



# Military Despatches

Vol 71 May 2023

## Dad's Army - art imitates life

Many of the cast of the sitcom were real military vets

## Operation Nimrod

The SAS raid watched live on television

## Josef Mengele

The Angel of Death

## World War II infantry

Which country had the best infantry of the war

*For the military enthusiast*



**Click on any video below to view**

**Military Despatches**

**Paratrooper Wings Quiz**

**Paratrooper Wings Quiz**

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

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

**Military Despatches**

**Military Firearms Quiz**

**Military Firearms Quiz**

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

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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**

**New videos each week**

**New videos each week**

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

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

**Military Despatches**

**Elite Military Units Quiz**

**Elite Military Units Quiz**

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

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

**Military Despatches**

**Who said that?**

**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

April is a bit of a weird month. Fair enough, there are more than enough public and religious holidays in the month. But it's also a bugger to try and get any work done.

I enjoy a good joke, but I'm afraid I've lost my sense of humour with Eskom. In fact, truth be told, I'm *gatvol*.

These days it's not a question of whether we will have loadshedding or not. It's more a question of "what stage of loadshedding will we have today?" Currently we're on Stage 6 until further notice.

That means that we sit without power for between seven and twelve hours a day. It's bad enough for the ordinary citizen, but a hell of a lot worse for anyone trying to run a business.

Even putting Military Despatches together every month is becoming more of a struggle.

To produce the magazine I need a few essentials. First of all I need a decent computer with the necessary software. I also need access to the Internet, a high speed fibre connection, and of course a kettle (I need a lot of coffee to keep me going).

Now all of this naturally makes use of electricity. Something that Eskom is determined that I can't have.

I did spend a fair amount of money on a decent inverter, but even inverters are starting to take strain with all the loadshedding. The batteries don't even have enough chance to recharge before the power is cut off once again.

Another thing is that anything that is powered by electricity is not done any good by the constant loadshedding.

I have two computers. One is for playing games and watching YouTube. The other is my work machine for doing Military Despatches and video editing. Yesterday my work machine didn't want to start. I had to once again spend money to replace the power supply unit.

And trust me when I say that Eskom is not that concerned about everything. And people still have the cheek to ask me why I drink.

Until next time, stay safe and stay healthy.

*Matt*

# Hipe! media

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### Front Cover

The cast of the British sitcom 'Dad's Army'. The series ran for nine seasons and was also made into a full-length movie.

Many of the cast members were veterans of World War I, World War II, or both.



# 10 powerful French weapons

Numerous countries have made use of French weapon systems, and this included the South African Defence Force (SADF). The French are the only ones in Europe who are almost self-sufficient in producing their own high quality weapon systems.

The *Forces armées françaises* (French Armed Forces) encompass the Army, the Navy, the Air and Space Force and the Gendarmerie of the French Republic. The President of France heads the armed forces as Chief of the Armed Forces.

France has the sixth largest defence budget in the world and the first in the European Union (EU). It has the largest armed forces in size in the European Union and currently ranked as the world's sixth-most powerful military.

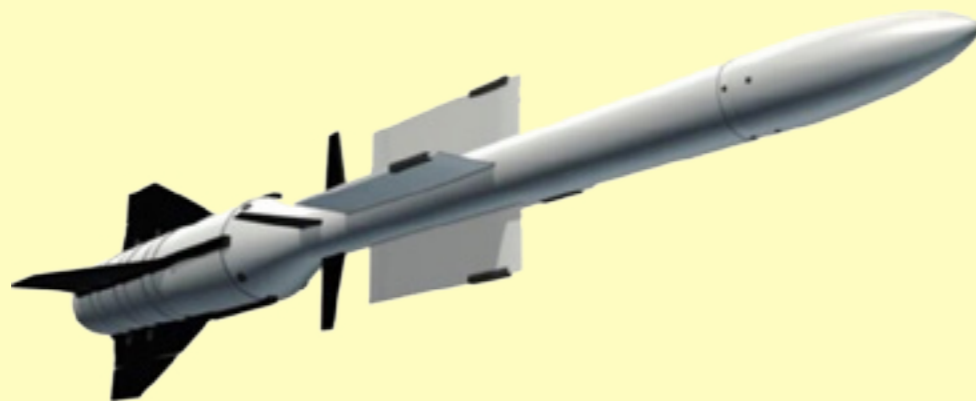
The French are the only ones in Europe who are almost self-sufficient in producing high quality military vehicles, firearms, ships and aircraft and weapons. Their products have been exported worldwide and have been the star in several major wars.

The South African Defence Force (SADF) benefited from the use of a number of weapon systems from France. These included the Eland Armoured Car (based on the French Panhard AML), the Dassault Mirage III and F1 fighter jets, the Aérospatiale Alouette III, Aérospatiale SA 330 Puma and Aérospatiale SA 321 Super Frelon helicopters, and the Daphné-class submarines.

In this month's 'Top Ten'

we take a look at 10 powerful French weapons currently in use with the French Armed Forces.

They are presented in alphabetical order.



## 10. Aster 15/30

The Aster 15 and Aster 30 are a Franco-Italian family of all-weather, vertical launch surface-to-air missiles.

The Aster missiles were developed to intercept and destroy the full spectrum of air threats from high-performance combat aircraft, UAVs and helicopters to cruise, anti-radiation and even sea-skimming supersonic anti-ship missiles.

In addition, the Aster 30 Block 1 and Block 1 NT were designed to counter ballistic missiles.

The Aster is primarily operated by France, Italy, as well as the United Kingdom as an export customer, and is an integrated component of the PAAMS air defence system (known in the Royal Navy as Sea Viper).

As the principal weapon of

the PAAMS, the Aster equips the Horizon-class frigates in French and Italian service as well as the British Type 45 destroyers.

- Weight: Aster 15 310 kg; Aster 30 450 kg
- Length: Aster 15 4.2 metres; Aster 30 4.9 metres
- Warhead: 15 kg focused fragmented warhead
- Detonation mechanism: Calculated delay proximity fuze
- Operational range: Aster 15 - Above 30 km; Aster 30 - Above 120 km
- Maximum speed: Aster 15 - Mach 3; Aster 30 - Mach 4.5
- Guidance system: Inertial guidance with up-link; Active RF seeker

## 9. Charles de Gaulle

Charles de Gaulle is the flagship of the French Navy. The ship, commissioned in 2001, is the tenth French aircraft carrier, and the first French nuclear-powered surface vessel.

The ship carries a complement of Dassault Rafale M and E-2C Hawkeye aircraft, AS365F Dauphin Pedro, EC725 Caracal and AS532 Cougar helicopters for combat search and rescue, as well as modern electronics and Aster missiles.

She is a CATOBAR-type carrier that uses two 75 m C13-3 steam catapults of a shorter version of the catapult system installed on the US Nimitz-class aircraft carriers, one catapult at the bow and one across the front of the landing area.



As of July 2021, Charles de Gaulle is the only non-American carrier-vessel that has a catapult launch system, which has allowed for operation of F/A-18E/F Super Hornets and C-2 Greyhounds of the US Navy.

She has a length of 261.5 metres and a top speed of 27 knots

(50 km/h). The Charles de Gaulle has a ship's complement of 1,350 sailors and an air wing of 600 personnel.

Her first operational deployment was in November 2001 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom against Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.

## 8. Crotale

The *Crotale* (Rattlesnake) is a French, all-weather, short-range surface-to-air missile system developed to intercept airborne ranged weapons and aircraft, from cruise or anti-ship missiles to helicopters, UAVs or low-flying high-performance fighter aircraft.

Originally the Crotale R440 system was developed by Rockwell International and Thomson-Houston (and Mistral) in France for South Africa, where it was named Cactus.

However, the achievements of the system impressed the French Armed Forces, who purchased the system both for the air force and for the navy.

The firing system includes



the main sensors of the ship, the firing system of the turret, and a central coordination system. The turret holds eight missiles ready for launch in watertight containers. The magazine behind the turret holds 18 missiles.

The French army first utilised

a 4x4 wheeled vehicle, armed with four launchers. In order to ensure higher mobility, it was decided to mount the system on the chassis of the French AMX-30 main battle tank. At the same time, the number of launchers was increased to six.

**7. Dassault Rafale**

The Dassault Rafale is a French twin-engine, canard delta wing, multirole fighter aircraft designed and built by Dassault Aviation. Equipped with a wide range of weapons, the Rafale is intended to perform air supremacy, interdiction, aerial reconnaissance, ground support, in-depth strike, anti-ship strike and nuclear deterrence missions. The Rafale is referred to as an “omnirole” aircraft by Dassault.



M88-4e turbofans

**Performance**

- Maximum speed: 1,912 km/h
- Combat range: 1,850 km
- Service ceiling: 15,835 metres
- Rate of climb: 304.8 m/s

**Armament**

- Guns: 1× 30 mm GIAT 30/M791 auto-cannon
- Hardpoints: 13 for Navy version (Rafale M) with provisions to carry combinations of: air-to-air, air-to-ground and air-to-surface missiles.

**General characteristics**

- Crew: 1 or 2
- Length: 15.27 metres
- Wingspan: 10.90 metres
- Height: 5.34 metres
- Empty weight: 10,600 kg
- Powerplant: 2 × Snecma

**6. Exocet**

The French-built Exocet anti-ship missile needs little introduction. One only needs to think back to the Falklands War in 1982.

On 4 May 1982 an Exocet missile fired by an Argentine Super Étendard strike fighter hit and sank the Royal Navy destroyer HMS Sheffield.

The sea-launched MM38 entered service in 1975, whilst the air-launched AM39 Exocet began development in 1974 and entered service with the French Navy five years later in 1979.

The relatively compact missile is designed for attacking small- to medium-size warships (e.g., frigates, corvettes, and destroyers), although multiple hits are effective against larger



vessels, such as aircraft carriers.

It is guided inertially in mid-flight and turns on active radar homing late in its flight to find and hit its target. As a countermeasure against air defence around the target, it maintains a very low altitude while inbound, staying just one to two

metres above the sea surface.

Due to the effect of the radar horizon, this means that the target may not detect an incoming attack until the missile is only 6,000 metres from impact. This leaves little time for reaction and stimulated the design of close-in weapon systems (CIWS).

**5. FAMAS felin**

The FAMAS is a bullpup assault rifle designed and manufactured in France by MAS in 1978, a year after the Austrian Steyr AUG.

The FAMAS felin is the upgraded and modernized version of the original FAMAS F1, and was designed to make it part of the FELIN combat system for French troops.

The improvements include a front grip for better weapon handling, new day/night optical sight, thermal sights, radio, integrated video camera and indirect aiming feature.

The most spectacular upgrade is the indirect fire mode which enables the engagement of targets which are not in line of sight while the soldier is main-



taining cover.

**Specifications**

- Weight: 3.8 kg
- Length: 757 mm
- Cartridge: 5.56 × 45mm NATO
- Action: Lever-delayed blowback

- Rate of fire: 900–1,100 rpm
- Effective firing range: 450 metres
- Feed system : 30 round detachable box magazine (STANAG)
- Sights: Day/night optical sight; thermal sight

**4. Horizon Class Frigate**

The Horizon class is a class of air-defence destroyers in service with the French and Italian navies. They are designated as destroyers by the Italians and using NATO classification but are referred to as “frigates” by the French.

The distinct piece of equipment on these ships is their primary EMPAR multifunction G-band AESA radar and their secondary Thales S1850 volume search AESA radar.

These ships are equipped with 48 A50 VLS cells for a mix of Aster-15/30 missiles. The range and capabilities of these missiles enable these ships to maintain an air defence bubble of radius 150 km around it.

Eight Exocet Anti-ship mis-



siles are carried behind the superstructure in angled box launchers. four torpedo tubes and an ASW helicopter form a potent defence against submarines.

The gun armament consists of 2x76mm super rapid guns which can be used against air

and surface targets and 2×20 mm cannons. The Sadral forms the CIWS component of the ship.

They have a speed in excess of 29 knots (54 km) and a range of 6,100 nautical miles (11,000 km) at 18 kn (33 km/h).

3. Leclerc MBT

The Leclerc is a third-generation French main battle tank developed and manufactured by Nexter Systems. It was named in honour of Marshal Philippe Leclerc de Hauteclocque, a commander of the Free French Forces, who led the 2nd Armoured Division in World War II.

The Leclerc is in service with the French Army, Jordanian Army and the United Arab Emirates Army. In production since 1991, the Leclerc entered French service in 1992, replacing the AMX-30 as the country's main armoured platform.

With production now complete, the French operate 222 Leclercs (with 184 more in storage, for a total of 406).



General characteristics

- Weight: 57.4 tonnes
- Length: 9.87 metres
- Width: 3.60 metres
- Height: 2.53 metres
- Crew: 3 (Commander, gunner, driver)
- Armour: modular composite armour
- Main armament: GIAT CN120-26/52 120mm tank gun
- Secondary armament: 12.7 mm coaxial M2HB machine gun ; 7.62 mm machine gun
- Engine: V8X SACM (Wärtsilä) 8-cylinder diesel engine
- Operational range: 550 km
- Maximum speed: 71 km/h on road; 55 km/h off road

2. Mistral Class LHD

The Mistral class is a class of five amphibious assault ships built by France. Also known as helicopter carriers, and referred to as “projection and command ships” (*bâtiments de projection et de commandement* or BPC), a Mistral-class ship is capable of transporting and deploying 16 NH90 or Tiger helicopters, four landing barges, up to 70 vehicles including 13 Leclerc tanks, or a 40-strong Leclerc tank battalion, and 450 soldiers.

The ships are equipped with a 69-bed hospital, and are capable of serving as part of a NATO Response Force, or with United Nations or European Union peace-keeping forces.

Following the start of the 2006 Lebanon War, Mistral



was one of four French ships deployed to the waters off Lebanon as part of *Opération Baliste*.

These ships were to protect, and if necessary evacuate, French citizens in Lebanon and Israel. Mistral embarked 650 soldiers and 85 vehicles, including 5 AMX-10 RC and about 20 VABs and VBLs. Four helicopters were also loaded

aboard, with another two joining the ship near Crete. During her deployment, Mistral evacuated 1,375 refugees.

The Mistral Class has a speed of 18.8 knots (35 km/h) and a range of 10,800 km at 18 knots (33 km/h).

The Mistral Class has a crew of 160 personnel which includes 20 officers.

1. SCALP Cruise Missile

SCALP is an Anglo-French low-observable, long-range, air-launched cruise missile developed since 1994 by Matra and British Aerospace, and now manufactured by MBDA.

While it is known as SCALP-EG (which stands for “*Système de Croisière Autonome à Longue Portée – Emploi Général*”; or: “General Purpose Long-Range Cruise Missile”), the British know it as Storm Shadow.

The missile is based on the French-developed Apache anti-runway cruise missile. They differ in that the Storm Shadow carries a warhead instead of submunitions.

The missile has a range of approximately 560 km. It is pow-



ered by a turbojet at Mach 0.8 and can be carried by the now retired RAF Tornado GR4, Italian Tornado IDS, Saab Gripen, Dassault Mirage 2000 and Dassault Rafale aircraft.

Storm Shadow was integrated with the Eurofighter Typhoon as part of the Phase 2 Enhancement (P2E) in 2015, but will not be fitted to the F-35 Lightning II.

It is a fire and forget missile,

programmed before launch. Once launched, the missile cannot be controlled or commanded to self-destroy and its target information cannot be changed. Mission planners programme the missile with the target air defences and target.

It weighs 1,300 kilograms, carries a 450 kilogram warhead, and has a top speed of 1,000 km/h.

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

The interface features a central photograph of a stone church with a steeple. Overlaid on the image are several interactive elements: a logo for 'Warrior's Gate Virtual Tour' with the text 'Take a virtual tour of Warrior's Gate, or find out more about the MOTH Order. Click on a thumbnail to view the video.'; a 'Virtual Tour' button; a 'Photo gallery' button; a 'History' button; a 'Ceremonial' button; a 'Message from the Vice-Chairman' button; and a 'Message from the custodian' button. There are also several small portrait thumbnails of people in military uniforms.

# Mademoiselle Helicopter

French Air Force neurosurgeon and pilot Valérie André broke all the rules - and saved hundreds of lives in the process

Born on 21 April 1922, Valérie André is a veteran of the French Resistance during World War II, a neurosurgeon, an aviator and the first female member of the military to achieve the rank of General Officer, in 1976, as Physician General.

In 1981, she was promoted to Inspector General of Medicine. A helicopter pilot, she is the first woman to have piloted a helicopter in a combat zone. She is also a founding member of the *Académie de l'air et de l'espace*.

She started as a Medical Captain in Indochina in 1948, already a qualified parachutist and pilot, in addition to being an army surgeon.

While in Indochina, she realized that the most difficult part of her duties was retrieving the wounded, who were often trapped in the jungle.

She returned to France to learn how to pilot a helicopter, then flew one to Indochina. From 1952–1953, she piloted 129 helicopter missions into the jungle, rescuing 165 soldiers, and on two occasions completed parachute jumps to treat wounded soldiers who needed immediate surgery.

One typical mission occurred on 11 December 1951, when casualties were in urgent need of evacuation from Tu Vu on the Black River. The only available helicopter, stationed near Saigon, was dismantled, flown to Hanoi by a Bristol Freighter and reassembled.

Captain André then flew into Tu Vu despite heavy mist and anti-aircraft fire. There, she triaged the casualties, operated on the most pressing cases and then flew the urgent wounded back to Hanoi, two at a time.

Later, she was put in command of a casualty evacuation flight.

She was given the nickname 'Mademoiselle Helicopter'.

She continued in Algeria as a Medical

Commander in 1960, where she completed 365 war missions.

She rose to the rank of Medical Lieutenant Colonel in 1965 then to Medical Colonel in 1970.

She had a total of 3,200 flight hours, and received seven citations of the *Croix de Guerre*.

She is one of eight women to hold the *Grand-croix* (Great Cross) rank in the Legion of Honour. On 21 April 2022 she turned 100.

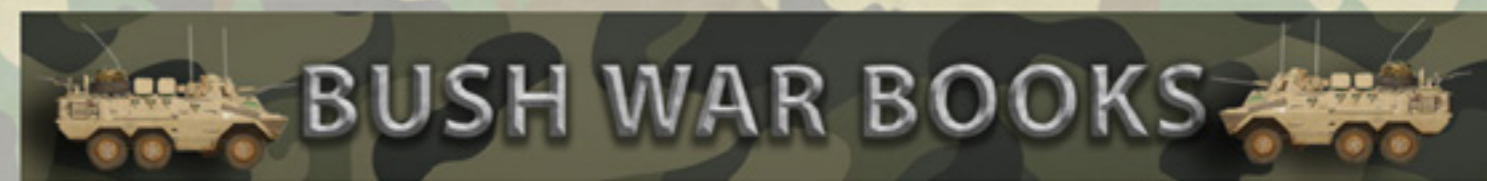
## Decorations

Besides being a holder of the Grand-croix of the Legion of Honour, she was also awarded the following:

- Grand-croix of the Ordre National du Mérite
- Croix de Guerre 1939-1945 with seven citations
- Croix de Guerre des Théâtres d'opérations extérieures
- Médaille de la Valeur Militaire
- Médaille commémorative d'Indochine
- Médaille de l'Aéronautique
- Médaille de Vermeil du service de santé
- Grande Médaille d'or du l'Aéro-club de France
- Médaille du Combattant Volontaire (1944)

She was also awarded the following foreign decorations:

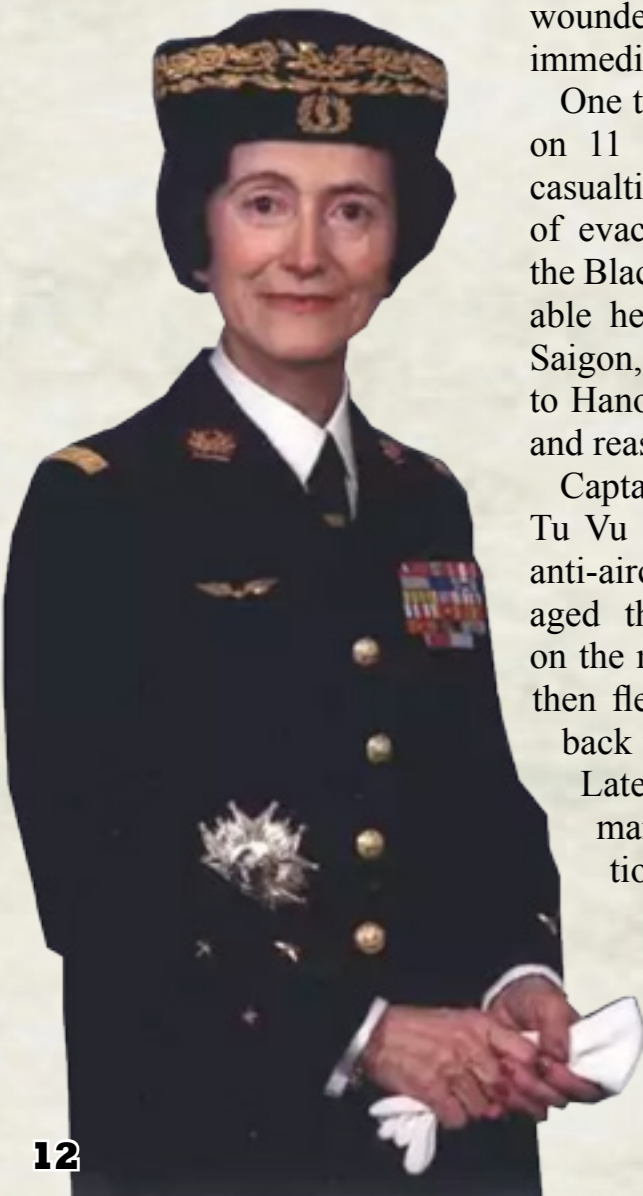
- Legion of Merit (USA)
- National Order of Vietnam
- Cross of Valour (Canada)



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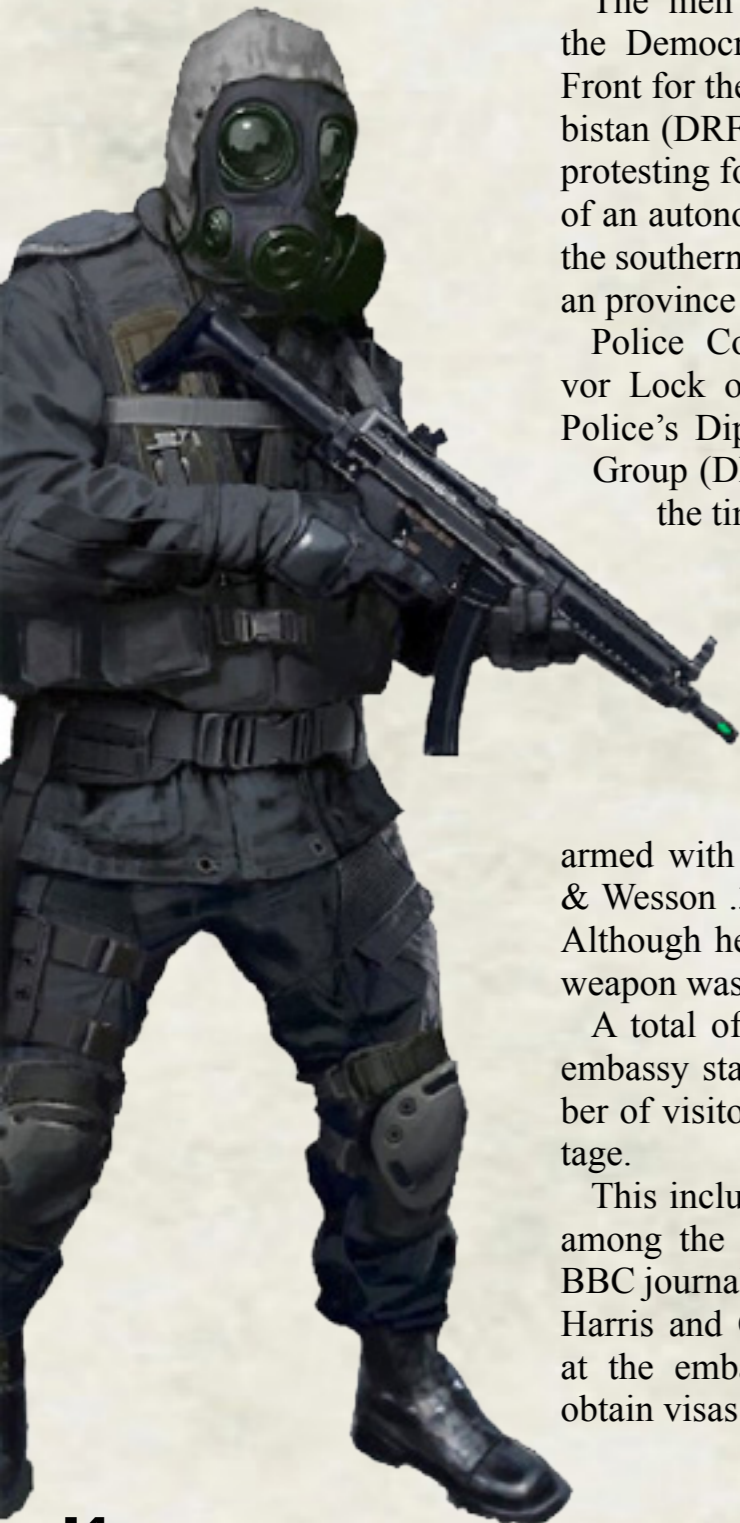
**“War does not determine who is right - only who is left”**



# Operation Nimrod

*The mission - rescue five British soldiers and their local liaison officer from a vicious militia group in a war-torn African country. Those taking part in the hostage rescue nicknamed the mission 'Operation Certain Death'.*

- **Date:** 5 May 1980
- **Location:** South Kensington, London
- **Units involved:** 22 Special Air Service Regiment (SAS)



The Iranian Embassy was situated on Princes Gate, South Kensington, London. On Wednesday 30 April 1980 at 11:30 the building was stormed by six heavily armed men.

