermanus Stephanus Lombard Moss from the Kaffrarian Rifles was Killed in Action when his Unimog detonated a landmine just north of Ondangwa in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.
- **1977** - Rifleman Joao Antonio from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Buffalo while delivering supplies to the Base. He was 27.
- **1978** - Corporal Nicolaas Johannes Koekemoer from the Johannesburg Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Rhodesia. He was 24.
- **1979** - Camp David peace

treaty is signed, ending 30 years of war between Egypt and Israel.

- **1980** - Rifleman John Stephen Botha from 32 Battalion died at Buffalo Base from a gunshot wound apparently accidentally self-inflicted. No foul play was suspected. He was 19.
- **1984** - Lieutenant Hendrik Hans Jacob Maree from the South African Medical Corps attached to 202 Battalion SWATF was killed in a motor vehicle accident at Rundu. He was 23.
- **1991** - Soldiers overthrow Mali's military dictator after days of rioting and protests that leave dozens dead.

27 March

- **1881** - A Boer force of 150 men storms Majuba and drives out 400 British troops in the decisive battle of the Anglo-Transvaal War.
- **1900** - General Piet Joubert, commandant-general of the Boer forces and vice-president of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, dies of gastritis in Pretoria.
- **1933** - Japan leaves the League of Nations.
- **1941** - Himmler orders building of the Auschwitz concentration camp.
- **1945** - The last German V-2 rocket attack on Britain: 134 people, many of them Jewish, are killed Whitechapel, London.
- **1964** - UN peacekeeping troops arrive on Cyprus.

- **1968** - Captain Andries Jacobus Mouton from Air Operations School was killed when his De Havilland Vampire T-55 Mk II was involved in a mid-air collision with a Canadair C13L Sabre piloted by Lt Liebenberg of 1 Squadron near Pietersburg. He was 29.
- **1975** - Minister of Defence P.W. Botha presents a White Paper outlining defence policy and justifying the increased expenditure which now accounts for one-fifth of the country's revenue budget.
- **1979** - Rifleman Dixon Njunge from 201 Battalion SWATF was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1981** - Rifleman Daniel Johannes Louw from the South African Cape Corps killed at M'pacha after suffering a fatal gunshot wound as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 20.
- **1983** - Three members from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Special Sergeant Edward Mutuku (29). Special Constable Matheus Funet (24). Special Constable Johannes Muyongo (25).

- **1987** - Rifleman Manuel Maundu from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 22.

28 March

- **1879** - Nearly one hundred officers and men of Wood's column are killed in a desperate fight against a Zulu impi on Hlobane Mountain during the Anglo-Zulu War.
- **1915** - German submarine 'U-28' torpedoes the British liner 'Falaba' in St. George's Channel, 104 die.
- **1942** - Operation Chariot: Nocturnal Royal Navy/Royal Marine commando raid blocks the 'Normandie' dock in Nazi-occupied St Nazaire. Five VCs are awarded as a result of the raid.
- **1945** - Last V-1 buzz bomb attack on London.
- **1969** - Dwight D. Eisenhower, US President, 5-star general and Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe, dies at the age of 78.

nel wounds in an accidental hand grenade explosion at the General De Wet Training Area. He was 18.

- **1978** - Sapper Michael Andries Stephanus Nel from 101 Field Engineer Regiment was Reported Missing while swimming in the Okavango River after he was attacked by a crocodile. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 19.
- **1979** - The World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa is launched in London, with the support of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid. Several Heads of State and Government are its patrons and Abdul S. Minty its Director.
- **1979** - Sergeant Robert Daniel Burt from Sector 70 Headquarters SWATF was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 26.
- **1979** - Rifleman Dennis Colin Golden from 1 Parachute Battalion was accidentally killed by own forces near Otavi. He was 19.
- **1979** - Rifleman Nikos Pavlakis from Infantry School Died of Wounds when his patrol, while moving along the Cut-line, was ambushed by a numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut Line. He was 23.
- **1985** - Rifleman Kleopas Mbango from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut Line. He was 23.
- **1987** - Special Sergeant Martin Lukas from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 32.
- **1980** - Trooper Leon Oosthuizen from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed after suffering multiple shrap-



V1
'Buzzbomb'

- **1988** - Special Constable Manuel Sevelenu 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.
- **1990** - Commandant John Orr, Officer Commanding 2 Squadron returned from a training sortie in his Mirage IICZ and while debriefing at the Squadron, he suddenly collapsed. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he succumbed. He was 37.

29 March

- **1879** - The battle of Kambula during the Anglo-Zulu War, takes place.
- **1911** - The U.S. Army adopts the M1911 .45 ACP pistol as its official sidearm.
- **1962** - The minister of defence, J.J. Fouché, discloses that South Africa is buying supersonic Mirage III jet fighters from France, and that South African forces are being equipped with French alouette helicopters.
- **1971** - 1st Lt William L Calley Jr found guilty in the My Lai massacre.
- **1973** - Private Johan Marthinus Kruger from 2 Mobilisation Centre was killed in a military vehicle accident at Petrusburg. He was 18.
- **1973** - Last US troops leave Vietnam, nine years after the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.

- **1977** - Staff Sergeant Gert Jacobus Voges from 29 Field Workshops died from injuries sustained in a military vehicle accident at the Otavi-Tsumeb crossroads. He was 39.
- **1988** - Gunner Hendrik Jacobus van der Westhuizen from Regiment Potchefstroom University was killed when he accidentally shot himself in Southern Angola during operations against FAPLA Forces near Cuito Cuanavale. He was 33.
- **1994** - Cease-fire ends Serbo-Croat War.