The men were members of the Democratic Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of Arabistan (DRFLA), Iranian Arabs protesting for the establishment of an autonomous Arab state in the southern region of the Iranian province of Khūzestān.

Police Constable (PC) Trevor Lock of the Metropolitan Police's Diplomatic Protection Group (DPG) was on duty at the time.

He was quickly overpowered, but he managed to press the panic button on his radio.

Lock was armed with a concealed Smith & Wesson .38 calibre revolver. Although he was searched, the weapon was not discovered.

A total of 26 people, mostly embassy staff, but also a number of visitors, were taken hostage.

This included PC Lock. Also among the hostages were two BBC journalists. Simeon "Sim" Harris and Chris Cramer were at the embassy attempting to obtain visas to visit Iran.

## Day 1 - 30 April 1980

Almost immediately after the first reports of gunfire were reported, seven DPG officers were on the scene. They surrounded the building but had to retreat when a gunman appeared at a window and threatened to open fire.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Dellow arrived half an hour later and took command of the situation.

Dellow coordinated the police response, which included the deployment of D11, the Metropolitan Police's marksmen and officers with specialist surveillance equipment.

Police negotiators made contact with Oan Ali Mohammed, the leader of the group. Contact was made via a field telephone passed through one of the embassy windows.

Oan demanded the release of 91 Arabs held in prisons in Khūzestān, and threatened to blow up the embassy and the hostages if this were not done by noon on 1 May.

A large number of journalists and television crews were on the scene quickly and they were moved into a holding area to the west of the front of the embassy.

The British government's emergency committee COBRA (Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms) was assembled. COBRA is made up of ministers,

civil servants and expert advisers, including representatives from the police and the armed forces.

The meeting was chaired by William Whitelaw, the Home Secretary, as Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister, was unavailable.

The gunmen released their first hostage, embassy press officer Frieda Mozaffarian, at 16:30.

She had been unwell since the start of the siege and the other hostages convinced Oan that she was pregnant and needed medical treatment.

Margaret Thatcher, kept apprised of the situation by Whitelaw, determined that British law would be applied to the embassy, despite the Vienna Convention, under which the embassy is considered Iranian soil.

## Day 2 - 1 May 1980

While the COBRA meetings continued through the night, two teams were dispatched from the Special Air Service (SAS) near Hereford.

The teams were from B Squadron, with specialists from other squadrons. They were under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Michael Rose, the officer commanding 22 SAS Regiment.

They set up at a holding area in Regent's Park Barracks. At 03:30 one of the SAS teams moved into the building next door to the embassy. They were briefed on Colonel Rose's "immediate action" plan, to be implemented should the SAS be required to storm the building before a more sophisticated

plan could be formed.

Early on the morning of 1 May, the gunmen ordered one of the hostages to telephone the BBC's new's desk.

Oan took the receiver and spoke directly to a BBC journalist, identifying who they were and stating the non-Iranian hostages would not be harmed.

Not long after that the police cut the phone lines to the embassy, leaving the field telephone as the only means of communication.

BBC journalist Chris Cramer became ill and his colleague, Sim Harris, was taken to the field telephone and told to negotiate for a doctor. The police refused.

Most of the morning was taken up with negotiations before Cramer was released at 11:15. He was rushed to hospital in an ambulance, accompanied by police officers sent to question him.

As the noon deadline approached the police negotiated for a new deadline of 14:00. They were convinced the gunmen did not have the capability to carry out their threat of blowing the building up.

The police allowed the 14:00 deadline to pass. Later that afternoon Oan altered his demands, now requesting that the British media broadcast a statement of their grievances and for ambassadors of three Arab countries to negotiate the group's safe passage out of the UK once the statement had been broadcast.

At about 20:00, Oan became agitated by noises coming from the Ethiopian Embassy next door. PC Lock was asked to identify the sounds. He claimed



that it was probably mice in the walls.

The sounds were actually technicians drilling holes in the wall to implant listening devices. COBRA decided to create a distraction and instructed British Gas to commence drilling in an adjacent road, under the guise of repairing a gas leak.

The drilling further agitated the gunmen, and instead British Airports Authority, owner of London Heathrow Airport, was told to instruct approaching aircraft to fly over the embassy at low altitude.

## Day 3 - 2 May 1980

At 09:30 Oan appeared at a first-floor window and demanded access to the telex system, which had been cut along with the phone lines.

The police refused and Oan threatened to kill Abdul Fazi Ezzati, the cultural attaché. Oan then demanded to speak to somebody from the BBC who knew Sim Harris.

The police agreed and produced Tony Crabb, managing director of BBC Television News and Harris's boss.





**GO:** Having abseiled down from the roof, an SAS team enters the embassy. An explosion from a stun grenade had caused the curtains to catch fire.

Oan repeated his earlier demands for safe passage out of the UK, to be negotiated by three ambassadors from Arab countries to Crabb from the first-floor window, and instructed that they should be broadcast along with a statement of the hostage-takers' aims by the BBC.

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office informally approached the embassies of Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria and Qatar to ask if their ambassadors would be willing to talk to the hostage-takers. The Jordanian ambassador immediately refused and the other five said they would consult their governments.

While the BBC did broadcast the statement that evening, Oan was not happy with it. He

claimed that it was truncated and incorrect.

Meanwhile SAS plans to enter the embassy by battering the front door and ground-floor windows were quickly scrapped when it was discovered that the embassy's front door was reinforced by a steel security door, and that the windows on the ground floor and first floor were fitted with armoured glass.

#### Day 4 - 3 May 1980

Oan, angered by the BBC's incorrect reporting of his demands the previous evening, contacted the police negotiators shortly after 06:00 and accused the authorities of deceiving him.

He demanded to speak with an Arab ambassador, but the negotiator on duty claimed that talks were still being arranged

by the Foreign Office.

Oan saw through the delaying tactic and threatened that a hostage would be killed unless Tony Crabb was brought back to the embassy.

Crabb did not arrive at the embassy until 15:30, nearly ten hours after Oan demanded his presence. Oan then relayed another statement to Crabb via Mustapha Karkouti, a journalist also being held hostage in the embassy.

The police guaranteed that the statement would be broadcast on the BBC's next news bulletin, in exchange for the release of two hostages.

The hostages decided amongst themselves that the two to be released would be Hi-yech Kanji and Ali-Guil Ghanzafar; the former as she was pregnant and the latter for no



## SAS CRW Kit

1. Nomex III Assault Suit.
2. AC200 Kevlar Assault Helmet.
3. Avon SF10 Respirator.
4. Nomex Hood.
5. Nomex Gloves.
6. Assault Vest.
7. PE Assault Belt.
8. GQ Abseil Harness.
9. Adidas GSG9 Assault Boots.
10. MBITR Radio.
11. Earpiece/Throat Mike.
12. Calumite Light Sticks.
13. Aircrew Knife.
14. Leatherman Tool.
15. Cable Ties.
16. Rope Bag (Leg).
17. 11 mm Abseil Rope.
18. Petzl Descender.
19. Stun Grenade.
20. CS Gas Grenade.
21. H&K MP5A5.
22. H&K MP5K-PDW.
23. H&K MP5SD6.
24. Remington 870.
25. Browning L9A1.
26. Sig Sauer P226 / P228

Nomex is a registered trademark for flame-resistant meta-aramid material developed in the early 1960s by DuPont.

They also wear Nomex underwear, which the SAS nickname 'Vindaloo', a hot Indian curry dish.

The Remington 870 shotgun is loaded with breaching rounds, used to blow a door off its hinges.

The H&K submachine guns will normally have a laser sight and/or torch attached.

**Weapons displayed on the following page**



### Day 5 - 4 May 1980

Throughout the day the Foreign Office were in talks with diplomats from Arabian countries in an effort to get them to talk to the hostage-takers. The talks ended in a stalemate.

Karkouti, the journalist, became increasingly ill throughout the day and by the evening was feverish. This led to speculation that the police had spiked the food that had been sent into the embassy.

While the police had considered this option, it was not done on the advice of a doctor who dismissed it as "impracticable".

The SAS officers involved in the operation, including Brigadier Peter de la Billière, Director Special Forces; Lieutenant Colonel Mike Rose, Commander of 22 SAS; and Major Hector Gullan, commander of the team that would undertake any raid, spent the day refining their plans for an assault.

### Day 6 - 5 May 1980

PC Lock was woken by Oan at dawn. Oan was convinced that there was an intruder in the building and sent Lock to investigate. No-one was found.

Later that morning Oan told Lock to examine a bulge in the wall separating the Iranian embassy from the Ethiopian embassy next door.

The bulge was actually caused by the removal of bricks to allow an assault team to break through the wall, and to implant listening devices.

Lock told Oan that he didn't think that the police were about to storm the building, but Oan was not convinced.

At 13:00 Oan told the police

that he would kill a hostage if he was unable to speak to an Arab ambassador within 45 minutes.

At 13:40, PC Lock informed the negotiators that the gunmen had taken the embassy chief press officer, Abbas Lavasani, downstairs and were preparing to execute him.

Exactly 45 minutes after Oan's demand to speak to an ambassador, three shots were heard from inside the embassy.

Home Secretary Willie Whitelaw rushed through and was briefed on the SAS plan by de la Billière, who told him to expect that up to 40 percent of the hostages would be killed in an assault.

De la Billière was instructed to prepare to assault the building at short notice. He passed this on to Mike Rose at 15:50 and by 17:00 the SAS were in a position to carry out the assault at ten minute's notice.

The police had recruited an imam from a local mosque at 18:20 and asked him to talk to the gunmen.

While the imam was talking to Oan via the field telephone, another three shots rang out. Oan announced that another hostage has been killed and that the rest would die in 30 minutes unless his demands were met.

Police believed that two hostages had been killed, although only Lavasani had been shot.

Lavasani's body was dumped out of the front door and was recovered by the police.

Sir David McNee, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, contacted the Home Secretary to request approval to hand control of the operation over to the British Army, under the pro-

visions of Military Aid to the Civil Power.

This request was relayed by Whitelaw to Margaret Thatcher who would immediately agree.

At 19:07, John Dellow signed over control of the operation to Lieutenant Colonel Mike Rose, authorising Rose to order an assault at his discretion.

The police negotiators began stalling Oan, offering concessions in order to distract him and prevent him from killing further hostages. At the same time the SAS made their final preparations.

### The Assault

Two SAS teams, Red Team and Blue Tea, were ordered to begin their simultaneous assaults at 19:23.

While snipers provided cover, 32 men stormed the embassy. Each assault team had a set area to cover. They were not to stray beyond these, to avoid friendly fire incidents.

At the 'Go' signal men burst in through the French windows at the rear of the building while others came in through a skylight on the roof while abseil teams reached the floors in between.

Not everything went off smoothly. The staff sergeant leading the abseiling team became entangled in his rope. Some of the hostages were not where the SAS expected.

One of the entry rooms turned out to have been barricaded shut, and a soldier had to leave through the window and re-enter across the balcony to get around the blockage. Stun grenades ignited fires, which quickly spread.

The staff sergeant, still hung up in his rope, was severely burnt. A second wave of abseilers cut him free and he fell to the balcony floor below. He stood up and followed the rest of his team into the building.

The aggressive plan paid off. Taken by surprise the gunmen were only able to kill one of their hostages before being gunned down, most in a hail of bullets from several SAS troops at once.

Two of the gunmen were taken alive, but as they were passed hastily from man to man down the stairs, the SAS realised that one of them was clutching a grenade. He was flung to the ground and shot dead before he could pull the pin.

The success was aided by PC Lock. Realising that the assault had begun, Lock knocked the terrorist leader to the ground and grappled with him.

Despite suffering from the effects of CS gas, Lock kept the terrorist from firing his gun, then rolled clear at a shout from the SAS, who shot the terrorist before he could fire.

PC Lock was later awarded the George Medal, the United Kingdom's second-highest civil honour, as well as the Freedom of the City of London.

Most of the raid, which lasted for 17 minutes, was watched live on television. It made the SAS a household name.

Many Special Forces units around the world would go on to base their weapons, equipment and tactics on those of the Special Air Service.

other reason than his loud snoring, which kept the other hostages awake at night and irritated the terrorists.

Later in the evening, at approximately 23:00, an SAS team reconnoitred the roof of the embassy.

They discovered a skylight,

and succeeded in unlocking it for potential use as an access point, should they later be required to storm the building.

They also attached ropes to the chimneys to allow soldiers to abseil down the building and gain access through the windows if necessary.

# Dad's Army - art imitates life

*Dad's Army was a British sitcom that ran for nine seasons. It featured the exploits of a fictitious British Home Guard unit during World War II. Yet many of those involved with the show had real wartime experience.*

**D**ad's Army is a British television sitcom about the United Kingdom's Home Guard during the Second World War. It was written by Jimmy Perry and David Croft, and originally broadcast on BBC1 from 31 July 1968 to 6 November 1977.

It ran for nine series and 80 episodes in total; a feature film released in 1971, a stage show and a radio version based on the television scripts were also produced. The series regularly gained audiences of 18 million viewers and is still shown internationally.

The Home Guard consisted of local volunteers otherwise ineligible for military service, either because of age (hence the title *Dad's Army*), medical reasons or by being in professions exempt from conscription. We did an article on *Dad's Army* in the very first edition of *Military Despatches* (July 2017).

The fictitious Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard Unit consisted of their leader Captain Mainwaring, his second-in-command Sergeant Wilson and the sole NCO, Lance Corporal Jack Jones. Mainwaring and Wilson work at the local bank, while Jones is the local butcher.

Other members of the platoon include Private Fraser (a dour Scotsman who is the local un-

dertaker), Private Walker (who runs the local black market), Private Godfrey (the platoon's medic), and Private Pike (the youngest of the platoon, who Mainwaring refers to as "You stupid boy.").

I was curious as to whether any members of the cast or those involved with the show actually had any prior military experience. I was surprised to discover just how many of them did serve in the military.



**Jimmy Perry OBE**

Along with David Croft, Perry devised and co-wrote '*Dad's Army*'. And who better to co-write the show.

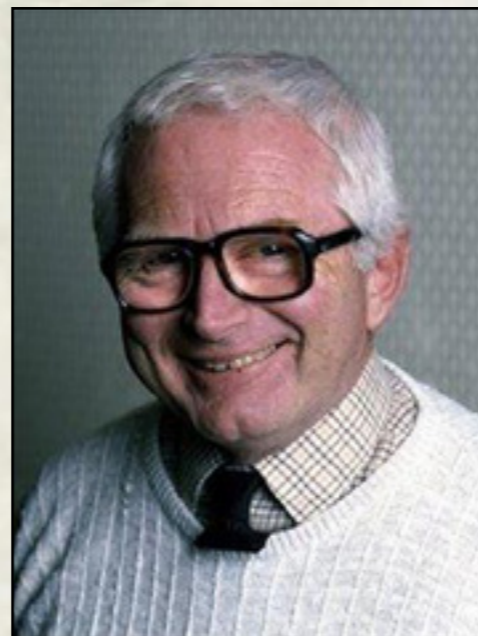
In 1940, at the age of 17, he served in the Watford Home Guard. In 1943 he joined the First (Mixed) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment of the Royal Artillery.

The following year, he was sent to Bombay in India, and then Burma, being promoted in rank from gunner to bombar-

dier in the process.

He was active in the concert party at the Deolali base of the Royal Artillery, and later in Combined Services Entertainment.

Perry died on 23 October 2016 at the age of 93.



**David Croft OBE**

David John Croft, OBE, was an English television comedy screenwriter, producer and director. He produced and wrote a string of BBC sitcoms with partners Jimmy Perry and Jeremy Lloyd, including *Dad's Army*, *Are You Being Served?*, *It Ain't Half Hot Mum*, *Hi-de-Hi!* and *'Allo 'Allo!*

He enlisted in the Royal Artillery in 1942. He served during the Second World War in North Africa, India and Singapore. After contracting rheumatic fever in North Africa, was sent

home to convalesce and then underwent officer training at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.

Croft was posted to India, arriving as the war in Europe ended, and was assigned to the Essex Regiment, rising to the rank of Major. When his military service ended he began working in the entertainment industry, as an actor, singer and writer.

Croft died on 27 September 2011 at the age of 89.



**Captain George Manwaring**

The role of Captain George Mainwaring was played by Arthur Lowe. For his part as Captain Mainwaring he was nominated for seven BAFTAs and became one of the most recognised faces on UK television.

In February 1939 Lowe joined the Territorial Army, which meant several months later he was among the first men called up to serve in the Second World War.

He served with the Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry. Initially training with horses, the regiment soon became a mechanised unit of the Royal Artillery.

Lowe was medically regraded due to his poor eyesight and after training in wireless and as a radar technician transferred to the Royal Army Ordnance

Corps.

After working on searchlights in Lincolnshire he was sent out to Egypt in 1942, where he soon transferred to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

He was a good horseman and learned to speak Arabic. After a period in the Suez Canal Zone he was stationed at the REME's 15th Radio Repair Workshops at Rafah.

Lowe died on 15 April 1982 at the age of 66.



**Sgt Arthur Wilson**

Sergeant Arthur Wilson was the second-in-command of the Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard Platoon.

Wilson also worked at the local bank under the bank manager George Mainwaring.

The role was played by John Le Mesurier. Not much is known about Le Mesurier's military career.

What is, however, a fact is that during World War II he was a member of the the Royal Tank Regiment and that he served in India. His rank was captain.

Le Mesurier died on 15 November 1983 at the age of 71. His eulogy was given by actor Bill Pertwee, who played the role of Chief ARP Warden

Hodges in *Dad's Army*.



**L/Cpl Jack Jones**

Clive Dunn played the role of Lance Corporal Jack Jones. He was the oldest member of the platoon (although at the age of 48, Dunn was one of the youngest members of the cast).

One of his most heard expressions is "Don't panic", normally said while he is panicking.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Dunn joined the British Army in 1940. He served as a trooper in the 4th Queen's Own Hussars.

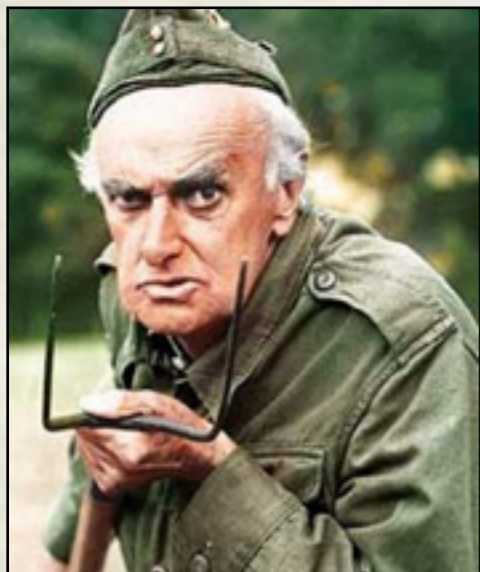
The regiment was posted to the Middle East arriving on 31 December 1940 and as part of the 1st Armoured Brigade in the 6th Australian Infantry Division which fought in the Greek Campaign.

Dunn fought in the rearguard action at the Corinth canal in April 1941. The regiment was forced to surrender after it was overrun and Dunn was among 400 men (including all the regiment's senior officers) who were taken as prisoners of war.

Dunn was held as a POW in Austria for the next four years. He remained in the army after

the war ended, until finally demobilised in 1947.

Dunn died on 6 November 2012 at the age of 92.



**Pvt James Frazer**

John Laurie played the role of Private James Frazer, a dour Scotsman that had served in the Royal Navy during World War I.

A sceptic and pessimist, his favourite sayings were "We're doomed! Doomed I tell you!" and "Rubbish!"

During World War I Laurie was a member of the Honourable Artillery Company and saw action on the Western Front.

He admitted that he never expected to survive the conflict. In fact he was injured and invalided out of the service and became a sergeant-of-arms at the Tower of London.

During World War II he served as a member of the Home Guard, an experience that he would call on during his role as Private Frazer in Dad's Army.

He died on 23 June 1980 at the age of 83. His body was cremated and his ashes were scattered at sea.



**Pvt Charles Godfrey**

The entire Walmington-on-Sea Platoon turn against Private Charles Godfrey when they discover that during World War I he was a conscientious objector.

Later on, after Godfrey saves the life of Captain Mainwaring during a training exercise, they learn that although Godfrey was a conscientious objector, he had served voluntarily in the trenches as a stretcher bearer with the Royal Army Medical Corps.

He had been awarded the Military Medal after rescuing several men from no-man's land while under heavy fire.

The platoon had then made Godfrey the platoon medic so that he wouldn't need to carry a rifle.

The role of Private Godfrey was played by Arnold Ridley OBE.

He had volunteered for service with the British Army on the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, but was initially rejected because of a hammer toe.

In December 1915, he enlisted as a private with the Somerset Light Infantry, British

Army. He saw active service in the war, sustaining several wounds in close-quarter battle.

His left hand was left virtually useless by wounds sustained on the Somme; his legs were riddled with shrapnel; he received a bayonet wound in the groin; and the legacy of a blow to the head from a German soldier's rifle butt left him prone to blackouts after the war.

He was medically discharged from the army with the rank of lance corporal in May 1917. He received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal for his service.

Ridley rejoined the army in 1939 following the outbreak of the Second World War. He was commissioned into the General List on 7 October 1939 as a second lieutenant.

He served with the British Expeditionary Force in France during the "Phoney War", employed as a "Conducting Officer" tasked with supervising journalists who were visiting the front line.

In May 1940, Ridley returned to Britain on the overcrowded destroyer HMS Vimiera, which was the last British ship to escape from the harbour during the Battle of Boulogne.

Shortly afterwards, he was discharged from the Armed Forces on health grounds. He relinquished his commission as a captain on 1 June 1940. He subsequently joined the Home Guard, in his home town of Caterham.

Ridley died on 12 March 1984 at the age of 88.

# A place called Grooties

*Many people that served in the old South African Defence Force and spent time on the 'border' will remember Grootfontein. After all, it was the main logistics base for the operational area.*

The South African Border War officially took place between 26 August 1966 and 15 January 1990. A total of 23 years, four months, two weeks and six days.

During that period thousands of personnel from all branches of the SADF - SA Army, SA Air Force, SA Medical Services, and even the SA Navy - served in what was then known as South West Africa.

The personnel included members of the permanent force, citizen force, and national servicemen.

Many units, on returning from a stint on the border, would spend a day or two in Grootfontein.

This time

was spent at a tented camp a few kilometres from the main base at Grootfontein.

It was officially known as the transit camp but was given the cynical nickname of the 'Southern Slums'. This was a play of words on the more famous 'Southern Suns' group of upmarket hotels.

The transit camp was not the most inviting of places. The facilities were meagre and when it rained the entire camp would turn into a huge mud bath.

Most were only too happy to leave the place and were glad that they had to spend no more than a few days there at most.

Yet there were others that

spent far more than just a few days at Grootfontein. Some national servicemen would spend more than a year there. For many permanent force members it was where they were stationed. Married members would often live in the town with their entire family.

They were, however, fortunate that they were not stationed at the transit camp, but rather at the main base which was known as Logistics Base Grootfontein.

The base at Grootfontein controlled the administration and logistical support for the entire operational area. The base itself was huge, far larger in fact than the actual town of Grootfontein from which



the base had taken its name.

Besides the large Air Force Base, Logistics Base Grootfontein could house thousands of support personnel and had its own hospital, post office, and a supermarket run by SADFI (South African Defence Force Institute).

The recreation facilities were also outstanding and included two swimming pools, tennis courts, squash courts, numerous pubs, a library, theatre, and an entertainment area.

While troops stationed at Grootfontein may have been far from home, they were not lacking the creature comforts. Yet troops in Grootfontein still worked hard and it took a massive effort to keep the operational area running.

While writing the book 'Service Rendered' I had the opportunity to speak to people that had been stationed at Grootfontein. Some of them had some amusing stories to tell.

Leon was stationed at 101 Signals Unit and worked in the communication centre (Comcen) in Grootfontein. While the hours were long and tiring, Leon said that they did have their moments. He takes up the story.

I spent 14 months of my national service in Grootfontein working in the Comcen. We were responsible for all the telex communication between the operational area and the rest of South Africa. As you can imagine, it was a lot of work.

We worked 12 hours a day, Sunday to Friday. Saturday's were even more fun because then we basically worked an 18 hour day.

On Saturdays, you see, we changed between day shift and night shift. We would work the Friday night from six in the evening through to six on the Saturday morning. Then we were off duty until noon.

We would then return to the Comcen and work until six that evening, thereby changing from night shift to day shift. As you can imagine, there was not much free time, but we made the best of it.

When I think back I'm still amazed at how we were treated. What other organisation would expect you to work a 90 hour week? Especially for what we were being paid.

I was a corporal, and therefore, the shift leader of one of the two shifts. One Friday night we decided that seeing as how we would not be working on the following night we would have a braai.

When we finished work at six that morning we walked back to our bungalow, had a shower and some breakfast, and then sat waiting until the bottle store in Grootfontein opened at nine.

Of course we could buy beer from the canteen, and at a really cheap price, we wanted to get something different for a change.

Mark and Barry, two of my friends and both on my shift, accompanied me into town and we bought two five litre casks of red wine.

By the time we arrived back at the bungalow it was already ten-thirty and we decided that there was not enough time to get some sleep before we went on duty. We decided to have a glass of wine. Only one glass

mind you.

At five to twelve I set off towards the Comcen to take over from the other shift. The two five litre casks of wine were empty and I was as high as a kite. Between seven of use we had polished off ten litres of wine.

I arrived fifteen minutes late for duty and was immediately summoned to the office of our adjutant. He was a permanent force full lieutenant.

He began berating me for being late and then, sniffing at the air, asked if I had been drinking. I denied that I had touched a drop of alcohol and began whining that he was always unfair towards my shift and to me in particular.

"Your shift is the worst bunch of troops I have ever seen corporal," he told me.

"That's rubbish Lieutenant," I told him, looking him square in the eyes. This was not as easy as it sounds because I was having great difficulty focusing.

"How can you say that about my guys!"

"That's easy corporal. Because they are always late, always in trouble, and they have no discipline," he informed me.

I immediately began defending my shift. "No ways!" I shouted, "You show me one occasion when my guys have been late or undisciplined. Just show me!"

He shook his head slowly, and with a frown on his face, pointed towards his open door. I turned to see what he was on about.

Staggering down the passage was my friend Mark. Not only was he half an hour late for

work, he also looked a sight. He was dressed in his browns and had a 'boom box' (radio/cassette) on his shoulder that was blaring out a Jethro Tull number. He was also wearing a pair of bright blue fluffy slippers. He waved cheerfully at the two of us and turned down the passage in the direction of the Comcen.

"Now do you see what I'm talking about corporal?" said the lieutenant.

"Okay, okay, but that's just one case. This doesn't happen all the time," I whined.

Before he could reply, he was interrupted by the sound of singing drifting down the passage. It became louder until Barry appeared, goose stepping down the passage. As he goose-stepped past us he flung his arm out in a Nazi salute.

"Heil Herr Oberst," he belated. He goose stepped another five paces down the passage and passed out like a light. It was too much for me and I sat down on the floor and started to cry. I think the long hours made us all a little bossies.

The lieutenant was actually bloody nice about everything. He sent the three of us back to the bungalow with orders to sleep it off. He never said a word about it after that, but every time he used to see me he would shake his head and smile.

For a PF, he wasn't such a bad guy.

Leon told me another amusing incident that had to be shared.

I had some real characters on my shift. There was this one guy who, if I remember correctly, was named Kotze. He was a large boy and was also a

very likeable character. He was always cheerful and helpful, but he had two left hands. If he touched something he was sure to break it.

We had one of those water coolers, you know the type with the big glass bottle on top of it. It was a real Godsend in the summer I can tell you. When the water container was nearly empty the rule was that the last person to use it had to refill the bottle.

One afternoon the bottle was nearly empty and I told my guys to go and fill it. Kotze, as was his nature, volunteered to do it. I told him to take someone with him because when it was full the thing weighed a ton. Kotze just shook his head and said that he could do it himself.

A few minutes later we heard this almighty crash in the passageway. Dear old Kotze had dropped the bottle. There was water and glass all over the passage and that was the end of our cold water from then on.

But what I really remember Kotze for was his moment of fame. As I said earlier, our responsibility was to run the Comcen, or communications centre.

All of the telex messages between the operational area and South Africa passed through our grubby hands. We handled thousands of messages a day and had something like ten telex machines in the office.

We had one telex to send and one to receive from each of the following places; Oshakati, Katima, Rundu, and Windhoek. There was also the main link to and from Pretoria. This link connected us to the rest of

South Africa.

If someone, say in Cape Town, wanted to send a telex to Rundu they would address it to Rundu and send it on their telex machine. It would go via Pretoria and it would then be re-routed to us in Grootfontein.

We would receive a printed copy of the message as well as a yellow ticker-tape. We would then take the ticker-tape and load it into the telex machine for Rundu. The message would then be sent to Rundu and we would file the printed copy.

Besides the message itself, each telex contained other important information. It had the date and time that it was sent, the destination and sender, and a priority rating. A telex could be rated RR, PP or OO.

The RR stood for Routine and it meant that the person receiving the message had 24 hours to react to it. PP meant that it was a priority message and that there were 12 hours to react to it. An OO message denoted that it was an immediate telex and had to be acted upon within an hour.

One afternoon a captain from 16 Maintenance Unit came into the Comcen and said that he needed to send an urgent message to a unit in Pretoria. He needed some spare parts and, as fate would have it, Kotze was the person to help him.

"Listen my boy," he told Kotze, "I need these spares urgently, so please put something on the message that will make them answer me quickly."

Now there was one priority rating that I haven't told you about. That was a ZZ or Flash message. None of us in the

Comcen had ever seen a Flash message before, so we weren't too sure about it. But dear old Kotze remembered from his training course that a ZZ was sure to get a quick reaction. He had no idea as to just what a reaction it would cause.

Kotze typed the message up, took the ticker-tape and loaded it into the Pretoria machine. He hit the send button and all hell broke loose.

A ZZ priority on a message was only supposed to be used in a major crisis. Say something like an outbreak of war. The moment he hit the send button on our telex the shit hit the fan.

The first thing a ZZ message does is to crash the entire telex system. It throws any and all other messages out of the system immediately and causes bells and whistles on the receiving side.

The guys in Pretoria nearly had a heart attack when they saw a Flash message coming through but when they saw what the message was about their reaction changed from one of panic to that of fury.

The result was that thousands of messages had been dumped out of the message queue and these all had to be traced and then resent. It took them days to sort all the problems out.

There was a lot of shit about it and they even held a board of inquiry. Poor old Kotze was given a severe slap on the wrists, but hell, he was only trying to help.

For some the pressure of the long hours and the lack of contact with home proved just a little too much. Gert was a national serviceman with the mili-

tary police and he was stationed in Grootfontein. He recalls the following incident.

We had quite a large base at Grootfontein that included a charge office and cells. We were also responsible for controlling the main gate into the base and there was a radio link between the charge office and the main gate.

While Grootfontein was a huge base, there was only one entrance and exit into the place. This was so that it could be properly controlled.

It was a Thursday night at about 8.30 pm and I was on duty in the charge office. I was sitting reading a magazine when I heard three shots from an R1 rifle. It was not all that uncommon to hear the odd shot or two so I didn't pay that much attention to it. A few minutes later the radio crackled into life.

"Come in, come in," a voice said. I replied with my call sign and told the person to go ahead. I knew that it was the main gate but I did not recognise the voice.

"I am not a terrorist," the voice on the other end told me, "I am a member of the SADF, but at this time I control this base. I have taken over the main gate and no traffic will move in or out of here without my permission."

At first I thought that it was a joke but this guy was insistent. I send someone up to the gate to check out what was happening and he came back a few minutes later looking really flustered.

A member of the signals unit in Grootfontein decided that he had had enough of being there and that it was time for him to

go home. He had a few drinks, took his R1 rifle, and headed off to the main gate.

On his arrival at the gate he had told the four MPs on duty that he was taking over and that they were now his hostages. The guy in charge at the gate, a lance corporal, had told this signaller to shove off before he arrested him. The signaller had promptly shot him through the foot.

He had then disarmed all of the MPs and locked them in the gatehouse. Now he really was in control of the gate and, of course, entry into and out of the base.

What ensued was a comedy of errors. There were contingency plans for an attack on the base and for just about every other situation. There was, however, nothing planned for someone taking control of the gate from the inside.

Eventually the gate was surrounded by heavily armed military police, guards and just about everyone else and his dog. The signaller demanded an aircraft to take him home and one of our officers, that had taken charge of the situation, was threatening that he would be shot if he did not surrender himself.

The situation dragged on for over two hours and there was a huge back-up of traffic trying to get into the base. Besides that, we had a military policeman that was busy bleeding from a foot wound.

A potentially disastrous situation was eventually averted when the signaller's section leader arrived at the gate. He was a young PF corporal and he



**COMCEN:** A typical layout of a Comcen or communications centre. Nearly every large SADF base would have a Comcen.

told our officer in charge that he would go and speak to this guy.

Our officer refused, saying that the situation was just too dangerous and that he didn't want another casualty on his hands. This corporal just shook his head, muttered something about 'arseholes', and walked towards the gate.

He stood there chatting with the signaller for a few minutes and the signaller handed over his R1 rifle. The corporal then put his arm around the guy and led him off to be arrested.

Instead of being hailed as a hero for sorting the situation out, our officer laid a charge against the corporal because the corporal had called him an arsehole. No wonder people went a bit mad.

Many of the national servicemen that were employed in administrative posts did not enjoy their work. Although it was hard work, no young man likes to be cooped up in an office all day. Some of them became bored and this often led to mischief.

The following story was told to me by someone who was a national service lance corporal. He told me that story on condi-

tion that we did not mention his name.

I was based in Grootfontein for most of my national service. The OC of our unit was a commandant who always reminded me of Rudyard Kipling's Colonel Blimp. He was fairly short and overweight and very pompous.

When he answered the phone he would just blurt out his surname, never bothering to give a proper greeting or use his rank.

"Dillman," he would bark into the phone.

Now this is not his real name. There is no way that I am going to tell you his real name because if he is still alive he will most probably hunt me down and shoot me if he ever reads this.

For the 15 months that I was in Grootfontein I became the bane of the commandant's existence. All of the telephones in the base were connected so you could call any phone in the base without having to go through the main switchboard. All you needed to do was pick up a phone and dial a three-digit extension.

I would take great delight in

going to an empty office and phoning the commandant.

"Dillman," he would bark into the phone.

"Howzit Dillman," I would say. "Listen, be a good boy and call the commandant for me."

The first time I did this, he exploded.

"Do you know who you're talking too?" he roared.

"Yes, I'm talking to Commandant Dillman. Do you know who you're talking to?" I asked.

"No, I don't know who I'm talking too!" he was so angry he could hardly speak.

"Well thank the good lord for that," I said, slamming down the phone.

After that it became my prime mission in life to get the commandant worked up into a state. I would phone him at least twice a day.

"Dillman", he would answer.

"Ah Dillman. Nice to hear your sour voice on the phone. How are things doing with you today? Not doing anything too physical I trust. At your age you need to start watching yourself you know."

He would become beside himself. I can remember this one occasion when he really lost it.

"Dillman," he said.

"Dillman my man," I said in a jovial tone. "How are things hanging? Now listen Dillman, we need to have a serious talk. Your telephone etiquette is shocking. Now out of the goodness of my heart I'm going to give you a bit of training. Now the first thing you need to do when you pick up the phone is greet the caller in a friendly

and efficient manner. Try saying something along the lines of ‘Good morning, how may I help you’. You think you can try that?”

His reply was so loud that people came running from offices all over to see what was going on.

“I’m going to get you!” he screamed. “I’m going to get you, you little piece of rubbish! I know who you are!”

Of course he had no idea of who I really was and he never did get me. I would always disguise my voice when I phoned him.

I had to because if I had used my normal voice I’m sure he would have recognised it instantly. You see, for 12 months I was his personal clerk.

Our last story about Groot-

fontein comes from Martin. He spent five years in the permanent force and served as a medic with SAMS.

I spent a good deal of time on the border. In fact I spent five months working in the hospital at Grootfontein. I also spent time at Oshakati and Rundu. I have some fond memories of my time at Grootfontein.

In fact it was at Grootfontein that I started dating a young nurse. She was a permanent force corporal and also worked at the hospital. She would later go on to become my wife.

In 2013 three of my mates, who also spent time on the border, and myself decided to take a trip up to Namibia.

We travelled to Windhoek and then on to Grootfontein.

We also went to Ondangwa and

Oshikati before making the trip back home.

When I saw the old base at Grootfontein I was shocked. The place was a skeleton of what it once was. Most of the buildings had been demolished and what remained looked dirty and in poor condition. I’m not ashamed to say that I shed a few tears.

I felt sad, and a little angry, at how they had just let the place fall into such a state. I’m sure that when they took over they could have made better use of the place.

If any of our readers spent time at Grootfontein, perhaps you have a story to tell. Feel free to email us at editor@hipe.co.za and put ‘Grootfontein’ as the heading. We would love to hear your story.



# Armed Forces

This month we’re taking a closer look at some of the logos, including army, navy and air force, of armed forces around the world. One of them, number 7, has been digitally modified because the name is on the logo. How many of these do you know. Answers on page 84.

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

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.

Click on the logo to the left to visit the SA Legion website.

# Hygiene in World War I

Many of our readers will know how difficult it was to keep clean in the bush. So spare a thought to those soldiers that fought in the trenches of World War I. How did they manage to keep clean and healthy - the simple answer is that they didn't.

Many of our readers served in the military during the 1970s and 1980s. And many of them spent time in what was then South West Africa, doing duty on the 'border' - the operational area in the Border War.

One well remembered feature of any bush base was the washing, bathing and toilet facilities. They were rudimentary to say the very least.

Washing of clothes was done by hand, showers were often limited in duration and usually with cold water, and toilets were nothing more than holes

dug in the ground. The photograph on the right should bring back memories.

Yet before we start wailing about how tough it was, let's turn back the clock a few decades and spare a thought for those that fought in the trenches of the 'Great War'.

Ever wonder how soldiers fighting in the trenches during World War I kept themselves clean? Well the short answer is, they didn't.

Lack of plumbing and hot water created such foul conditions that even when circumstances were at their best, maintaining

personal hygiene was mostly a losing battle.

So in this article we're going to take a look at what hygiene was like in the trenches of World War I. Time to look at how great hygiene was during the Great War.

## Toilets? Hot water? Not a chance

Imagine you're on the front lines of one of the most bloody and violent conflicts in the history of mankind. And suddenly, you hear nature calling - and it's a number two. What do you do?

In order to go to the bathroom



**REMEMBER TO FLUSH:** Using the toilets in the bush was an acquired skill. Yet it was a whole lot worse if you were out on patrol.

in the trenches, the men designated specific areas to serve as latrines. Soldiers dug pits anywhere from four to six feet in depth in which to relieve themselves.

And while those holes were usually used as is - after all, you're not going to spend a whole lot of time sprucing up the community bogs - some troops would construct wood boxes around them in an attempt to control the flies.

The job of digging and maintaining the unmentionable holes was so despised that it was often doled out to soldiers as punishment.

The smell was equally as horrifying. And the troops dealt with the odour by attempting to cover it with chloride of lime.

Unfortunately, we don't often get to decide when we need to use the bathroom, which was especially true for soldiers in the trenches, suffering from diarrhoea due to contaminated drinking water.

Those unable to make it to the latrine often made use of

buckets or empty food cans to relieve themselves, and would then simply dump the unpleasant contents outside the trench so that the makeshift bedpan could be reused. Indeed, the Great War was fought on many fronts.

Speaking of contaminated water, one of the most common methods of sterilizing water to make it safe for drinking is to boil it. But that was impossible for soldiers in the trenches, due to the equipment required and the war. You can't exactly call a time-out to bring a pot of water to boil.

Another problem was that if you made a fire at night, your position would become the focus of attention for every mortar or artillery piece within firing range.

To address this, the British army experimented with sterilization equipment and purifying chemicals. But the chemicals made the water taste awful. They also tried giving their troops acid sodium sulphate tablets to purify an individual

serving of water.

But the chemicals reacted badly with the aluminium of the soldiers' canteens and would burn skin and even clothing if it came into contact with moisture in the air. And let's face it, melting your lips to your canteen is generally something you want to avoid when you're trying to stay hydrated during a historic global conflict.

Understandably averse to the tablets and unable to boil water themselves, soldiers on the front line typically relied on their fellow soldiers to treat water elsewhere and transport it to those in the trenches at night under the cover of darkness.

Unfortunately, the water was often carried in old gasoline canisters, which contaminated it and made it nearly undrinkable. And if active fighting or other circumstances prevented a water delivery from reaching the front lines, soldiers in the trenches found themselves completely without.

This led many desperate troops to drink questionable water, simply because they had no other choice. One soldier recalled instances in which men were so thirsty, they would slurp water out of shell holes, the craters left behind by artillery fire, which could contain anything, including human body parts.

Due to unwashed bodies and clothes, open latrines, piles of trash, and countless nearby corpses, the trenches and all who spent time in them smelt like the inside of a sumo wrestler's jockstrap.

Not only did soldiers in the trenches have pungent body odour, but their infrequent bath





ing and soiled uniforms fuelled widespread lice infestations.

To combat that problem, units would set up facilities away from the front lines that soldiers could use to be de-loused, launder their clothes, and rest.

There were also communal baths, where soldiers could clean themselves of the odour they'd accumulated while in the trenches.

These facilities helped boost morale and keep many soldiers healthy. But soldiers often had to stay in the trenches for a number of days without bathing or changing their clothes before they were allowed this respite.

As use of chemical weapons became widespread, more and more soldiers carried and used gas masks.

Believing the masks would fit more closely if troops had no facial hair, US forces gave their soldiers shaving kits to carry with them, which is the only reason there are no photographs of World War I soldiers with long flowing beards.

Known as khaki kits, the standard issue shaving sets featured a Gillette safety razor with disposable blades. By forking out a bit of money soldiers or their family members could purchase a fancier version of the kit that came in a metal case with military insignias.

It's unclear how many soldiers opted to pay extra for an upgraded kit. But the ability to shave was likely appreciated.

However, while a shave may have provided those fighting in the trenches with a small feeling of normalcy and possibly help them feel a little cleaner, there was a downside.

Namely, their shaving brushes may have exposed them to anthrax. *Bacillus anthracis*, the naturally occurring bacteria which causes anthrax, can linger in animal hair for years and can be passed on to anyone who uses a shaving brush made from improperly disinfected hair.

It's believed that more than 200 American and British soldiers may have been infected with anthrax while shaving.

## Smile

To put it lightly, oral health wasn't a priority during the time of the Great War. Hardly anyone regularly visited the dentist. So many fighting men already had bad oral hygiene before the war began.

And once on the front lines, most soldiers paid no attention to the state of their teeth.

In fact, in 1914, many militias like the British Expeditionary Force thought dentists were totally unnecessary.

After all, you can have a mouth full of cracked vampire teeth or no teeth at all and still shoot people for the king.

It wasn't until General Douglas Haig developed a horrible toothache that the British military began enlisting dentists to help those near the front.

However, despite the lack of emphasis on maintaining a healthy smile on the front lines, the military rejected potential soldiers if their oral hygiene was particularly rough.