30 March

- **1945** - Soviet troops enter Austria.
- **1945** - The Red Army captures Danzig.
- **1972** - Private Sydney Eric Wienand from the Air Force Gymnasium was killed in a military vehicle accident in Pretoria. He was 19.
- **1973** - Private Andrew James MacPherson from Natal Command Headquarters was killed in a military vehicle accident in Durban. He was 18.



**M1911
.45 ACP
Pistol**

- **1977** - Sergeant Daniel Petrus Theron from the Military Headquarters, Grootfontein, died from injuries sustained in a military vehicle accident which occurred on 29 March at the Otavi-Tsumeb crossroads near Grootfontein. He was 35.
- **1979** - Private Douw Teuns Gerbrand De Beer from Western Province Command Headquarters was killed in a military motorcycle accident at Groote Schuur. He was 19.
- **1980** - Sergeant Barend Zacharias Gericke from 32 Battalion was Killed in action in Southern Angola. He was 21.
- **1980** - Rifleman Johannes Oarum from 41 Battalion SWATF was killed in Northern Owamboland when he was struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 18.

- **1984** - Four members from the Congella Regiment and one member from Group 10 attached to the Regiment were killed and one critically injured when their Military Landrover Vehicle was struck and flattened by an articulated vehicle loaded with logs that jack-knifed across the road approximately 9 km outside Richmond. The casualties were: Staff Sergeant Kevin Ernest Parker (37). Lance Corporal Roderrick William Bekker (28). Rifleman Winston Churchill (25). Rifleman Stefan Henry Conrad (27). Rifleman Grant Edward Brierley (27) died from his injuries on 31 March 1984.
- **1984** - Corporal Daniel Matsetse from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with

- SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1987** - Sergeant (Flight Engineer) Daniel Lan from 16 Squadron was Killed in Action after being hit by enemy small arms fire while acting as door gunner in Alouette III 624 during a close-air support operation against SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in the Oshivello area. He was 27.

31 March

- **1900** - General Christiaan de Wet and his men, in a battle that marks the first of the guerrilla phase of the Second Anglo-Boer War, clash with British forces under General R Broadwood and capture 421 men, seven guns and 83 wagons. The battle is fought at Sannaspost (Sannah's Post), east of Bloemfontein.
- **1921** - The Royal Australian Air Force is established.
- **1941** - Germans launch a counter-offensive in North Africa in World War II.
- **1943** - USAAF accidentally bombs a residential area of Rotterdam, 326 die.
- **1954** - USSR offers to join NATO.
- **1960** - Four more regiments

- of the Citizens' Force are mobilised. Legal authorities in Johannesburg state the emergency regulations create a situation of virtual martial law.
- **1970** - Marshal of the Soviet Union Semion Timoshenko dies at the age of 75.
- **1977** - A Defence White Paper analyses South Africa's defence requirements in the context of the Soviet and Cuban intervention in Angola. South Africa is to be placed on a war footing.
- **1977** - Private Wilhelm Jacobus Johannes van Nieuwenhuizen from 32 Field Workshop Squadron was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 28.
- **1989** - Johan Papenfus, a SA Defence Force rifleman captured in Angola nearly a year previously, returns to South Africa from Cuba. His return is part of an exchange for prisoners held by Unita.
- **1992** - UN Security Council votes to ban flights and arms sales to Libya, branding it a terrorist state for shielding six men accused of blowing up Pan Am Flight 103 and a French airliner.
- **1994** - South African President F.W. de Klerk declares a state of emergency in Natal and orders the army into the Zulu stronghold.



**Semion
Timoshenko**



QUIZ

If the hat fits...

1. Australian slouch hat.
2. World War II Russian forage cap.
3. 32 Battalion beret (SADF).
4. World War II Japanese forage cap.
5. French Navy.
6. French Foreign Legion Képi blanc.
7. United States Marine Corps dress cap.
8. World War II German Fallschirmjäger (Paratrooper) steel helmet.
9. United States Cavalry.
10. United States Green Beret.
11. World War II German SchutzStaffel (SS) steel helmet.
12. British Parachute Regiment.
13. Selous Scouts beret (Rhodesia).
14. South African Special Forces beret.
15. Russian Navy ushanka fur cap.



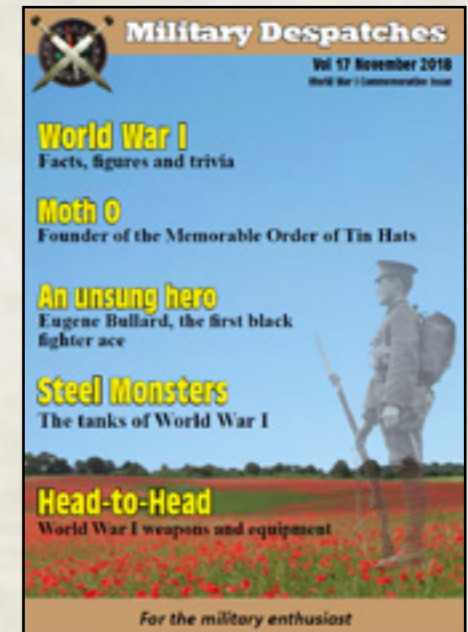
Useful links

Every month we feature a few useful links to military websites, newsletters and online magazines. Stuff that we think our readers will appreciate.

Here are two of our favourites. The first one is Nongqai, the unofficial police newsletter for veterans of the former South African Police Force and for those interested in Police History. The second is Jimmy's Own, the official newsletter of the South African Signals Association. Click on the magazine covers to go to the respective websites.



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“Things don’t have to change the world to be important.”
Steve Jobs

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