This was because the food supplied to soldiers in the trenches required relatively strong teeth to eat.

## Food was cold, dirty, and often contaminated

To feed their soldiers, allied troops set up mobile kitchens and transported prepared food to troops on the front line.

However, the food was only edible by the most generous definition of the word. For instance, British soldiers received rations of canned corned beef (known as Bully Beef), hard tack biscuits, and bread made from dried turnip once the wheat ran out.

Sounds more like a recipe for cement rather than a menu, but in the trenches, you took what you could get.

Like the soldiers' rations of sanitized water, the transports often carried meals to the front lines in empty gas canisters loaded with contaminants.

And because it took so long to transport the food to the trenches, meals were cold and often stale.

Further complicating things were ever present swarms of flies drawn to all the corpses on the battlefield. The flies would often land on the soldiers' food, spreading filth and disease.

Rations could also end up caked with dirt due to the weather and transport conditions.

In 1982 I had the opportunity to interview Charles Slatter. At the time he was 83 years old. In 1916, at the age of 17, Charles had joined the British Army and had seen action on the Western Front. He still had very clear memories about the food.

"Calling it food was a bit of a stretch," he told me. "At best it was bloody terrible.

"When we were in the front



**FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD:** Meals in the trenches of the Great War were not that great. The food was nearly always cold and it was often contaminated.

line trenches we would have to send a couple of blokes back to the rear so that they could bring up the rations.

"It was actually quite a desirable job to be sent back to get the rations. You could grab a hot meal at the kitchens. Look, it still tasted like bollocks. But at least it was hot.

"The kitchen would often prepare a stew. I hate to think what meat they used in the stew. Probably horse meat or something. It was cooked up with a few carrots and spuds thrown in.

"The problem was that by the time it arrived back at our lines it was cold. The oil that was used to cook the meat had congealed, so everything was covered in a thick layer of greasy fat. Often you would have to pick off the flies that had landed on the food and got stuck in the grease.

"And when we were sent bread it was always stale. The only way you could eat it was to dip it into your mug of tea. And talking about the tea, it was always weak, and cold."

## Vermin infestations were a fact of life

Thanks to all the trash, food scraps, and corpses, the trenches were regularly filled with rodents, which often grew unusually large due to the plentiful amount of food.

In addition to being a nuisance, the rats spread infections such as typhus and the plague. Obviously, having our soldiers at risk of contracting the disease that levelled half of Europe was a concern.

So catching rats became something to pass the time during daylight hours. The military even offered soldiers a reward

for slaying the rodents as an incentive to decrease their numbers.

According to one report, troops were so into this new sport that one Army Corps managed to catch 8,000 rats in a single night.

According the Western Front veteran Charles Slatter, the rats were a constant problem.

"To this day I hate the sight of a rat. There were always thousands of the vile things in the trenches.

"And you won't believe the size of some of them. I guess it was because there was always plenty for them to eat. Some of them were the size of cats. And they were aggressive bastards as well. They weren't scared of anyone or anything."

French troops tried to control the rat problem by bringing terriers into the trenches with them. Other soldiers adopted

cats instead of dogs. It's believed around 500,000 cats helped out in the trenches over the course of World War I.

Many of the cats and some of the dogs even wound up serving as mascots for troops on the front lines.

Although the animals were presumably exempt from having to stay clean shaven, unfortunately, not every pest encountered was as comparatively easy to deal with.

Due to the damp waste filled condition of the trenches and the soldiers' inability to frequently bathe, biting insects like fleas and lice flourished.

Not only did they make troops itchy and uncomfortable, these pests allowed disease to run rampant through the front lines.

Bacteria from infected lice spread typhus, which can cause aches, fever, vomiting, and confusion.

Lice bites also caused trench fever, resulting in leg pain, dizziness, and headaches.

And although trench fever wasn't fatal, soldiers who contracted it were in no condition to fight, reducing their ranks by a considerable number.

From 1915 to 1918, an estimated 500,000 soldiers in the French, British and Belgian armies contracted the disease. Controlling flea and lice infestations meant diligently washing skin, hair, and clothing. But as we've discussed, this simply wasn't possible out in the trenches.

Therefore, soldiers spent much of their downtime picking lice off their bodies or burning them with candles.

According to Charles Slatter

the fleas and lice were just another problem that the troops had to deal with.

"The one good thing is that he weren't kept in the front line for too long. We would man the front line trenches for between six to eight days. Then we would be sent to the rear for four or five days.

"It gave us the chance to get a bit of rest, wash our clothes, repair our kit, and have a hot bath. In autumn and winter it could get bloody cold. So the first thing we would do when we got to the rear was build a fire. Just to get warm for a change.

"The problem with this was that as soon as you started to get a bit of heat back into your body it would wake up the fleas and lice. Within minutes you would be scratching for all it was worth. You couldn't wait until it was your turn to have a bath."

### **Disease was rampant and difficult to control**

To help combat vermin infestations and unsanitary conditions that spread disease, many armies would put a team of soldiers on sanitation duty, which included collecting trash.

The trash produced by troops consisted not only of food scraps, empty containers, and spent shell casings, but also the corpses of both animals and humans.

Dumping areas were set up away from the trenches for sanitation teams to safely dispose of the garbage.

However, despite the efforts of sanitation teams, the amount of trash that piled up was nearly

unavoidable.

Not only did removing trash take time, but it could be a dangerous task if there was active fighting.

As the piles of trash decayed, they attracted hordes of maggots and flies, compelling many soldiers to wrap scarves around their faces to keep the pests away from their mouths.

The substandard sanitation and close quarters of the trenches allowed numerous communicable diseases to spread easily among soldiers. Mumps, smallpox, meningococcal meningitis, and tuberculosis travelled through battalions, forcing many to pull back from the front lines or perish.

Severe cases of dysentery were also common among the troops of many countries. Spread by human faeces, the disease causes diarrhoea and extreme dehydration. And many of the thousands afflicted in the trenches perished.

In 1917 Charles Slatter had a severe bout of diarrhoea.

"I was in the front lines when I got the squirts. They sent me to a small hospital in the rear, where I spent two weeks.

"For the first week I was scared that I was going to die. For the second week I was scared that I wasn't going to die. By that stage I was ready to call it quits."

Every soldier who travelled to the front lines knew that death was an extreme possibility. But still, violent diarrhoea is a disappointing thing to have chiselled on your tombstone.

It couldn't have been dignifying to have "Here lies Private Joe Bloggs. Shat himself



**SPANISH FLU:** The Spanish Flu pandemic is believed to have begun in military camps after World War I. It would eventually lead to more deaths than the war did.

to death for King and Country" inscribed on your tombstone.

The German army in particular, experienced sweeping epidemics of dysentery. At least 155,000 German soldiers spent time in the hospital suffering from the disease.

In contrast, dysentery affected around 6,200 soldiers in the American Expeditionary Force and caused 31 fatalities, meaning that although the conditions in the allied trenches were still deplorable, they evidently had better sanitation than the Germans.

Researchers believe that in addition to improper sanitation, dysentery disproportionately affected the German troops due to nutritional deficiencies, lack of vaccines, and the limitations of German military hygienists to prevent the spread of disease.

Although most of these conditions are treatable today, at

the time, vaccinations had yet to be developed, leaving many soldiers vulnerable to infection. And while the military did screen their soldiers for some diseases like tuberculosis before deployment, close contact with others and lack of knowledgeable treatment allowed illness to flourish.

As World War I wound down in 1918, the transmission of infectious disease among soldiers likely contributed to an even more widespread disaster – the great influenza epidemic of 1918.

Charles Slatter had reason to remember the epidemic.

"I had two really good mates, Billy and Joe. They had joined up at the same time as me and we went through two and a half years of the war together.

"Joe was a real wag. He always had a some scheme or two and his sense of humour often

got us through tough times.

"When we got back home after the war we would often get together. Both Billy and Joe died from the flu.

"I mean they both survived everything that the war threw at them. The shelling, going over the top, the atrocious conditions. They get through it all without a scratch. And then go an die from a bloody cold."

The Spanish Flu, as the pandemic came to be known, is believed to have begun in military camps before spreading to infect much of the world, resulting in more losses than the war itself.

It is estimated that 20 million died during World War I. The Spanish Flu led to between 25 and 50 million deaths.

In other words, the trenches of World War I were so dirty, they may have literally gotten the entire world sick.

## World War II Infantry

*This month we take a look at the standard infantry units of five countries during World War II as they go Head-to-Head. They are Russia, Britain, Japan, USA and Germany.*

Search throughout the history of warfare and you are sure to find one thing in common - the basic foot soldier.

Weapons, equipment and technology have advanced over the years. World War I saw the introduction of tanks and aircraft to the battlefield. By the time World War II began there had been vast improvements on the weapons used in "The war to end all wars."

Tanks had better armour, they were better armed, and they were much quicker and mobile than those of the previous war.

Fighter aircraft were better armed and could fly higher, further, and quicker than the wood and canvas planes of the first war. Bombers could fly much further and carry heavier payloads.

Artillery was far more powerful and could deliver a barrage over a far longer distance.

Yet once again, there was one thing in common - infantry.

Every military force relied heavily on infantry troops. They were the ones that had to go into battle, They were the ones that had to capture and hold enemy territory. And they were the ones that had to defend their own positions against enemy attack.

Within any unit, training,

leadership, technology, morale and numbers were crucial factors. And this was particularly true of infantry squads.

Externally, factors such as terrain, weather, and just dumb luck must all be taken into account.

All of these factors interacted with each other in some way too. An officer's orders could be misheard in the middle of a deluge. Mud could choke the mechanisms of a gun.

While training, leadership and technology were integral factors within an infantry unit, training and leadership also facilitated coordination with external, non-infantry units and their technology, primarily in the form of heavier weapons of war such as artillery, armour, and air and naval forces.

In this months Head-to-Head we will be looking at the infantry of five countries during World War II.

These countries are Russia, Britain, Japan, United States, and Germany. At the end of the article we will give our opinion of which of these five countries had the best infantry.

And please remember, this is our opinion and you are entitled to disagree with us.

### Russia

It seems clear that the Red Army command cared little about sustaining heavy casualties, adhering to the principles of quantity over quality.

Discipline was severe in the Red Army. Soviet officers would have no hesitation in shooting any troops that even thought about retreating.

Often when Russian infantry mounted an attack the feared NKVD would be behind them with machine guns.

The infantry were faced with the choice of advancing into the German fire, or retreat and be



mown down by their own people.

It was none other than Joseph Stalin that said, "It takes a brave man to be a coward in the Red Army."

One of the factors contributing to Soviet defeats in Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941, was a lack of experienced officers. Stalin had seen to this with his 'Great Purge'.

Between 1937 and 1938 Stalin's campaign of political repression in the Soviet Union had seen the large-scale repression of the peasantry; ethnic cleansing; purges of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, government officials, and, importantly, the Red Army.

Most of the senior and experienced officers had either been executed or sent off to gulags in Siberia, which was just as good as a death sentence.

With no solid leadership the Red army quickly fell apart. After Stalingrad, however, they had the resources to advance and deploy their military doctrines.

On a broad scale, Soviet Deep Battle doctrines were employed, and on a squad level, the Soviets took inspiration from the Germans.

They reduced the manpower in their squads, substituting it for firepower. A machine gunner wielding a DP-28 LMG was introduced, and he was supported by riflemen with bolt-action

rifles such as the Mosin-Nagant and semi-automatics like the SVT-40 and submachine gunners armed with SMGs such as the iconic PPSH-41.

As the war progressed Soviet officers and troops began to gain experience. Generally they could handle local conditions, such as the harsh Russian winters, far better than the Germans.

The became experts in urban combat and house-to-house fighting. A hard lesson they learnt in Stalingrad.

On a whole the average Russian infantryman was tough and was used to following orders. Independent thinking was not encouraged.

### Russian small arms



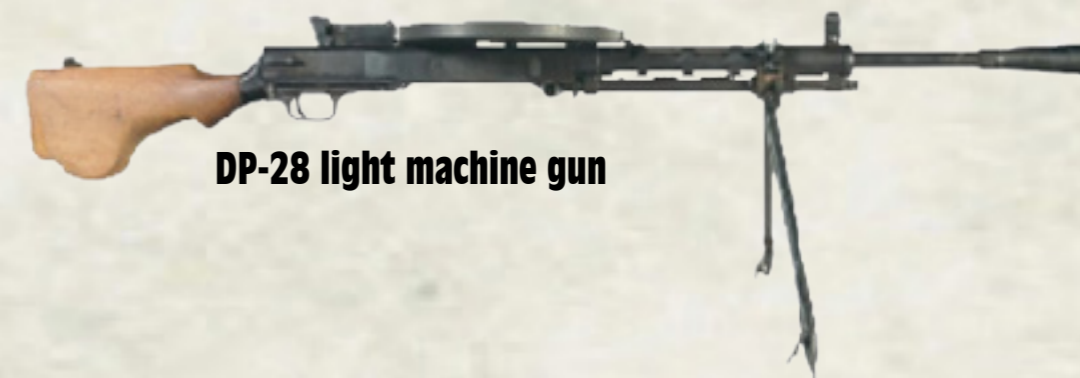
**Mosin-Nagant M1891/30**



**Tokarev SVT-40**



**PPSh-41**



**DP-28 light machine gun**

Their military law compelled Soviet infantry units to hate their enemies and act against traitors to the Motherland, and while their hatred for the

Germans manifested in many unspeakable acts, they were incredibly brave despite the horrendous losses they suffered throughout the war.

Without this bravery, the outcome of the war would have been very different indeed.

## Britain

Overall, the training and leadership of British Army infantry units earned them the reputation of cautious combatants, preferring to claim small advances and consolidate power rather than making aggressive and dangerous sweeps.

Due to a scarcity of manpower, the Brits did not wish to, and could not, sustain heavy casualties. British training focused on realism, with, for example, live rounds being fired in the vicinity of trainees so they could learn to tell the difference between the sound of a gun firing and a bullet striking something near.

In terms of coordination with non-infantry units, British infantry units were supported by tanks, and it's worth noting that while British tanks had their uses, they were generally inferior to those used by the Germans.

When it came to tactics, the British allowed for the adapta-

tion of mission templates on the fly, but they also discouraged major changes, so as not to confuse their own men.

When assaulting a position, British infantry would force enemy heads and guns down with suppressive fire, allowing their own troops to advance. The infantry sections were ten strong up until 1944. However, only seven of these ten men would be in combat at once, with three in reserve.

This way, they wouldn't replace the dead or otherwise incapacitated with 'green' troops unfamiliar with the unit. British infantry made good use of the Lee-Enfield rifle, which surpassed the bolt-action rifles wielded by the Germans, such as the Karabiner 98k.

The Bren light machine gun saw heavy use, and it bested the US Army's Browning Automatic Rifle or BAR, in that it held an additional ten rounds and featured a fast-change barrel which could be swapped out



when it overheated.

In closer quarters, British infantry used the American Thompson submachine gun, also known as the Tommy Gun until that was replaced by the British Sten gun.

## British small arms



Lee Enfield No. 4 Mk I



Thompson M1A1



Sten gun



Bren light machine gun

## Japan

Overall, Japan favoured light infantry supported by air and naval forces over armour. What Japanese infantry had more than anything else is bravery and ruthlessness.



They endured incredible hardships, and they certainly dished it out, earning a reputation as brutal warriors, even fanatics.

They fought like hell on every front, and often to the very last man, preferring to go out in a suicidal bayonet charge than throw up a white flag.

To understand the Japanese fighting soldier, one first has to understand the culture.

Many Japanese officers fancied themselves as samurai, even though very few of them were.

Samurai lived by a strict code known as *bushido* or 'The Way of the Warrior'.

Yet almost every Japanese had a strong sense of *giri* or duty. There is an old Japanese saying that goes "*Gimu wa yama yori mo omoku, shi wa hane yori mo karui.*" This means "Duty is heavier than a mountain, while death is lighter than a feather."

Duty was first and foremost to the emperor, then to their god, and finally to their family. To die for the emperor or for Japan was considered a great honour.

While on the offensive, Japanese infantry would travel light. They would capture supplies along the way and take ammunition and sometimes even weapons from the enemy dead.

During World War II, many Japanese infantrymen were thrown into the fray after just three months training, and many of these men came from agricultural backgrounds.

While their training was short, officers enforced strict discipline, beating those who stepped out of line.

Standard Japanese rifles, namely the Type 39 and Type 99 Arisaka rifles were decent, but they fell short of the bolt-action rifles of the other fighting nations.

Japanese machine guns such as the Type 11, Type 96, and Type 99 were cumbersome, unreliable, and lacked stopping power. Their pistols were straight up trash.

Japanese infantry training prioritised bayonet attacks, relating the honour of wielding a bayonet to the honour of wielding a *katana*.

## Japanese small arms



**Type 100 Sub Machine Gun**



**Type 99 Arisaka rifle**



**Type 99 light machine gun**



**ON THE MOVE:** Troops of the US 1st Infantry Division, known as 'The Big Red One', advance somewhere in Europe.

ten fell under British command.

Both the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps had infantry squads.

Most of the US Army infan-

try fought in North Africa and

Europe against the Germans.

In the South Pacific it was the US Marine Corps that bore the

brunt of the fighting.

US infantry troops were well

equipped and, in most cases,

well supplied.

## United States

Generally, infantry units of the United States were trigger happy and had the means of production to back it up.

Unlike British infantry, who regularly exercised caution, American infantry units were willing to accept casualties and go in guns blazing.

When attacking a position, they would light up that general direction with suppressive fire, allowing the rest of the unit to get into a better position or execute a flank.

While the Yanks did burn a lot of gunpowder, they didn't charge recklessly, opting instead to make good use of cover, particularly from around corners rather than over the top of an object.

When units were on the move, they could keep pressure on the enemy by hammering the trigger of their M1 Garand, the first standard issue semi-automatic rifle of the war.

These were especially effective rifles – game changing – but US small arms innovations weren't limited to the M1.

They brought the Thompson submachine gun into the war as well as the BAR, which while its barrel wasn't easy to swap out as the British Bren gun – was still a force to be reckoned with.

In terms of leadership, American NCOs got stuck into the fight with their men and were generally respected, but the US Army was lacking educated officers higher up, and its units of-

## US small arms



**M1 Garand**



**Thompson M1A1**



**Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR)**



## Germany

In our humble opinion the German Wehrmacht had the best infantry of World War II. They had better training, leadership, tactics, equipment, and morale than most other infantry units for at least the first few years of the war.

Now some people will say that this is because they were all fanatical Nazis. Fair enough, many junior officers were members of the Nazi Party and were particularly zealous towards Hitler.

Yet many NCOs and troops were never members of the Nazi Party. A fair percentage of them had little time for Hitler or the party.

In the early 1980s I had the opportunity to interview a member of the Wehrmacht that had fought in the Battle of France and on the Eastern Front during

World War II. At the time he was in his late 60s.

“Our lieutenant was a member of the Party, and so was one of our sergeants. The rest of us had no interest in becoming members. As far as we were concerned we were fighting for Germany, not for Hitler.

As the war progressed, especially after we invaded Russia, we had even less time for *Gröfaz* and his bunch. When we heard what the *Einsatzgruppen* (SS Extermination Squads) were getting up to, we realised that we would have to win this war. Especially against the Russian. If we lost we would end up paying for it dearly.

Towards the end of the war we were no longer even fighting for Germany. We were fighting for each other and our survival. We would do whatever it took to stay alive.

Right at the end of the war we fought like demons to head for the west and surrender to the Americans. There was no ways that we wanted to surrender to the Russians.”

*Gröfaz* was the German soldier’s derogatory nickname for Adolf Hitler. It was an acronym for *Größter Feldherr aller Zeiten*. It meant “the Greatest Field Commander of all Time.”

Unlike what many stereotypes depict, the Germans were not mindless robots. While they were among the most disciplined and professional soldiers on the battlefield, they were also incredibly creative, using infantry to support tanks, rather than the other way around like the Brits, inventing mechanized infantry, inventing the squad machine gun, and capitalising

on almost every one of their opponents mistakes, even if that meant changing their plans on the fly.

They were also capable of mounting quick counter-attacks and disengaging efficiently and with minimal casualties.

As the early Blitzkrieg showed, Wehrmacht infantry understood coordinated artillery, armoured, and air support tactics firmly. The MG42 machine gun was perhaps the German infantry’s most pivotal squad-level weapon. Units were built around this very gun, tasked with feeding it ammo and watching its operator’s flanks.

German infantry made good use of the iconic MP40 too, and this weapon outclassed the American Tommy gun, the Soviet PPSH-41, and the British Sten.

Overall, German infantry units used more SMGs than rifles, making them masters of city fighting, in which their grey battledress was a fitting camouflage. German helmet designs were also a cut above the rest, and – like many other aspects of the German war machine – other belligerents basically copied its design.

The Germans fought a war on two fronts and lost, in short, because of attrition (and, still they boasted a kill ratio of up to five to one.)

As American military analyst Colonel Trevor Dupuy put it, “On a man to man basis, German ground soldiers consistently inflicted casualties at about a 50 percent higher rate than they incurred from the opposing British and American

troops under all circumstances. This was true when they were attacking and when they were defending, when they had a local numerical superiority and when, as was usually the case, they were outnumbered, when they had air superiority and when they did not, when they won or when they lost.”

The fact that Germany lost the war reinforces the reality that a war cannot be won by exceptional infantry alone and that it

does not, indeed, take place in a vacuum.

Now this article only looked at the infantry of five major countries in World War II. This is not to say that other countries did not have exceptional infantry troops.

The South Africans, for example, earned a reputation during the Italian campaign and in the Western Desert.

Finland held out against

the Russians, even though the Finns were vastly outnumbered, for far longer than they should have. Once again, this was because they had excellent infantry and tactics.

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, the Desert Fox, was once quoted as saying, “If I invaded hell I would use Australian troops to capture it, and New Zealand troops to hold it.”

## German small arms



Karabiner 98k



MP40



MG 42 light machine gun



# Josef Mengele

*A physician with doctorates in anthropology and medicine, an officer in the German Schutzstaffel (SS), he earned the well deserved title of Todesengel (Angel of Death). Yet it was his experiments on live humans for which he will always be remembered and reviled. This was Dr Josef Mengele.*

From 1942 onwards the Nazi Germans built six special camps as part of their “Final Solution to the Jewish question”.

The purpose of these camps was to systematically murder over 2.7 million people – mostly Jews – in the Holocaust.

These camps were known as *vernichtungslager* (extermination camps), *todeslager* (death camps), or *tötungszentren* (killing centres).

The camps were all built in occupied Poland and were Chelmo, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau (also known as Auschwitz II).

The victims of death camps were primarily killed by gassing, either in permanent installations constructed for this specific purpose, or by means of gas vans.

Auschwitz and Majdanek death camps also used extermination through labour in order to kill their prisoners.

The brutal and sadistic treatment of prisoners at these camps defies belief. Yet there was

one man that stood out from a long list of sadists and psychopaths.

He was the chief physician of the *Zigeunerfamilienlager* (Romani family camp) at Birkenau, a sub-camp located on the main Auschwitz complex. Not only was he a doctor, he was also a *SS-Hauptsturmführer*

(Captain) in the *Schutzstaffel* (SS). His name was Josef Mengele.

## Early Life

Mengele was born in Günzburg on 16 March 1911, the eldest of three sons of Walburga (née Hupfauer) and Karl Mengele. His two younger brothers were Karl Jr. and Alois.

Their father was founder of the Karl Mengele & Sons company (later renamed as Mengele Agrartechnik, which produced farming machinery.

Mengele was successful at school and developed an interest in music, art, and skiing.

He completed high school in April 1930 and went on to study philosophy in Munich, where the headquarters of the Nazi Party were located.

In 1931 he joined the *Der Stahlhelm*, a paramilitary organization that was absorbed into the *Nazi Sturmabteilung* (‘Storm Detachment’; SA) in 1934. In 1935, Mengele earned a



PhD in anthropology from the University of Munich.

In January 1937, he joined the Institute for Hereditary Biology and Racial Hygiene in Frankfurt, where he worked for Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer, a German geneticist with a particular interest in researching twins.

As Von Verschuer’s assistant, Mengele focused on the genetic factors that result in a cleft lip and palate, or a cleft chin.

His thesis on the subject earned him a cum laude doctorate in medicine (MD) from the University of Frankfurt in 1938. (Both of his degrees were revoked by the issuing universities in the 1960s.)

In a letter of recommendation, Von Verschuer praised Mengele’s reliability and his ability to verbally present complex material in a clear manner.

The American author Robert Jay Lifton notes that Mengele’s published works were in keeping with the scientific mainstream of the time, and would probably have been viewed as valid scientific efforts even outside Nazi Germany.

On 28 July 1939, Mengele married Irene Schönbein, whom he had met while working as a medical resident in Leipzig. Their only son, Rolf, was born in 1944.

## Military service

The ideology of Nazism brought together elements of anti-Semitism, racial hygiene, and eugenics, and combined them with pan-Germanism and

territorial expansionism with the goal of obtaining more *Lebensraum* (living space) for the Germanic people.

Nazi Germany attempted to obtain this new territory by attacking Poland and the Soviet Union, intending to deport or kill the Jews and Slavs living there, who were considered by the Nazis to be *untermensch*, inferior to the Aryan master race.

Mengele joined the Nazi Party in 1937 and the *Schutzstaffel* (SS; ‘Protection Squadron’) in 1938. He received basic training in 1938 with the *Gebirgsjäger* (‘light infantry mountain troop’) and was called up for service in the *Wehrmacht* (German armed forces) in June 1940, some months after the outbreak of World War II.

He soon volunteered for medical service in the *Waffen-SS*, the combat arm of the SS, where he served with the rank of *SS-Untersturmführer* (‘second lieutenant’) in a medical reserve battalion until November 1940.

He was next assigned to the *SS-Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt* (‘SS Race and Settlement Main Office’) in Poznań, evaluating candidates for Germanization.

In June 1941 Mengele was posted to Ukraine, where he was awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class. In January 1942, he joined the 5th SS Panzer Division Wiking as a battalion medical officer.

After rescuing two German soldiers from a burning tank, he was decorated with the Iron

Cross 1st Class, the Wound Badge in Black, and the Medal for the Care of the German People.

He was declared unfit for further active service in mid-1942, when he was seriously wounded in action near Rostov-on-Don.

Following his recovery, he was transferred to the headquarters of the SS Race and Settlement Main Office in Berlin, at which point he resumed his association with Von Verschuer, who was now director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics. Mengele was promoted to the rank of *SS-Hauptsturmführer* (‘captain’) in April 1943.

## Auschwitz

In 1942 Auschwitz II (Birkenau), originally intended to house slave laborers, began to be used instead as a combined labour camp and extermination camp.

Prisoners were transported there by rail from all over Nazi-controlled Europe, arriving in daily convoys.

By July 1942, SS doctors were conducting “selections” where incoming Jews were segregated, and those considered able to work were admitted into the camp while those deemed unfit for labour were immediately killed in the gas chambers.

The arrivals that were selected to die, about three-quarters of the total, included almost all children, women with small children, pregnant women, all

the elderly, and all of those who appeared (in a brief and superficial inspection by an SS doctor) to be not completely fit and healthy.

In early 1943, Von Verschuer encouraged Mengele to apply for a transfer to the concentration camp service.

Mengele's application was accepted and he was posted to Auschwitz, where he was appointed by SS-Standortarzt Eduard Wirths, chief medical officer at Auschwitz, to the position of chief physician of the *Zigeunerfamilienlager* (Romani family camp) at Birkenau, a sub-camp located on the main Auschwitz complex.

The SS doctors did not administer treatment to the Auschwitz inmates but supervised the activities of inmate doctors who had been forced to work in the camp medical service.

As part of his duties, Mengele made weekly visits to the hospital barracks and ordered any prisoners who had not recovered after two weeks in bed to be sent to the gas chambers.

Mengele's work also involved carrying out selections, a task that he chose to perform even when he was not assigned to do so, in the hope of finding subjects for his experiments, with a particular interest in locating sets of twins.

In contrast to most of the other SS doctors, who viewed selections as one of their most stressful and unpleasant duties, he undertook the task with a flamboyant air, often smiling or whistling a tune.

He was one of the SS doctors responsible for supervising the administration of Zyklon B, the

cyanide-a based pesticide that was used for the mass killings in the Birkenau gas chambers. He served in this capacity at the gas chambers located in crematoria IV and V.

When an outbreak of noma - a gangrenous bacterial disease of the mouth and face - struck the Romani camp in 1943, Mengele initiated a study to determine the cause of the disease and develop a treatment.

He enlisted the assistance of prisoner Berthold Epstein, a Jewish paediatrician and professor at Prague University. The patients were isolated in separate barracks and several afflicted children were killed so that their preserved heads and organs could be sent to the SS Medical Academy in Graz and other facilities for study.

This research was still ongoing when the Romani camp was liquidated and its remaining occupants killed in 1944.

When a typhus epidemic began in the women's camp, Mengele cleared one block of six hundred Jewish women and sent them to their deaths in the gas chambers.

The building was then cleaned and disinfected and the occupants of a neighbouring block were bathed, de-loused, and given new clothing before being moved into the clean block.

This process was repeated until all of the barracks were disinfected.

Similar procedures were used for later epidemics of scarlet fever and other diseases, with infected prisoners being killed in the gas chambers.

For these actions, Mengele was awarded the War Mer-

it Cross (Second Class with swords) and was promoted in 1944 to First Physician of the Birkenau sub-camp.

### Human experimentation

Mengele used Auschwitz as an opportunity to continue his anthropological studies and research into heredity, using inmates for human experimentation.

His medical procedures showed no consideration for the victims' health, safety, or physical and emotional suffering.

He was particularly interested in identical twins, people with heterochromia iridum (eyes of two different colours), dwarfs, and people with physical abnormalities.

A grant was provided by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft ('German Research Foundation'), at the request of Von Verschuer, who received regular reports and shipments of specimens from Mengele. The grant was used to build a pathology laboratory attached to Crematorium II at Auschwitz II-Birkenau.

Miklós Nyiszli, a Hungarian Jewish pathologist who arrived in Auschwitz on 29 May 1944, performed dissections and prepared specimens for shipment in this laboratory.

Mengele's research subjects were better fed and housed than the other prisoners, and temporarily spared from execution in the gas chambers.

His research subjects lived in their own barracks, where they were provided with a marginally better quality of food and somewhat improved living conditions than the other areas of



**ROGUES GALLERY:** Taken in 1944, this photograph shows (from left to right) Richard Baer (Commandant of Auschwitz), Dr. Josef Mengele and Rudolf Hoess (the former Auschwitz Commandant).

the camp.

When visiting his young subjects, he introduced himself as "Uncle Mengele" and offered them sweets, while at the same time being personally responsible for the deaths of an unknown number of victims whom he killed via lethal injection, shootings, beatings, and his deadly experiments.

Mengele has been described as sadistic, lacking empathy, and extremely anti-Semitic, believing the Jews should be eliminated as an inferior and dangerous race.

Even Mengele's own son, Rolf, would later go on to say that his father had shown no remorse for his wartime activities.

Twins were subjected to weekly examinations and measurements of their physical attributes by Mengele or one of his assistants.

The experiments he per-

formed on twins included unnecessary amputation of limbs, intentionally infecting one twin with typhus or some other disease, and transfusing the blood of one twin into the other.

Many of the victims died while undergoing these procedures, and those who survived the experiments were sometimes killed and their bodies dissected once Mengele had no further use for them.

Nyiszli recalled one occasion on which Mengele personally killed fourteen twins in one night by injecting their hearts with chloroform.

If one twin died from disease, he would kill the other twin to allow comparative post-mortem reports to be produced for research purposes.

Mengele's eye experiments included attempts to change the eye color by injecting chemicals into the eyes of living subjects, and he killed people with

heterochromatic eyes so that the eyes could be removed and sent to Berlin for study.

His experiments on dwarfs and people with physical abnormalities included taking physical measurements, drawing blood, extracting healthy teeth, and treatment with unnecessary drugs and X-rays.

Many of his victims were dispatched to the gas chambers after about two weeks, and their skeletons were sent to Berlin for further analysis.

Mengele sought out pregnant women, on whom he would perform experiments before sending them to the gas chambers.

Alex Dekel, a survivor, reports witnessing Mengele performing vivisection without anesthesia, removing hearts and stomachs of victims.

Mengele sewed two Romani twins together, back to back, in a crude attempt to create conjoined twins; both children died of gangrene after several days of suffering.

### After Auschwitz

Along with several other Auschwitz doctors, Mengele transferred to Gross-Rosen concentration camp in Lower Silesia on 17 January 1945, taking with him two boxes of specimens and the records of his experiments at Auschwitz. Most of the camp medical records had already been destroyed by the SS by the time the Red Army liberated Auschwitz on 27 January.

Mengele fled Gross-Rosen on 18 February, a week before the Soviets arrived there, and travelled westward to Žatec in



Czechoslovakia, disguised as a Wehrmacht officer.

There he temporarily entrusted his incriminating documents to a nurse with whom he had struck up a relationship.

He and his unit then hurried west to avoid being captured by the Soviets, but were taken prisoners of war by the Americans in June 1945.

Although Mengele was initially registered under his own name, he was not identified as being on the major war criminal list due to the disorganization of the Allies regarding the distribution of wanted lists, and the fact that he did not have the usual SS blood group tattoo.

He was released at the end of July and obtained false papers under the name "Fritz Ullman", documents he later altered to read "Fritz Hollmann".

After several months on the run, including a trip back to the Soviet-occupied area to recover his Auschwitz records, Mengele found work near Rosenheim as a farmhand.

He eventually escaped from Germany on 17 April 1949, convinced that his capture would mean a trial and death sentence.

Assisted by a network of former SS members, he used the ratline to travel to Genoa, where he obtained a passport from the International Committee of the Red Cross under the alias "Helmut Gregor", and sailed to Argentina in July 1949. His wife refused to accompany him, and they divorced in 1954.

## South America

Mengele worked as a carpenter in Buenos Aires, Argentina,

while lodging in a boarding house in the suburb of Vicente López.

After a few weeks, he moved to the house of a Nazi sympathizer in the more affluent neighbourhood of Florida Este. He next worked as a salesman for his family's farm equipment company, Karl Mengele & Sons, and in 1951 he began making frequent trips to Paraguay as a regional sales representative.

He moved into an apartment in central Buenos Aires in 1953, used family funds to buy a part interest in a carpentry concern, and then rented a house in the suburb of Olivos in 1954.

Files released by the Argentine government in 1992 indicate that Mengele may have practiced medicine without a license while living in Buenos Aires, including performing abortions.

After obtaining a copy of his birth certificate through the West German embassy in 1956, Mengele was issued with an Argentine foreign residence permit under his real name. He used this document to obtain a West German passport, using his real name and embarked on a trip to Europe.

Mengele's business interests now included part ownership of Fadro Farm, a pharmaceutical company.

Along with several other doctors, he was questioned in 1958 on suspicion of practicing medicine without a license when a teenage girl died after an abortion, but he was released without charge. Aware that the publicity could lead to his Nazi background and wartime activities being discovered, he took an extended business trip to

Paraguay and was granted citizenship there in 1959 under the name "José Mengele".

Mengele's name was mentioned several times during the Nuremberg trials in the mid-1940s, but the Allied forces believed that he was probably already dead.

Irene Mengele and the family in Günzburg also alleged that he had died.

Working in West Germany, Nazi hunters Simon Wiesenthal and Hermann Langbein collected information from witnesses about Mengele's wartime activities.

In a search of the public records, Langbein discovered Mengele's divorce papers, which listed an address in Buenos Aires.

He and Wiesenthal pressured the West German authorities into starting extradition proceedings, and an arrest warrant was drawn up on 5 June 1959.

Argentina initially refused the extradition request because the fugitive was no longer living at the address given on the documents; by the time extradition was approved on 30 June, Mengele had already fled to Paraguay and was living on a farm near the Argentine border.

## Hunted by Mossad

In May 1960, Isser Harel, director of the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad, personally led the successful effort to capture Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires. He was hoping to track down Mengele so that he too could be brought to trial in Israel.

Under interrogation, Eichmann provided the address of

a boarding house that had been used as a safe house for Nazi fugitives.

Surveillance of the house did not reveal Mengele or any members of his family and the neighbourhood postman claimed that although Mengele had recently been receiving letters there under his real name, he had since relocated without leaving a forwarding address.

Harel's inquiries at a machine shop where Mengele had been part owner also failed to generate any leads, so he was forced to abandon the search.

## Later life and death

In 1969, Mengele and his friends, the Stammers, jointly purchased a farmhouse in Caieiras, with Mengele as half owner.

When Wolfgang Gerhard returned to Germany in 1971 to seek medical treatment for his ailing wife and son, he gave his identity card to Mengele.

The Stammers' friendship with Mengele deteriorated in late 1974, and when they bought a house in São Paulo, he was not invited to join them.

The Stammers later bought a bungalow in the Eldorado neighbourhood of Diadema, São Paulo, which they rented out to Mengele.

Rolf, who had not seen his father since 1956, visited him at the bungalow in 1977; he found an "unrepentant Nazi" who claimed he had never personally harmed anyone and only carried out his duties as an officer.

Mengele's health had been steadily deteriorating since 1972. He suffered a stroke in 1976, experienced high blood

pressure, and developed an ear infection which affected his balance.

On 7 February 1979, while visiting his friends Wolfram and Liselotte Bossert in the coastal resort of Bertioga, Mengele suffered another stroke while swimming and drowned. He was 67 years old.

His body was buried in Embu das Artes under the name "Wolfgang Gerhard", whose identification Mengele had been using since 1971.

Other aliases used by Mengele in his later life included "Dr. Fausto Rindón" and "S. Josi Alvers Aspiazú".

## Exhumation

Meanwhile, sightings of Mengele were being reported all over the world.

Wiesenthal claimed to have information that placed Mengele on the Greek island of Kythnos in 1960, in Cairo in 1961, in Spain in 1971, and in Paraguay in 1978, eighteen years after he had left the country.

He insisted as late as 1985 that Mengele was still alive - six years after he had died.

German authorities alerted the police in São Paulo, who then contacted the Bosserts. Under interrogation, they revealed the location of Mengele's grave and the remains were exhumed on 6 June 1985.

Extensive forensic examination indicated with a high degree of probability that the body was indeed that of Josef Mengele.

Rolf Mengele issued a statement on 10 June confirming that the body was his father's and he admitted that the news of his father's death had been concealed

in order to protect the people who had sheltered him for many years.

In 1992, DNA testing confirmed Mengele's identity beyond doubt, but family members refused repeated requests by Brazilian officials to repatriate the remains to Germany.

The skeleton is stored at the São Paulo Institute for Forensic Medicine, where it is used as an educational aid during forensic medicine courses at the University of São Paulo's medical school

It is an injustice that Mengele was never captured, put on trial, and made to pay for his inhumane crimes.

## The Ratlines

Ratlines (*Rattenlinien*) were a system of escape routes for Nazis and other fascists fleeing Europe in the aftermath of World War II. These escape routes mainly led toward havens in Latin America, particularly Argentina though also in Paraguay, Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, Chile, Peru, Guatemala, Ecuador and Bolivia, as well as the United States, Spain and Switzerland.

There were two primary routes: the first went from Germany to Spain, then Argentina; the second from Germany to Rome to Genoa, then South America.

The ratlines were supported by some controversial clergy of the Catholic Church, and later used by the United States Intelligence officers.

# Stuka

## Junkers Ju 87

*With its wailing sirens and its pin-point accuracy, the Stuka was the terror of the skies during the early part of World War II.*

It was probably one of the most feared, aircraft of World War II. It was easily recognisable by its inverted gull wings and fixed spatted undercarriage.

Upon the leading edges of its faired main gear legs were mounted the *Jericho-Trompete* (Jericho trumpet), and the wailing sirens were a sound that no-one that heard them could ever forget.

It became the propaganda symbol of German air power and the blitzkrieg victories of 1939–1942.

Officially it was known as the Junkers Ju 87, but everyone called it by its nickname, Stuka.

The word came from the German word for dive bomber,

*Sturzkampfflugzeug.*

The

Stuka's design included several innovative features, including automatic pull-up dive brakes under both wings to ensure that the aircraft recovered from its attack dive even if the pilot blacked out from the high g-forces.

Designed by Hermann Pohlmann, it first flew in 1935. The Ju 87 made its combat debut in 1937 with the Luftwaffe's Condor Legion during the Spanish Civil War as a dive bomber and ground-attack aircraft.

It

could dive vertically and deliver a bomb with pin-point accuracy.

### American idea

With 62 kills, Ernst Udet was the second highest fighter ace

of World War I. Only the famed Red Baron had more kills than Udet.

In 1931 Udet was in the United States to take part in a stunt flying display. He watched a Curtiss F8C Helldiver make a simulated dive bombing attack at an air show. Udet was really impressed.

In fact he was so impressed that he brought two US dive bombers back to Germany.

These would eventually lead to the design and develop-

fixed  
and  
"spatted" un-  
dercarriage.

The design of the Ju 87 had begun in 1933 as part of the *Sturzbomber-Programm*. The Ju 87 was to be powered by the British Rolls-Royce Kestrel engine. This was later replaced by the Daimler-Benz DB 600 engine.

Early prototypes of the Stuka featured stabilizing double-fin tail-plane configurations yet weren't fitted with dive brakes. In January 1936, one of Junkers' most experienced test pilots was killed when his starboard tail-fin broke away. The pilot was unable to pull out of a dive and crashed. After this, Stukas were fitted with single tail fins and brakes.

The Stuka carried a crew of two - pilot and rear gunner. It was armed with a 2× 7.92 mm MG 17 machine gun in each

ment of the Stuka.

Udet would go on to become a general in the Luftwaffe and a champion of the concept of using dive bombing to support ground forces.

### Development

The Ju 87's principal designer, Hermann Pohlmann, held the opinion that any dive-bomber design needed to be simple and robust. This led to many technical innovations, such as the retractable undercarriage being discarded in favour of one of the Stuka's distinctive features, its

wing, while the rear gunner operated a single rear-facing 1× 7.92 mm MG 15 machine gun.

One of the unique features of early models of the Stuka were the *Jericho-Trompete* (Jericho trumpet).

The two propeller-driven sirens with a diameter of 0.7 m were fitted on the B-1 model of the Ju 87, which was the first version of Stuka that went into mass production. They were either mounted on the wing's leading edge, or on the front edge of the fixed main gear fairing.

The Germans relied on the psychological effect of the noise to give them an edge against their opponents.

After a while, the devastating effect of a screaming dive bomber was lost. Rather, it became a warning sign attached directly to the aircraft. Later versions were built without the Jericho Trumpets, and instead, aerial bombs were fitted with a whistling device for the same purpose.

### Operational history - Spain

Stukas made their combat debut as part of the German contingent to the Spanish Civil War — the Condor Legion. They first flew in action in 1936 when a single experimental Ju 87 was secretly deployed to fight alongside nationalist forces. More would follow in the coming months. In fact, Stukas would serve in limited numbers in support of Francisco Franco until early 1939. During that time, at least one was lost in action. Yet the Luftwaffe learned valuable lessons about the effectiveness of the Ju 87 as a dive-bomber

from the deployment.

### Poland

On 1 September 1939, the Wehrmacht invaded Poland, triggering World War II. Generalquartiermeister der Luftwaffe records indicate a total force of 366 Ju 87 A and Bs were available for operations on 31 August 1939.

A Ju 87 achieved the first air victory during World War II on the morning of 1 September 1939, when Rottenführer Leutnant Frank Neubert of I/StG 2 "Immelmann" shot down a Polish PZL P.11c fighter while it was taking off from Balice airfield.

The Stukas also participated in the Battle of Bzura which resulted in the breaking of Polish resistance. During the Siege of Warsaw and the Battle of Modlin, the Ju 87 wings contributed to the defeat of well-entrenched and resolute Polish forces.

### Norway

Operation Weserübung began on 9 April 1940 with the invasions of Norway and Denmark. Denmark capitulated within the day; Norway continued to resist with British and French help.

The Ju 87s were given the role of ground attack and anti-shiping missions; they proved to be the most effective weapon in the Luftwaffe's armoury carrying out the latter task.

The Stukas had numerous successes against Allied naval vessels and in particular the Royal Navy which posed a formidable threat to German naval and coastal operations.

## Specifications - Ju 87 B-2

### General characteristics

Crew: 2  
Length: 11.00 m  
Wingspan: 13.8 m  
Height: 4.23 m  
Wing area: 31.90 m<sup>2</sup>  
Empty weight: 3,205 kg  
Loaded weight: 4,320 kg  
Max. takeoff weight: 5,000 kg  
Powerplant: 1 × Junkers Jumo 211D liquid-cooled inverted V12 engine, 1200 PS (1,184 hp (883 kW))  
Propellers: Three-blade Junkers VS 5 propeller, 1 per engine  
Propeller diameter: 3.4 m

### Performance

Never exceed speed: 600 km/h  
Maximum speed: 390 km/h  
Cruise speed: 319 km/h  
Range: 500 km with 500 kg bomb load  
Service ceiling: 8,200 m with 500 kg bomb load  
Rate of climb: 2.3 m/s

### Armament

Guns: 2× 7.92 mm MG 17 machine gun forward, 1× 7.92 mm MG 15 machine gun to rear  
Bombs: Normal load = 1× 250 kg bomb beneath the fuselage and 4× 50 kg, two bombs underneath each wing.

The Ju 87 G-series was deployed in an anti-tank role and had twin *Bordkanone* 3.7 cm underwing gun pods.



**AIRBORNE ARTILLERY:** The Stuka could deliver a 250 kg bomb with pin-point accuracy. It was an aircraft that was both respected and feared.

### France and the Low Countries Battle of Britain

The Ju 87 units had learned lessons from the Polish and Norwegian campaigns. When Fall Gelb (Case yellow) began on 10 May 1940, the Stuka helped swiftly neutralise the fortress of Eben Emael, Belgium.

The Ju 87 proved to be a useful asset to Army Group B in the Low Countries. In pitched battles against French armoured forces at Hannut and Gembloux Ju 87s effectively neutralised artillery and armour.

The Ju 87s also assisted German forces in the Battle of the Netherlands. The Ju 87 units were also instrumental in the Battle of France. It was here that most of the Ju 87-equipped units were concentrated. They assisted in the breakthrough at Sedan, the critical and first major land battle of the war on French territory. The *Stukawaffe* flew 300 sorties against French positions, with StG 77 alone flying 201 individual missions.

As an anti-shiping weapon, the Ju 87 proved a potent weapon in the early stages of the battle. Yet the Battle of Britain proved to be a turning point for the Stuka.

It proved for the first time that the Junkers Ju 87 was vulnerable in hostile skies against well-organised and determined fighter opposition. The Ju 87, like other dive bombers, was slow and possessed inadequate defences. Furthermore, it could not be effectively protected by fighters because of its low speed, and the very low altitudes at which it ended its dive bomb attacks.

The Stuka depended on air superiority, the very thing being contested over Britain. It was withdrawn from attacks on Britain in August after prohibitive losses, leaving the Luftwaffe without precision ground-attack aircraft.

## North Africa and the Mediterranean

In response to the Italian defeats in Greece and North Africa, the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht ordered the deployment of German forces to these theatres. Amongst the Luftwaffe contingent deployed was the command unit StG 3, which touched down in Sicily in December 1940. In the next few days, two groups - 80 Stukas - were deployed under X. Fliegerkorps.

The first task of the Korps was to attack British shipping passing between Sicily and Africa, in particular the convoys aimed at re-supplying Malta. North Africa and the Mediterranean.

The dive bomber wing supported Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps in its two-year campaign in North Africa; its other main task was attacking Allied shipping.

In 1941, Ju 87 operations in North Africa were dominated by the Siege of Tobruk, which lasted for over seven months.

It served during the Battle of Gazala and the First Battle of El Alamein, as well as the decisive Second Battle of El Alamein, which drove Rommel back to Tunisia. As the tide turned and Allied air power grew in the autumn of 1942, the Ju 87 became very vulnerable and losses were heavy.

## Eastern Front Barbarossa 1941

On 22 June 1941, the Wehrmacht commenced Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the

Soviet Union. The Luftwaffe order of battle of 22 June 1941 contained four dive bomber wings.

As a result of the Luftwaffe's attention, the Soviet Air Force in the western Soviet Union was nearly destroyed. The official report claimed 1,489 Soviet aircraft destroyed.

Göring ordered this checked. After picking their way through the wreckage across the front, Luftwaffe officers found that the tally exceeded 2,000. In the next two days, the Soviets reported the loss of another 1,922 aircraft.

Soviet aerial resistance continued but ceased to be effective and the Luftwaffe maintained air superiority until the end of the year.

### Fall Blau to Stalingrad 1942

In early 1942, the Ju 87s gave the German Army yet more valuable support. On 29 December 1941, the Soviet 44th Army landed on the Kerch Peninsula. The Luftwaffe was only able to dispatch meager reinforcements of four bomber groups (Kampfgruppen) and two dive bomber groups belonging to StG 77. With air superiority, the Ju 87s operated with impunity. In the first 10 days of the Battle of the Kerch Peninsula, half the landing force was destroyed, while sea lanes were blocked by the Stukas inflicting heavy losses on Soviet shipping.

For the German summer offensive, Fall Blau (Case Blue), the Luftwaffe had concentrated 1,800 aircraft into Luftflotte 4 making it the largest and most powerful air command in the world. The Stukawaffe strength stood at 151.

During the Battle of Stalingrad, Stukas flew thousands of sorties against Soviet positions in the city. StG 1, 2 and 77 flew 320 sorties on 14 October 1942.

As the German Sixth Army pushed the Soviets into a 1,000 metre enclave on the west bank of the Volga River, 1,208 Stuka sorties were flown against this small strip of land.

The intense air attack, though causing horrific losses on Soviet units, failed to destroy them.

The Luftwaffe's Stuka force made a maximum effort during this phase of the war. They flew an average of 500 sorties per day and caused heavy losses among Soviet forces, losing an average of only one Stuka per day.

The Battle of Stalingrad marked the high point in the fortunes of the Junkers Ju 87 Stuka. As the strength of the Soviet Air Forces grew, they gradually wrested control of the skies from the Luftwaffe. From this point onward, Stuka losses increased.

### Kursk 1943

The Stuka was also heavily involved in Operation Citadel, the Battle of Kursk. The Luftwaffe committed I, II, III./StG 1 and III./StG 3 under the command of Luftflotte 6. I., II, III. of StGs 2 and 3 were committed under the command of Hans Seidemann's *Fliegerkorps VIII*.

Hauptmann Rudel's cannon-equipped Ju 87 Gs had a devastating effect on Soviet armour at Orel and Belgorod.

The Ju 87s participated in a huge aerial counter-offensive lasting from 16–31 July against a Soviet offensive at Khotynets and saved two German armies from encirclement, reducing the

attacking Soviet 11th Guards Army to 33 tanks by 20 July.

The Soviet offensive had been completely halted from the air although losses were considerable

The Battle of Kiev also included substantial use of the Ju 87 units, although again, unsuccessful in stemming the advances. Stuka units were with the loss of air superiority, becoming vulnerable on the ground as well. Some Stuka aces were lost this way.

In the aftermath of Kursk, Stuka strength fell to 184 aircraft in total. This was well below 50 percent of the required strength.

On 18 October 1943, StG 1, 2, 3, 5 and 77 were re-named Schlachtgeschwader (SG) wings, reflecting their ground-attack role, as these combat wings were now also using ground-attack aircraft, such as the Fw 190F-series aircraft. The Luftwaffe's dive-bomber units had ceased to exist.

### Bagration to Berlin 1944-45

Towards the end of the war, as the Allies gained air supremacy, the Stuka was being replaced by ground-attack versions of the Fw 190.

By early 1944, the number of Ju 87 units and operational aircraft terminally declined. For the Soviet summer offensive, Operation Bagration, 12 Ju 87 groups and five mixed groups (including Fw 190s) were on the Luftwaffe's order of battle on 26 June 1944.

*Gefechtsverband Kuhlmei*, a mixed aircraft unit, which included large numbers of Stuka dive bombers, was rushed to



**TANK KILLER:** Hans-Ulrich Rudel's Junkers Ju 87G, with twin BK 3,7 gun pods attached to the underside of the wings, in Russia 1943.

the Finnish front in the summer of 1944 and was instrumental in halting the Soviet fourth strategic offensive.

The unit claimed 200 Soviet tanks and 150 Soviet aircraft destroyed for 41 losses. By 31 January 1945, only 104 Ju 87s remained operational with their units. The other mixed Schlacht units contained a further 70 Ju 87s and Fw 190s between them. Chronic fuel shortages kept the Stukas grounded and sorties decreased until the end of the war in May 1945.

In the final months of the war the ground attack groups were still able to impose operational constraints upon the enemy.

Most notably the aircraft participated in the defence of Berlin. On 12 January 1945 the 1st Belorussian Front initiated the Vistula–Oder Offensive. The offensive made rapid progress. The

Soviets eventually outran their air support which was unable to use forward, quagmire-filled, airfields. The Germans, who had fallen back on air bases with good facilities and concrete runways, were able to mount uninterrupted attacks against Soviet army columns. Reminiscent of the early years, the Luftwaffe was able to inflict high losses largely unopposed.

### Tank Killer

The Bordkanone 3,7 (BK 3,7) ("on-board cannon 3.7") was a German 3.7 cm anti-tank/bomber auto-cannon of World War II made by Rheinmetall.

It was mounted on Luftwaffe aircraft such as the Junkers Ju 87 G-1 and G-2; Henschel Hs 129B-2/R3; Messerschmitt Bf 110G-2/R1-3; Junkers Ju 88P-2 or P-3 and others.

The cannon could be attached

under the wings or the fuselage of the aircraft as self-contained gun pods with 12-round magazines. It fired Armour Piercing Composite Rigid (APCR, Tungsten-cored) ammunition or high-explosive shells at 160 rounds per minute.

BK 3,7 equipped ground attack aircraft were developed for tank hunting on the Eastern Front in an effort to blunt the massive numerical superiority of the Soviet T-34 tank as the war turned against Germany.

In contrast to the bombs delivered by dive bombing, when the BK 3,7 was used to attack the relatively thin armour of the top of the turret and the engine compartment armour of a tank, kills could be achieved with a relatively light and cheap armour-piercing projectile that could be carried in much greater quantities than bombs.

At 04h26 on 1 September 1939, three Ju 87 B2 Stuka dive-bombers crossed the Polish border in the first mission of Case White - the invasion of Poland.

As night fell on 31 August 1939, the long flat airfield was covered with patches of fog, giving it an eerie feel.

Ghostly skeletal shapes of aircraft stood around the hangars and administration buildings.

The airbase was the scene of quiet un-hurried activity. Black figures moved in and out of the beams of truck lights as maintenance crews serviced the aircraft, arming them with fragmentation bombs fitted to racks on the sloping struts, and fuelled them from tankers.

Each of the planes had a black cross on its fuselage and wings, and a rakish, fixed trouser-type undercarriage. They were ugly gull-winged Junkers Ju 87 B2 of *Luftflotte 1*, under the command of General Kesselring.

Along the border between Germany and Poland there was a tenseness in the air. Since sundown the night had been filled with clanging of tank tracks, the sound of vehicles moving into place, and distant sounds of shunting trains.

Despite rumours and intelligence reports, few in Poland believed that Germany would really attack Poland. After all, Britain and France had said they would come to Poland's aid if Germany attacked.

The were convinced that Hitler was mounting his greatest bluff ever and that he would not risk a European War. However, during 31 August, Poland belatedly began to mobilise her troops.

**Preparing for War**

At 03h30 on 1 September a long row of dimmed headlights headed through the fog towards the airfield.

Before long Luftwaffe staff cars and crew trucks were pulling in before a low flat building near the tarmac.

The six men that comprised the crews of three dive-bombers of *3rd Gruppe of Stukegeschwader 1* were among the first to enter the building.

Under the leadership of Hauptmann Bruno Dilley they had a cup of hot coffee and listened to last minute orders and weather reports.

More and more Stuka crews filled into the briefing room. They



huddled in tight knots around their leaders. The mood in the long narrow room was confident.

All briefings had taken place hours before and now they were checking changes to their flight plans because of the closed-in weather along the Eastern Front.

At 04h10, Dilley's group fastened on their helmets, checked their parachute harnesses and left the building. On the tarmac they split into pairs and walked to their aircraft. Ground crew members were waiting to give them a hand aboard.

The early morning stillness was shattered by a deafening roar as one by one the Jumo 211D engines burst into life. The three Ju 87 Bs stood waiting for the go signal, held in place only by their airbrakes.



**INTO ACTION:** Stukas take off from an airfield in Germany. Their destination is a target in Poland.

Then Dilley received the signal and his plane jerked forward and began roll across the field in the direction of the airstrip. Forty-five metres behind him came the second plane, with the other further behind.

They reached the end of the runway and swung round to face upwind. The engines roared to a crescendo and Dilley released his brakes. The Stuka began to pick up speed as it rushed down the runway. At short intervals, the second and third plane followed.

Dilley cleared the trees and the low ridge of hills into the darkness. The time was 04h26 and the first mission of *Fall Weiss* (Case White) had truly begun.

The sky above the clouds was clear. There was no moon and the whole of the eastern horizon was lit by the dull pink glow of dawn.

A cold blast of air swept into the cabin as Dilley's navigator slid open the Stuka's side screen. He looked down to get his bearings, but most of the

countryside was covered in cloud. He looked at the stars, took a compass bearing, and slid the screen shut.

The navigator opened his microphone and spoke a few words to Dilley, giving him a slight course adjustment.

Dilley acknowledged and then switched over to the open radio network and spoke to the other two pilots in the flight. They checked in a altered course with him.

Dilley pressed his stick forward and throttled back. The three Stukas sank slowly through the clouds.

Dilley turned the lighting on his instrumentation down low to minimise distraction. At 04h31 they crossed the border into Poland.

**Dawn attack**

The ground seemed to slowly come up at Dilley as he brought his plane down in a smooth sweep of controlled power.

The other two Stukas hung to his tail. Dilley climbed to skim over a low hill and the other two

aircraft followed like a double shadow.

Now they were hedge-hopping toward the low-lying valley of the Vistula. The navigation had been spot on.

Dilley could see the river lying diagonally in front of him. He banked sharply to get in line with it, turning north.

Their mission was the twin bridges at Dirschau. Their mission was not to destroy the bridges, but rather to save them.

The Germans knew that once the Panzers crossed the border, the Poles would demolish the Dirschau bridge and others in an effort to buy time.

An armoured train carrying units of the German shock troops was due to cross the border at 04h50, the moment when armoured groups from west Germany, Czechoslovakia and East Prussia would roll into Poland.

Dilley's mission was aimed at stopping the Poles from destroying the bridges across the Vistula before the armoured train could arrive.

The German High Command knew that the Poles would have rigged the bridges with explosives. These would have been wired to charges fixed to the bridge supports. It has been reasoned that the Stuka, armed with fragmentation bombs, would be the ideal weapon.

It was a hazardous mission and the crews had been hand-picked. They had spent several weeks training at Insterburg airfield.

Dilley and three other pilots had visited Dischau by train to make a first-hand inspection of the bridges and the surround

ing terrain, particularly the approach from the south.

The kette (chain) leader had realised at once that it was not a dive-bombing mission, something for which the Stukas had been built. Rather this had to be a low-level bombing while flying straight and level.

If the strike was to be effective the Stukas would have to fly at the lowest possible level and drop their bombs at the very last instant. It would require precision flying.

At 04h35 the three Stuka pilots saw the twin bridges rushing towards them. The Jumo engines throttled up to a wailing scream as the planes swept towards the target, a mere nine metres above the ground.

They released their bombs to straddle the shelving river banks and the row of shacks that lay at the foot of the bridges. This was where the Polish troops that had the duty of blowing the bridges were stationed.

Once they had dropped their bombs they zoomed up over the bridges and away.

The bombs exploded in a flat crackle of blasts. Flames illuminated the darkness, exposing the gaunt under-structures of the bridges into spectral relief against the sky.

In a few seconds it was all over, leaving the surrounding countryside in silence. Then men began to cry out in alarm. Somewhere a dog began to bark. A whistle sounded. There was the crackle of flames as some buildings on the shore caught fire.

The Stukas climbed above the cloud base and turned for home. They were elated. They had just successfully completed the first mission of the war.

While the Stukas had succeeded in severing the leads to the detonators, what they didn't know was that, even now, the Poles were putting in fresh lead with which they would destroy one the bridges before the German armoured train arrived.

German engineers were forced to build a pontoon bridge across the river.



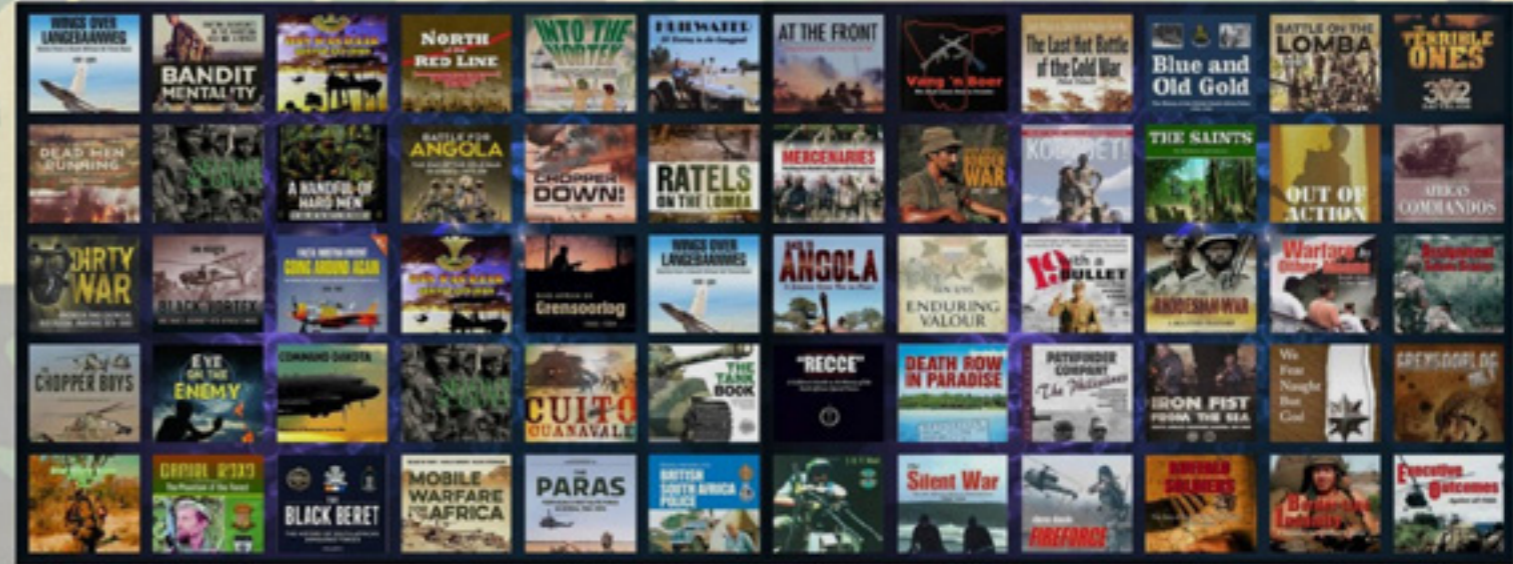
Bruno Dilley was born on 29 August 1913. He joined the Luftwaffe as a lieutenant in 1935 and on 1 June 1938 he was promoted to squadron commander.

During World War II he fought in Poland, Norway, France, the Battle of Britain, the Balkans, Africa, and the Eastern Front.

He was shot down four times, managing to escape each time. He flew nearly 700 combat missions and was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with oak leaves.

After the war he joined the Bundeswehr and finished his career as a Lt Colonel. He died on 31 August 1968.

# BUSH WAR BOOKS



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**HELD UP:** One of the bridges across the Vistula was destroyed, the other damaged. German engineers had to build a pontoon bridge.



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



**CAPTAIN MATT O'BRIEN** is going 'over the top'. His troops, on the other hand, are going out of their minds. He soon discovers that *The Great War* was not so great after all.

I've been a gamer since I was seven years old. And most of the games I have enjoyed have been military-type games.

At first it was mainly board games but, for the past 43 years, they have been computer games. Over the years I have played some really enjoyable games.

While I've played many games based on modern warfare, World War II, and even the Middle Ages, one genre that hasn't been well represented was World War I.

So I was thrilled to receive a copy of *The Great War: Western Front*. You get play a deciding role in history with this real-time tactical experience as you take charge in the pivotal Western Front from 1914 to 1918.

In this strategy game you get to step into the role of both Theatre Commander and Field Commander.

There are four different game modes - Campaign, Historical Battles, Skirmish, and Multi-player.

Your best bet is to start off with the campaign. This will allow you to play the tutorial, and trust me, you need to play the tutorial before even attempting to get into the game.

In the tutorial you get to play as the Americans that have just

entered the war on the side of the Allies. The tutorial will get you familiar with the objectives of the game, as well as the controls.

One of the first things you get to know is about National Will. This represents the feelings of the home nations towards the war - how likely they are to enlist, buy war bonds, or support the war effort in general.

This is one of the ways you can win the game. If your nation's will drops to zero then it's game over.

The second way to win the game is to capture the region containing the enemy's Command HQ. For the Allies this is Paris, for the Central Powers it is Kreuznach.

Each region has a defence rating measured in stars. When you attack a region, achieving a Great Victory removes one star. Once the final star is removed, the region becomes yours.

There is one slight problem though. One star regenerates per turn for the owning faction as long as no combat occurs in the region.

In other words if you attack a region, gain a Great Victory and removed a star, you need to press home the attack.

If, for example, you attack a region with three stars and remove one of them. You will

need to attack the same region in the next turn. Otherwise they will simply regenerate the star they lost.

Some regions has inherent bonuses or features. Paris, for instance, has both the 'Command HQ' bonus and the 'Deployment' bonus.

This means that this region is designated as a win condition and it also means that all new French troops begin in this region.

Military units can be moved on the map. While they may have different names, they act the same way with movement. Each unit contains a selection of smaller groups called a Company.

For example an infantry corps can contain multiple infantry types as well as artillery.

In the campaign you can select whether you want to play the role of the Allies or the Central Powers. The Allies will give you French and British troops and, later one, Americans. The Central Powers are the Germans.

Each turn in the campaign is equal to one month of time. At the start of each turn you are allocated Gold Reserves. This allows you to purchase new units, regional structures, and to use strategic abilities.

One of the abilities is Intel-



ligence. You can use spies to get a rough idea of what you will be up against. You can also use Counter-Intelligence to try and restrict the enemy from doing the same.

You can now move reserves from your Command HQ to any front-line region. Supply is also important. It is the currency used during battles. It is used to build trenches and other defences, to call in reinforcements, and to activate abilities such as artillery fire and air missions.

Once you have completed setting up you then end your turn. The enemy will then perform whatever preparations they wish to do. Both sides now complete their Battlefield Deployment.

It will now reveal what units and abilities each side has and will predict the probable outcome of the battle. You now choose whether to auto-resolve

the battle, or engage in the actual battle.

All battles begin in the pre-battle phase. This allows you to set up your trench lines and initial troop placement before starting the actual battle. Control points are a primary focus of the battle, with the goal being to secure as many as possible.

The game offers a lot at your disposal. Besides infantry you can also have trench raiders and flame-thrower troops. There a machine guns and reinforced machine guns, trench mortars, light and heavy artillery. Barbed wire and razor wire can slow down or even injure attacking infantry.

Air units, both fighters and bombers, can become available, as well as light and heavy tanks.

After each battle you will be given Research Points and these are used to unlock new weapons and abilities.

There is way to much to explain in this short review. You will just need to play the game to discover its scope.

This is a game well worth trying out. As it says, these battle are not won by miles, but rather by inches.



Publisher - Frontier Foundry

Genre - Strategy

Score - 8/10

Price - R400.00 (on Steam)



# Movie Review

## Fury

Released: 2014  
Running time: 135 minutes  
Directed by: David Ayer

Fury is a 2014 American war film written and directed by David Ayer. The film portrays US tank crews fighting in Germany during the final weeks of the European theatre of World War II.

In Nazi Germany in early April 1945, the Allies meet fanatical Waffen-SS resistance. Don "Wardaddy" Collier (Brad Pitt), a battle-hardened US Army Staff sergeant in the 2nd Armoured Division, commands a Sherman tank nicknamed Fury and its veteran crew: gunner Boyd "Bible" Swan (Shia LaBeouf), loader Grady "Coon-Ass" Travis (Jon Bernthal), driver Trini "Gordo" Garcia (Michael Peña), and bow gunner "Red", all of whom have fought together since the North African campaign.

Red is killed and replaced by private Norman Ellison (Logan Lerman), a young clerk with no combat experience.

As Fury moves deeper into Germany, Norman's inexperience becomes dangerous: He spots but fails to shoot a team of Hitler Youth who ambush the platoon leader's tank with a Panzerfaust, killing its entire crew.

Later, Norman hesitates under fire during a skirmish and as a result, Don finds a captured German soldier and gives Norman his M1917 Revolver, ordering him to execute the prisoner.

When he refuses, Don wrestles the revolver into his hand

and forces him to pull the trigger, killing the prisoner and traumatizing Norman.

After the platoon captures a small town, Don and Norman search an apartment and encounter a frightened woman, Irma, and her younger cousin, Emma. Don pays them for a meal and hot water while Norman and Emma bond.

At Don's urging, Norman and Emma go into the bedroom for sex. Later, as the four sit down to eat, the rest of the crew drunkenly barges in. They harass the women and bully Norman until Don puts a stop to it.

As the crew returns to the tank, German artillery hits the town, killing Irma and Emma.

The platoon receives orders to capture and hold a crossroads to protect the division's rear. En route, they are ambushed by a Tiger I tank, which manages to destroy three American tanks. Fury destroys the Tiger by outmanoeuvring it.

Unable to notify his superiors because the radio has been damaged, Don decides they must complete their mission rather than risk going back. Upon arriving at the crossroads, Fury is immobilized by a Teller mine.

Don sends Norman to scout a nearby hill, from which he sees a large number of Waffen-SS approaching.

Don decides to stay, informing the others they are permitted to

leave if they wish. Norman volunteers to stay with Don and the rest of the crew decides to fight as well. The men disguise Fury to appear destroyed and hide inside.

As the German near the tank, the crew opens fire. They inflict heavy casualties on the unsuspecting Germans.

What follows is a furious fire-fight. Will Don Collier or any of the crew manage to survive a fight which they cannot hope to win? You'll have to see the movie to find out.

Not the best World War II movie I've ever watched, but not the worst by a long shot.



Click on the poster to watch a trailer of the film.

## Eagle Strike!

This is the story of an audacious, airborne assault, on 4 May 1978, on a SWAPO fortified base containing its military headquarters, logistical support, reserves and training facilities.

The assault was supported by a very strong air strike by bombers and fighters as well as by air transport to drop the paratroopers into battle in one of the major, post World War paratroops, 250kms deep behind enemy lines, swarm of helicopters to extract the paratroopers back to safety, this execution of the whole intricate operation through a joint HQ deployed in the field.

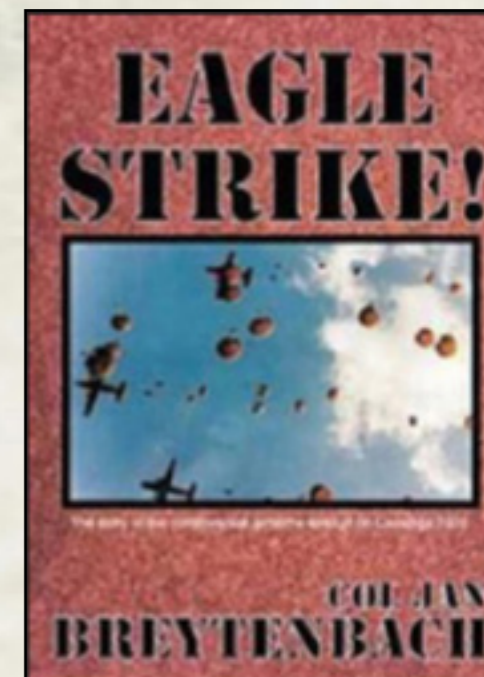
Unfortunately the subsequent uproar in the international media, based on allegations that this assault was a brutal attack on a

refugee camp, did much to detract from the incredible victory the SADF had claimed.

Was it a refugee camp, a SWAPO HQ and strategic military establishment, or a mixture of both.

This is the only personal account ever written by somebody on the SADF side who 'was actually there' and who was the commander of the paratroopers.

It also brings to light much more than this brief outline, especially the dangerous nature of the whole enterprise through personal experiences, by paratroopers and air crews, and how and why it nearly became the most disastrous undertaking of the whole 'bush war' era through uncalled for meddling by an outsider who should not have been there.

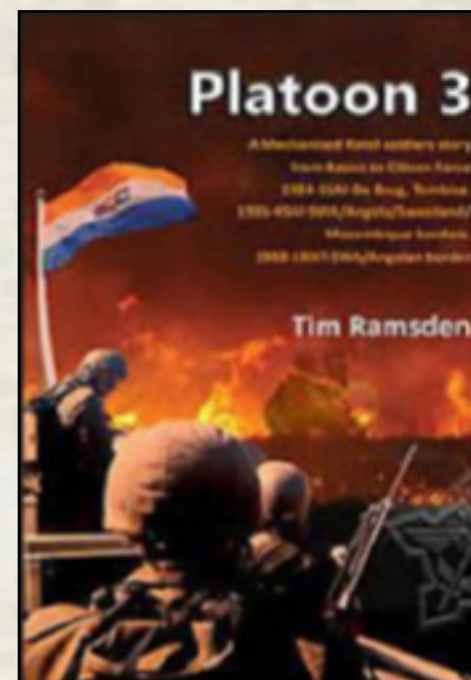


This book is a must for those interested in the South African Border War.

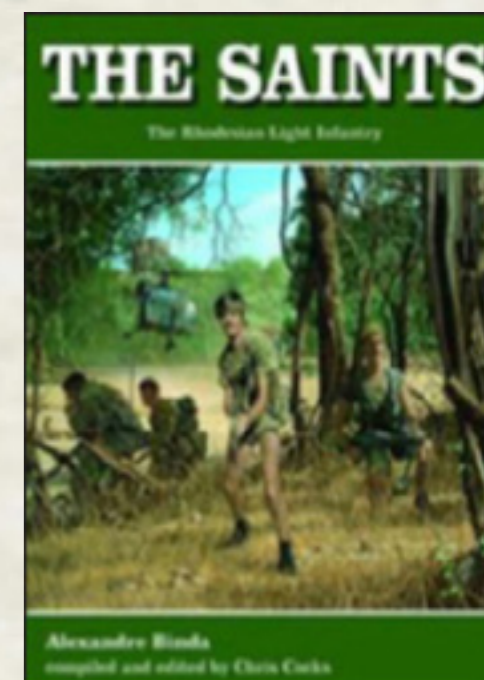
Softcover, 640 pages  
Cost: R800



Border War 1966 - 1989  
R425



Platoon 3  
R330



The Saints  
R480

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Some of the significant military events that happened in May. Highlighted in blue are the names of those members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that lost their lives during the month of May.

### 1 May

- **1915** - A German U-boat sinks the American tanker 'Gulflight', three killed.
- **1936** - Emperor Haile Selassie leaves Ethiopia as the Italians rout his army.
- **1941** - German assault on Tobruk.
- **1947** - Vice Adm Roscoe Hillenkoeter becomes 1st CIA director.
- **1960** - An American U-2 spy plane was shot down over Sverdlovsk in central Russia on the eve of a summit meeting between President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Soviet Russia's Premier Nikita Khrushchev. The pilot, CIA agent Francis Gary Powers, survived the crash, and was tried, convicted and sentenced to 10 years in prison by a Russian court.
- **1962** - First French underground nuclear blast, in the Sahara.
- **1982** - Two members from Infantry School were killed in a private motor vehicle accident between Edenburg and Bloemfontein while on weekend pass. The casualties were: Rifleman Marnes van Jaarsveld (18). Rifleman Jurgen Swaak (18).
- **1982** - Rifleman Hans Jurie Storm from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Bloemfontein while on weekend pass. He was 19.

- **1984** - Corporal Johannes Gerhardus Terblanche from 1 SAI was killed instantly when his Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicle overturned during exercises at the De Brug Training Area. He was 20.

### 2 May

- **1863** - Stonewall Jackson is wounded by his own men at Chancellorsville, he dies on 10 May.
- **1943** - Japanese aircraft bomb Darwin, Australia.
- **1945** - Berlin formally surrenders to the Red Army.
- **1945** - German forces in Italy surrender.
- **1982** - Falklands War: British sub HMS 'Conqueror' sinks Argentine light cruiser 'General Belgrano', 323 members of the crew are killed.
- **1982** - Rifleman Karel Titus from the South African Cape Corps was killed when he was knocked down and run over by a civilian vehicle while carrying road block duties at Eersterivier. He was 29.
- **1982** - Captain Leon van Wyk from 1 Parachute Battalion was Killed in Action east of Otavi during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 26.
- **1984** - Special Warrant Officer Benyamen Joseph from the SWA Police Counter-In-

surgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 37.

- **1985** - Rifleman Piet Defransa from 201 Battalion SWATF was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 21.
- **1987** - Three members from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment were Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces at Otchinjau in Southern Angola during Ops Bauwer. They were: Corporal Augusta Fernando (26). Corporal Martin Nyamhunga (24). Corporal Obadiah Malose Sebata (25).
- **1988** - A self-confessed SA spy of the security police in the ANC, Olivia Forsyth, who was held prisoner at ANC Quatro prison camp for seven months and spent another fifteen months under ANC guard in Luanda, evades her guards and takes refuge in the British embassy in Luanda.
- **1990** - Two members from the Cape Regiment were accidentally killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Mpumalanga. They were: Corporal Andrew Afrika (23). Rifleman Jan Geduld (36).
- **1990** - Lieutenant Mike Schillings from Group 17

was killed in military vehicle accident at Vereeniging. He was 22.

- **2011** - U.S. Special Operations Forces killed Osama bin Laden during a raid on his secret compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

### 3 May

- **1846** - The Mexican Army invades Texas.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: A battle takes place between the British forces under Lord Roberts and the Boers under Gen. De la Rey at Brandfort OFS. De la Rey retreats at nightfall.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General Lord Roberts departs from Bloemfontein and begins the 'March to Pretoria' with almost 44,000 men, 18,000 horses, and 1,200 field-guns. He leaves to the strains of "We are marching to Pretoria" which is heard for the first time.
- **1941** - US supply ships finally reach the British Middle East army at the Suez Canal.



**Osama bin Laden**

- **1943** - US 1st Armoured Division captures Mateur, Tunisia.
- **1945** - British troops liberate Rangoon from the Japanese.
- **1945** - Polish 10th Armoured Brigade captures Wilhelms-hafen.
- **1945** - RAF sinks several German prison-ships in Lubeck Bay. About 7,500 are killed.
- **1946** - The Allied Military Tribunal in Tokyo begins war crimes trials.
- **1961** - Defence legislation is amended to enable use of the armed forces for the suppression of internal disorder and reorganise the police so as to co-ordinate its command headquarters with that of the military.
- **1969** - Lieutenant Andre Weilbach from 4 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard failed to recover from a spin and crashed near Hartebeespoortdam during a routine general flying training sortie. He was 25.
- **1976** - Two members of the Kempton Park Commando were killed in a military vehicle accident in Pretoria. They were: Lance Corporal Johannes Petrus Hendrik Barnard (20). Rifleman Lawrence William Custard (24).
- **1978** - Three thousand members of the Congolese National Liberation Front

(FNLC) invade Zaire's Shaba Province from Angola.

- **1979** - Captain Gabriel Johannes Jacobus Basson from 4 SAI accidentally drowned when his boat struck an underwater obstruction and he was thrown overboard by the impact. He was 28.
- **1982** - Falklands War: Argentine Exocet missile sinks HMS 'Sheffield'.
- **1987** - Corporal Cornelius Johannes Du Toit from Regiment Bloemspruit died from a gunshot wound resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle while at Fouriesburg. He was 24.
- **1988** - Representatives of South Africa, United States, Angola and Cuba meet in London (3-4 May) in search of a solution to the Angolan war and independence for Namibia.

### 4 May

- **1860** - The Orange Free State signs a peace treaty with Moshesh at Wittebergen, near Winburg, after the first Basuto war.
- **1902** - General Smuts, on his way to the national delegation at Vereeniging to start peace negotiations, meets with General Lord Kitchener at Kroonstad, OFS.
- **1916** - Germany abandons unrestricted submarine warfare, at the "request" of the US.
- **1945** - German troops in the Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway surrender.

- **1965** - Units of the SADF are now being equipped with a rifle made completely in South Africa. It is the R1-7.62 mm rifle, developed from the Belgian FN rifle, with improvements.
- **1970** - At Kent State University, four students were killed by National Guardsmen who opened fire on a crowd of 1,000 students protesting President Richard Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia.
- **1978** - South African airborne attack on a South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) military base at the former town of Cassinga, Angola. Conducted as one of the three major actions of Operation Reindeer during the South African Border War, it was the South African Army's first major air assault.
- **1978** - Four members from 2 and 3 Parachute Battalion were Killed in Action during Operation Reindeer and the subsequent assault on Cassinga in Southern Angola. The casualties were: Rifleman Edward James Backhouse (22). Rifleman Martin Kaplan (25). Rifleman Jacob Conrad De Waal (23). Rifleman Andries Petrus Human (29) was reported Missing in Action after jumping from the aircraft at Cassinga. It was later learnt that he had landed in the river and drowned.
- **1978** - Corporal Terence Michael Bridgeman, an Eland

- 90 Armoured Car Crew Commander from 2 Special Service Battalion "D" Squadron Walvis Bay, was Killed in Action. He was 19.
- **1978** - Corporal Herbert Charles Truebody, an Eland 90 Armoured Car Crew Commander from 2 Special Service Battalion "D" Squadron Walvis Bay, was Killed in Action when his Eland 90 armoured car was hit by a Soviet 82mm B10 recoilless anti-tank rocket. He was 19.
- **1981** - Signaller Ronald Christo van Hamersveld from 2 Signal Regiment was killed in Military Vehicle Accident in Pretoria. He was 21.
- **1982** - Special Sergeant N. Tamunila 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.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal Gerhardus Daniel Blignaut from 6 SAI was Killed in Action after suffering fatal gunshot wounds when his patrol walked into a SWAPO/PLAN ambush. He was 21.
- **1988** - Six members from 101 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action during a contact with a numerically superior enemy force at Donguena, North of Calueque in Southern Angola. Private Papenfus from the

Technical Service Corps was captured during this encounter and later taken to Cuba. He was released a few years later. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Hendrik Jacobus Venter (20). Lance Corporal F. Petrus (22). Rifleman L. Haifiku (24). Rifleman H. Haimbodi (22). Rifleman W. Robert (23). Rifleman J. Petrus (20).

### 5 May

- **1821** - France's Napoleon Bonaparte dies in exile on the island of St. Helena.
- **1941** - Emperor Haile Selassie returns to Addis Ababa.
- **1942** - US begins rationing sugar during WW II.
- **1942** - A combined British military and naval force land on Madagascar and by the afternoon the town of Diego Suarez is captured.
- **1945** - Okinawa: 131 Kamikaze sink 17 ships.
- **1945** - German troops in the Netherlands surrender to the Allies.
- **1965** - First large US ground units arrive in South Vietnam.
- **1969** - P.W. Botha, the Minister of Defence, announces that an air-to-air projectile has been perfected by South Africa.
- **1977** - Rifleman Hendrik Johannes Jordaan from Regiment Westelike Provinsie was Killed in Action when he detonated a landmine while on patrol in the Jati Strip. He was 21.
- **1977** - Willem Johannes Pi-

etersen drowned while on Observation Post duties on the Kavango River. He was 20.

- **1980** - Rifleman Simon Kapuna from (35 Battalion) 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 24.
- **1980** - Two members of 8 SAI were Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds when their TB came under attack from SWAPO/PLAN insurgents using mortars and RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rockets. The casualties were: Rifleman Derek van den Berg (21). Rifleman Andre Johannes Redelinghuys (20).
- **1987** - Lance Corporal Rodney Abraham Scott from Group 39 was killed in a motor vehicle accident at Barkley East. He was 21.
- **2000** - Sierra Leone rebels seize peacekeepers from Zambia, raising to more

than 300 the number of UN personnel they are believed to be holding captive and dealing another blow to UN peacekeeping efforts in Africa.

- **2011** - Claude Stanley Choules dies in Australia at the age of 110. He was the last combat veteran of World War I and also the last veteran to have served in both World Wars.

### 6 May

- **1906** - British troops kill over sixty Zulus during a punitive expedition near Durban, Natal.
- **1915** - Gallipoli: Allies attack Cape Hellas.
- **1942** - Corregidor and the Philippines surrender to the Japanese
- **1943** - Allied forces on their way to Tunis wipe out German 15th Panzer Division.
- **1945** - Axis Sally makes her last broadcast.
- **1955** - West Germany joins NATO.
- **1962** - USS 'Ethan Allen' (SSBN-608) fires the first nuclear warhead from a submerged submarine.
- **1976** - Two crew members from 27 Squadron were Reported Missing when their Piaggio P166S Albatross disappeared south of Dassen Island while returning from a long range West Coast Sea Patrol. The crew have no known grave and re-

main unaccounted for. They were: Major Raymond Hall Carter (52). Captain Gideon Machiel Albertus Rossouw (25).

- **1978** - South Africa is condemned by the United States of America for its recent raid into Angola (Operation Reindeer).
- **1982** - Lieutenant Raymond Roderick Hughes from 6 Squadron was killed near Port Elizabeth while approaching to land in Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I while returning from a routine training flight. He was 25.
- **1983** - Rifleman Louis Smit from Regiment Westelike Provinsie suffered a fatal heart attack and died while on a foot patrol in the Operational Area. He was 25.
- **1991** - Gunner Phillipus Andries van der Merwe from 25 Field Regiment was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Batavia. He was 18.
- **1992** - Rifleman Ralph Jeffrey Steyn from 3 SAI was killed at Imbali Township near Pietermaritzburg when his Buffel Troop Carrier suffered brake failure and overturned. He was 22.

### 7 May

- **1915** - The British passenger ship Lusitania was torpedoed by a German submarine off the coast of Ireland, losing 1,198 of its 1,924 passengers, including 114 Americans. The attack hastened neutral America's entry into



**Claude Choules**

- World War I.
- **1937** - Germany's Condor Legion arrives in Spain to help the Nationalists.
- **1939** - Germany and Italy announce a military and political alliance known as the Rome-Berlin Axis.
- **1942** - World War II: East Africa. Naval bases on Madagascar are surrendered to the British by Vichy forces.
- **1943** - World War II: Final Allied Offensive, Tunisia. General Sir Harold Alexander's 18th Army Group captures Bizerte and Tunis. All that remains of the German force is General Gustav von Vaerst's 5th Panzer Army on the Cape Bon peninsula.
- **1945** - World War II: Germany signs an unconditional surrender at Allied headquarters in Rheims, France, to take effect the following day, ending the European conflict of World War II.
- **1946** - British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, announces plans to withdraw British troops from Egypt, dependent upon agreement for a military alliance for the protection of the Suez Canal.
- **1954** - The French Indochina War ended with the fall of Dien Bien Phu, in a stunning victory by the Vietnamese over French colonial forces in northern Vietnam. The country was then divided in half at the 17th parallel, with South Vietnam created in 1955.
- **1982** - Corporal Hercules Petrus Bester from 5 SAI

- was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents at Tsumeb. He was 20.
- **1982** - Private Barry Andre van Tonder from the Technical Service Corps was accidentally electrocuted at Lohatla and could not be revived. He was 22.
- **1983** - Two members from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Special Warrant Officer Lebeus Vilho (36). Constable Nico Johannes Swiegers (22).
- **1984** - Special Sergeant Filupus Matheus from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 28.
- **1985** - Gunner Conrad Heathcote from 10 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment collapsed and died after suffering a fatal heart attack during Junior Leaders Course at Youngsfield. He was 24.
- **1985** - Rifleman A.H. Ambrosius from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 19.
- **1987** - Rifleman Christo-

- pher George Docherty from 7 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Barberton. He was 23.
- **1997** - Former Defence Minister Magnus Malan takes full responsibility for secret apartheid raids into neighbouring countries but says they were all state-sanctioned and legal.
- **2000** - Rebels in Sierra Leone use civilians as shields while fighting UN forces.

### 8 May

- **1902** - A combined force of British soldiers and armed Blacks attempts to surround General C.H. Muller's commando, commanded in his absence by Col. Trichardt, near Belfast. The attackers are repulsed.
- **1940** - The Cape Corps, consisting of Cape Coloured men, is reformed under Col. C.N. Hoy.
- **1941** - Royal Navy captures 'U-110', with an intact Enigma machine.
- **1942** - During World War II in the Pacific, the Battle of the Coral Sea began in which Japan would suffer its first defeat of the war.
- **1943** - World War II: Final Allied Offensive, Tunisia. Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet launches Operation 'Retribution', to prevent Axis forces from evacuating North Africa.
- **1945** - A second German sur-

- render ceremony was held in Berlin. Soviet Russia's leader Josef Stalin had refused to recognize the German surrender document signed a day earlier at Reims.
- **1950** - General Douglas MacArthur is appointed commander of the United Nations (UN) forces in Korea, including South Africans.
- **1952** - US conducts the first H-Bomb test at Eniwetok Atoll.
- **1966** - WO1 Louis Matthys Jakobus Pienaar from the Artillery School was killed when his Landrover was involved in a head-on collision with a civilian vehicle near Heidelberg. He was 45.
- **1980** - Rifleman Simon Kanunu from 35 Battalion (Later 202 Battalion) SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1980** - Two members of 36 Battalion (Later 203 Battalion)



Joseph Stalin

### 9 May

- **1936** - Five days after Italy captured the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, Mussolini annexes Ethiopia and announces that Abyssinia is now part of the Italian Empire.
- **1945** - Czechoslovakia liberated from Nazi occupation.

- ion) SWATF were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Rifleman Kumsa Ntamshe (22). Rifleman David Twi (20).
- **1981** - Two members from 2 SAI were Killed in action in a landmine explosion in Northern Owamboland. They were: Lance Corporal Johannes Petrus Botha (19). Rifleman Johannes Willem Hanekom (22).
- **1985** - Rifleman Petrus Johannes Theron from the Germiston Commando was killed in a head-on collision between two Buffel Troop Carriers in the Kathlehong Township. He was 26.
- **1985** - Special Constable Linus Abraham 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.

### 10 May

- **1857** - Sepoy uprising at Meerut initiates the Indian Mutiny.
- **1918** - Royal Navy commando raid on Ostend: HMS 'Vindictive' is sunk to block the Harbour.
- **1940** - British form the Home Guard (Dad's Army).
- **1940** - Germany invades France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg.
- **1940** - Kurt Student becomes the first general to make

combat parachute jump, over Rotterdam.

- **1940** - Luftwaffe bombs Freiburg, Germany, by mistake; Goebbles blames the RAF.
- **1940** - Winston S. Churchill becomes Prime Minister of the UK.
- **1941** - Rudolf Hess, Adolph Hitler's deputy, parachutes into Scotland.
- **1946** - Italy's former colonies in North Africa are to be placed under UN control.
- **1956** - France sends 50,000 reservists to Algeria.
- **1968** - Vietnam War: Paris peace talks begin, as does the Battle of Hamburger Hill.
- **1983** - Four members from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in Action during fierce engagement with a numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Sergeant A. Willem (27). Special Constable U. Maundu (25). Special Constable T. Mben-dura (28). Special Constable J. Musaso (24).

### 11 May

- **1862** - To prevent its capture by Union forces advancing in Virginia, the Confederate Ironclad Merrimac was destroyed by the Confederate Navy.
- **1914** - Taza, Morocco, is occupied by French troops.
- **1915** - World War I: The force of the Union of South

Africa enters Windhoek, capital of South West Africa.

- **1943** - World War II: Final Allied Offensive, Tunisia. General Gustav von Vaerst's 5th Panzer Army finally surrenders on the Cape Bon peninsula, Tunisia.
- **1943** - RMS 'Queen Mary' arrives at New York with Winston Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff, en route to Washington, as well as 5,000 Afrika Korps veterans bound for POW camps, and the 300 troops guarding them.
- **1955** - Israeli raid on Gaza.
- **1960** - Israeli agents capture Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires.
- **1966** - Lieutenant Ian Pieter Roos from 1 Squadron was killed when his Canadair CL13B Sabre crashed near Waterkloof during a routine general flying training flight. He was 21.
- **1978** - Private Pieter Benade from 84 Technical Stores Depot was killed in a military motor vehicle accident at Grahamstown. He was 20.
- **1982** - Rifleman Jaques Samuae Du Preez from the Army Intelligence Corps was Killed in Action during an attack on the "Kanjimi Marenga" school where he was serving as a teacher. He was 19.
- **1982** - Corporal Don Stoffel Olyn from 911 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned during a patrol in the Etosha Pan. He was 18.

- **1985** - Corporal Mark Anthony Pond from 905 Special Services Company was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola.
- **1986** - Three members from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in Action during a fierce contact with heavily armed PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland when their Z5S Casspir was hit by a Soviet RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket. The casualties were: Constable Ignatius Francois van Zyl (25). Special Constable Simeon Shindele (25). Special Constable Simon Toivo (24).

### 12 May

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Lord Roberts enters Kroonstad. President M.T. Steyn proclaims Heilbron in the Orange Free State as his new capital.
- **1941** - Urgent supplies, including tanks and aircraft arrive at the Egyptian port of Alexandria with the convoy, code-named 'Tiger'. General Wavell can now prepare for operation 'Brevity', and the push against Rommel's forces on the Egypt-Libya border.
- **1949** - Soviet Russia lifted its blockade of Berlin.
- **1973** - 2nd Lieutenant Jacobus Petrus Kolver from 6 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard spun into

the ground near the Sundays River during a routine general flying training flight. He was 21.

- **1975** - Trooper Pieter Gabriel Eybers from 2 Special Service Battalion was accidentally killed when he fell out of a patrol observation post in the Operational Area. He was 20.
- **1980** - Rifleman Cornelius Johannes Nortje from 1 SAI attached to 61 Mech Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Michael Simon Ngoma from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment died from gunshot wounds accidentally sustained. He was 24.
- **1983** - Rifleman Frank Paul Couvelis from 912 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action in Southern Angola when his convoy was ambushed by a numerically superior enemy force.



**Kurt Student**

- **1988** - Rifleman Dean Anthony Lones from Regiment Dan Pienaar was killed in a military vehicle accident at Hazyview near White River. He was 25.
- **2000** - Ignoring international pleas to end their two-year border conflict, Ethiopia and Eritrea return to open war with fighting reported on three fronts.

### 13 May

- **1940** - Churchill promises "blood, toil, tears, and sweat."
- **1940** - Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands flees to England to avoid capture by the Germans.
- **1943** - World War II: The Italian commander-in-chief in Tunisia surrenders a day after his German counterpart, with the Allies holding some 250,000 prisoners of war.
- **1946** - US sentences 58 Mauthausen concentration camp guards to death.
- **1964** - Rifleman Paul Jacobus Krogh from 1 Parachute Battalion was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier in the Barracks in Tempe, Bloemfontein. He was 20.
- **1981** - Rifleman Mike Williams from the South African Intelligence Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident, at Madimbo. He was 21.

- **1988** - Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha and Defence Minister Magnus Malan hold talks in Brazzaville, Congo, with an Angolan delegation headed by Minister of Justice Fernando van Dunem.

### 14 May

- **1942** - During World War II, an Act of Congress allowed women to enlist for non-combat duties in the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), the Women Appointed for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES), Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS), and Semper Paratus Always Ready Service (SPARS), the Women's Reserve of the Marine Corp.
- **1943** - Japanese submarine sinks Australian hospital ship 'Centaur' off Brisbane, 268 of 332 persons aboard die; wreck is found in 2009, with the Red Cross still prominent on her sides.
- **1976** - 2nd Lieutenant Lionel John Kidson from 6 SAI was critically injured when his Unimog vehicle overturned on the "Wit Pad", close to Eenhana. He and the other injured were airlifted to the Grootfontein Hospital where he died during the night. He was 19.
- **1978** - Communist-backed Katangan gendarmes, who had been living in neighbouring Angola, invade the region around Kolwezi in southern Zaire. Zairian troops are sent into quell the

violence.

- **1980** - Three members from 8 SAI were killed after receiving multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental M26 hand grenade explosion at Okalongo in Northern Owamboland. They were: Lance Corporal Andre David Naude (21). Rifleman Frederick Engelbrecht (18). Rifleman Willem Johannes Landman (20).
- **1982** - Rifleman Andre Jodt from the South West Africa Territory Force Gymnasium was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 29.
- **1986** - Staff Sergeant Jan Carl Bergh from the Soutpansberg Commando was killed in a private vehicle accident while on his way to the Unit Headquarters after being called up for duty during the state of emergency. He was 42.
- **1987** - Rifleman L. Emmanuel from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.

### 15 May

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General Buller and Lord Dundonald enter Dundee. Lyttelton's division captures Glencoe.
- **1902** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Vereeniging conference begins. The sixty Boer representatives elect General C.F. Beyers as chairman.
- **1940** - German troops occu-

py Amsterdam as the Dutch Army surrenders.

- **1941** - World War II: Operation 'Brevity'. British forces regain Halfaya Pass and capture the towns of Sollum and Capuzzo on the Egypt-Libya border.
- **1944** - Eisenhower & Montgomery brief George VI & Churchill on the D-Day plan.
- **1957** - First British A-bomb explosion, Christmas Island, the Pacific.
- **1973** - Private Harry Cornelius Theron from 1 Maintenance Unit was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier at the 1 Maintenance Unit weapons store while they were in the process of cleaning and checking firearms. He was 18.
- **1980** - Rifleman Glen Andrew Paul from 8 SAI was critically wounded after receiving multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental hand grenade explosion at Okalongo in Northern Owamboland on 14 May 1980, he unfortunately succumbed to his wounds on 15 May 1980. He was 20.
- **1981** - Rifleman Willie Elefante from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1984** - Rifleman Malekudu Johannes Nkada from 113 Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned while on patrol near Messina. He was 23.

- **1985** - Special Constable K. Tjindunda from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.
- **1986** - Lance Corporal Isaac Londo from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.

### 16 May

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: A 'flying' column that has sped its way straight from Kimberley (reinforced further by Canadian troops) comes to the aid of Mafeking who is under siege by Boer forces.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General Hunter occupies Christiana, the first ZAR town to be captured.
- **1941** - World War II: North Africa. Believing that previous day's advance by British forces into Sollum and Fort Capuzzo was the start of an attack on Tobruk, General Rommel attacks and forces the British back to Halfaya Pass.
- **1943** - German troops destroy the main synagogue of Warsaw.
- **1964** - Six members of the SADF were killed when their Military Vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with a Military Recovery vehicle while return-

ing from a sports event at Uniondale. The casualties were: Staff Sergeant Abraham Carel Prinsloo (30). Sergeant Johannes Hendrik August Agenbach (22). Corporal Pieter Johannes Kotze (22). Trooper Izak Sybrand Visagie (20). Bombardier Johannes Adrianas Du Toit (21). Rifleman Johannes Frederick Wepener (18).

- **1981** - WO II Isak Philipus Venter from North West Command Headquarters was accidentally killed at Stilfontein when he was knocked down by a civilian vehicle during the Republic Day preparation festivities. He was 47.
- **1981** - Rifleman Benjamin Buys from 16 Maintenance Unit was killed when his private motor vehicle overturned at Grootfontein. It appears that he had fallen asleep behind the wheel. He was 20.
- **1997** - Mobutu Sese Seko, who has ruled Zaire for more

than 30 years, looting it of billions of dollars, flees the capital city as rebel forces advance. The rebels enter the city the next day and Laurent Kabila declares himself head of state.

### 17 May

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: After 216 days Boer forces abandon the siege of Mafeking and Colonel Mahon's relief column enters the town.
- **1940** - Germans capture Brussels.
- **1941** - World War II: North Africa. Rommel is instructed by Berlin to leave Tobruk to the Italians and concentrate his *Deutsches Afrika Korps* on the fight along the Egypt-Libya border.
- **1943** - Operation Chastise: RAF 617 Squadron ("The Dam Busters") destroys the Ruhr Valley dams.
- **1981** - Signaler Albert Peter Jordaan from the Army Signals Training Centre at Heidelberg was killed in a private motor vehicle accident between Heidelberg and Grootvlei, on the N3. He was travelling home on weekend pass after standing guard duty the whole night. He was 18.
- **1987** - USS 'Stark' (FFG-31) hit by Iraqi missiles, 37 sailors die.
- **1988** - Former information officer of the SADF, Brig-

adier J. Bosman, reveals in Parliament that one third of the 3 000 troops involved in SA's operation in south-east Angola are not White. In addition 65% to 70% of the soldiers in the operational area were 'people of colour'.

- **1989** - A military coup fails to remove Mengistu Haile Mariam as president of Ethiopia.
- **1991** - Rifleman Antonio Joao Sampaio from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action after being struck in the neck by an AK-47 bullet fired from an unknown gunman while he was on patrol in Tokoza Township. He was 34.

### 18 May

- **1804** - Napoleon Bonaparte became Emperor of France, snatching the crown from the hands of Pope Pius VII during the actual coronation ceremony, and then crowning himself.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Boer negotiators, Generals Botha, De Wet, De la Rey, Smuts and Hertzog attend peace talks in Pretoria with Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener. They are still asking for a continued independence of the former republics.
- **1941** - World War II: East Africa. The 5th Indian Division, part of General William Platt's Northern Force, takes Amba Alagi after eighteen days of fighting. The Italian commander, Duke d'Aosta, is the last one to leave the



**Mobutu Sese Seko**

fortress.

- **1944** - The Polish II Corps storms Monte Cassino.
- **1967** - UN agrees to Egyptian demand to withdraw UN forces from Gaza Strip.
- **1973** - Staff Sergeant Kevin Everitt Potgieter from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a parachute accident at Tempe. He was 27.
- **1980** - Four members from 41 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with a numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. The casualties were: Rifleman Hendrik Balie (21). Rifleman Dawid Goliath (29). Rifleman Vincent Sekopomashe (25). Rifleman Joseph Tjipuna (22).
- **1982** - Rifleman Likambo Zecks Maxwell from 701 Battalion SWATF was killed after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental mortar bomb explosion at Nkongo Base. He was 21.
- **1994** - Military observers returning to the Rwandan countryside report ethnic killings of at least 200,000.
- **1997** - Rebels led by Laurent Kabila take control of Kinshasa, capital of Zaire now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, after overrunning the country in seven months.
- **1999** - Sierra Leone's government and the country's rebels agree to a cease-fire to end seven years of savage fighting.
- **2000** - The UN Security

Council unanimously approves an arms embargo against Ethiopia and Eritrea following the latest flare-up in their two-year border war.

### 19 May

- **1931** - "Pocket Battleship" 'Deutschland' launched in Germany.
- **1935** - T. E. Lawrence, better known as 'Lawrence of Arabia', is killed in a motorcycle accident at the age of 46.
- **1940** - Charles De Gaulle's 4th Armoured Division counter-attacks the Germans at Péronne.
- **1951** - UN begins counter offensive in Korea.
- **1958** - The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) is established.
- **1967** - US bombs Hanoi.
- **1978** - Rifleman Adriaan Adolf Jonker from the Midlands Commando died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while he was serving in the Operational Area. He was 24.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal Colin Watson Kindness from 4 SAI, attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while the platoon was 'Falling In' during musketry training. He was 22.
- **1986** - South African troops

carry out raids in Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, killing three people.

- **1987** - Rifleman John Barnard from Regiment Bloemspruit was killed in a military vehicle accident at Van Stakensrus. He was 25.
- **1996** - French troops move into downtown Bangui, Central African Republic, to help quell an army uprising.
- **1998** - The name of the military base, Voortrekkerhoogte is officially changed to Thaba Tshwane.

### 20 May

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: A squadron of Colonel E.C. Bethune, under Captain Geoff, runs into a well-placed ambush under Commandant Blignaut at Scheepers Nek, ten km south west of Vryheid. The British lose twenty-seven killed, twenty-five wounded, eleven taken prisoner and twenty-nine horses killed. The Boers capture a machine gun and twenty-six horses, while losing one burgher killed, one wounded and one captured by the British.
- **1902** - US military occupation of Cuba (since June of 1898) ends.
- **1940** - German tanks reach the Channel.
- **1940** - World War II: The 1st SA Infantry Brigade is called up for continuous training, to be followed by other units, including the SA Artillery Corps, Engineer Corps and the newly formed Tank

Corps.

- **1942** - Japanese submarine-borne aircraft reconnoiter Durban, South Africa.
- **1970** - Two members from Flying Training School Langebaanweg were killed when their Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I flipped over on the runway during a landing at Air Force Base Langebaanweg. They were: Major Gabriel Hendrik van Dyk (31). Captain Phillip Spencer Weyer (25).
- **1979** - Special Constable Petrus Mabashe 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.
- **1981** - Three members of the SADF were Killed in Action while on a vehicle patrol from Okankolo northeast along the Odilla River bed. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Stephen

Soloman Hansen (19). Sapper Jan Hendrik Smith (19). Sapper Anthonie Christoffel Strydom (19).

- **1982** - Corporal Brian Gerald Peterson from 701 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1983** - A powerful car bomb placed by MK Operatives exploded outside the Air Force Headquarters building in Church Street during the afternoon rush-hour period killing seven members of the SADF and 10 civilians. Another 197 SADF personnel and civilians were wounded in the explosion that also killed the two MK Operatives who had placed the bomb. The SADF casualties were: Colonel Stefanus Sebastiaan Walters (43). Commandant Johan de Villiers (47). Commandant Izak Johannes Henning (60). Captain Rian Hendrik Liebenberg (26). Flight Sergeant Jacob Johannes Ras (38). Corporal Anton Nel (22). Airman Wayne Lawrence Kirtley (19).
- **1983** - Rifleman John Philip Olivier from Regiment Groot Karoo was Killed in Action near Mupa. He was 24.
- **1987** - Chief Petty Officer Jan Johannes Barend Mostert was killed in a military vehi-

cle accident at Nelspoort. He was returning from Simons-town after collecting sports equipment when his vehicle overturned. He was 38.

- **1987** - Private Clifton Brian Kilian from 97 Ammunition Depot was killed in a military vehicle accident at Mokerong. He was 19.
- **1988** - Rifleman Motsemoholo Joseph Mpembe from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was killed in a parachuting accident at Kenilworth. He was 23.
- **1988** - Rifleman Andre Petrus Prinsloo from 16 Maintenance Unit was killed in a military vehicle accident 10km South of Windhoek. He was 21.
- **1998** - Ethiopia and Eritrea amass thousands of troops along their border, ready to fight over a 640-square km triangle of disputed land.

### 21 May

- **1902** - Second Anglo-Boer War: The proposed peace proposals agreed on by a commission of five, Botha, De la Rey, De Wet and Hertzog, with Kitchener and Milner, are received in London.
- **1941** - SS 'Robin Moore' is sunk off Brazil, first U-boat kill of an American ship in World War II.
- **1944** - World War II: Allied forces break through the Hitler Line in Italy.
- **1951** - USSR announces it will sell arms to Egypt.
- **1956** - US explodes the first air-dropped hydrogen bomb,



**T E Lawrence**

- Bikini Atoll
- **1974** - The British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, states in the House of Commons that the export license for a Westland Wasp helicopter to South Africa will be revoked.
- **1976** - Private Adriaan Johannes van der Merwe from the 4th Provost Company, South African Corps of Military Police was killed in Military Vehicle Accident at Grootfontein. He was 19.
- **1978** - French and Belgian paratroopers who were flown into Kolwezi, Zaire's main copper producing town, to rescue the 3,000 White residents, have discovered over 150 bodies lying in the town's main streets. Most have been badly mutilated. Communist-backed Katangese gendarmes, who had invaded the region earlier this month, are blamed. Zairian troops, who had been sent in a week ago, appear to have joined with the Katangese gendarmes, getting high on drugs and going on the murder spree.
- **1980** - Fifteen members from 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during heavy close-quarter fighting against a vastly numerically superior enemy force of FAPLA troops and PLAN insurgents during an engagement to neutralise an enemy base complex at Savate in Southern Angola during Operation Tiro a Tiro. The casualties were: Captain An-

- dre Erasmus (28). Lieutenant Charl de Jongh Muller (23). 2nd Lieutenant Timothy Simmons Patrick (18). 2nd Lieutenant Johannes Mattheus Heyns Muller (19). Corporal Eduard Coetzee Engelbrecht (19). Lance Corporal Andrew Jeremy Falkus (20). Lance Corporal Joao Kaumba (21). Rifleman Rodrigues Alberto (27). Rifleman Benedito Albino (25). Rifleman Sebastiao Angelo (22). Rifleman Manuel Augusto (26). Rifleman Antonio Caliango (31). Rifleman Abel Livingue (23). Rifleman Casto Marcelino (24). Rifleman Joaquim Matamba (22).
- **1985** - Three members of the Air Force Base Waterkloof Fire Section were Killed in Action after being called to assist the Pretoria Fire Department in extinguishing a massive fire at the SASOL Bulk Storage Depot in Pretoria West after Soviet SPM limpet mines planted by MK Operatives had exploded and damaged some of the large fuel storage tanks. The casualties were: Sergeant Wynand Jacobus Hawkins (30). Corporal Donald Graham Clench (22). Airman Michael Sydney Knoetze (23).
- **1985** - A SADF unit is ambushed at the Cabinda oil refinery in Angola and Special Forces Captain Wynand du Toit is taken captive.
- **1985** - Two members from 4 Reconnaissance Regiment

- were Killed in Action during a Reconnaissance Operation in Cabinda Province of Northern Angola. Captain Wynand du Toit is captured. The casualties were: Corporal Rowland Ridgard Liebenberg (25). Corporal Louis Pieter van Breda (25).
- **1985** - Three members from 101 Battalion SWATF were killed when their Caspir Vehicle overturned at Ondangwa. They were: Rifleman J Kandjii (27). Rifleman M Domingos (26). Rifleman J Felosiano (25).
- **1986** - Rifleman Gabriel Gerhardus Malan from 7 SAI was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Kwandebele. He was 19.
- **1986** - Corporal D Mauriocu from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 24.

### 22 May

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: USA President McKinley says he will not intervene in the war in South Africa despite direct requests by Boer representatives visiting the White House.
- **1915** - Italy declares war on Austria-Hungary.
- **1941** - World War II: East Africa. Caught between a pincer movement of the 11th and 12th African Divisions, the Abyssinian town of Soddu is captured. It was the penultimate point of resistance to the Allied campaign in

- East Africa; only Gondar, to the north, still remains under Italian control.
- **1941** - British troops take Baghdad, deposing pro-Nazi Iraqi regime.
- **1942** - Mexico declares war on Nazi Germany and Japan.
- **1945** - The Allies dissolve the "Dönitz Government," and abolish German sovereignty.
- **1945** - After being captured by the British, Heinrich Himmler commits suicide. He was 44.
- **1960** - Israel announces the capture of Nazi Adolf Eichmann in Argentina.
- **1965** - Minister of Defence Jim Fouché announces that R12m. has been spent on the defence radar screen in the Transvaal.
- **1969** - Trooper Hendrik Erlank Pieterse from 84 Technical Stores Depot was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 19.
- **1983** - Rifleman Johannes Engelbrecht from the Infantry School was critically injured in a private motor



**Kat Liebenberg**

- vehicle accident near Colesburg and later succumbed to his injuries in the Universitas Hospital, Bloemfontein. He was 22.
- **1985** - Major Jan Pen Wesels from 85 Combat Flying School was killed when his Dassault Mirage IID2Z crashed near Pietersburg. He was 36.
- **1994** - Rwandan rebels seize the key government army barracks in Kigali, removing the biggest obstacle in their drive to capture the capital.

### 23 May

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: British troops arrive at the Renoster River only to find that the Boers have destroyed the bridge.
- **1966** - The Fort Klapperkop military museum, Pretoria, mainly illustrating the period from the Great Trek to 1902, is opened by President C.R. Swart.
- **1979** - Two members from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment were Killed in Action at Shona Mutamanjamba in Southern Angola while carrying out reconnaissance mission to locate a suspected SWAPO/PLAN Base in the area. The casualties were: Captain Johannes Cornelius van Wyk HC (27). Corporal Johan Kloosterziel (22).
- **1983** - Rifleman Coenraad Jacobus Bezuidenhout from Regiment De La Rey was

- killed instantly when a Soviet PG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket was accidentally detonated inside their Buffel Troop Carrier while travelling on the Oshakati-Oshikuku road. He was 24.
- **1983** - 2nd Lieutenant Jacobus Edward Visser from 202 Battalion SWATF was killed in a motor cycle accident at Rundu. He was 23.
- **1983** - In response to a car bomb attack in Pretoria on 20 May, the South African Air Force bombs ANC bases in a Maputo suburb, Mozambique, killing six.
- **1998** - General Andreas "Kat" Liebenberg, ex-chief of the SA defence force, dies of cancer in Pretoria.

### 24 May

- **1870** - Jan Christian Smuts, who was to become the Union of South Africa's second prime minister, is born on the farm Bovenplaats near Riebeeck West in the Cape.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Britain annexes the Orange Free State. Lord Roberts changes the name to Orange River Colony.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Colonel Robert Baden-Powell occupies Zeerust.
- **1902** - Second Anglo-Boer War: British General Sir Ian Hamilton attends General Jan Christiaan Smuts' birthday party: "I sat between Botha and De la Ray. On Botha's right was De Wet, on De la Ray's left sat Smuts.

I had the most enchanting evening, and never wish to eat my dinner in better company.”

- **1916** - Britain introduces conscription.
- **1916** - Germans capture Ft. Douaumont, Verdun, from the French.
- **1921** - The British Legion, now the Royal British Legion, is formed by Great War veterans.
- **1941** - Battle of the Denmark Straits: the 'Bismarck' sinks HMS 'Hood', 1,416 are killed. There are only three survivors.
- **1979** - Private Albertus Mundy from 16 Maintenance Unit was killed in a military vehicle accident at Grootfontein. He was 21.
- **1991** - Corporal Revis Omie Khoza from the Kruger Park Commando was killed after he was attacked and trampled to death by an enraged buffalo while on patrol in the Kruger National Park. He was 35.

### 25 May

- **1857** - In an attempt to unite the two Boer republics, the commandoes of the Free State and Transvaal (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek) confront each other at the Renoster River, but an armed clash is averted through mediation of Paul Kruger and others.
- **1940** - German troops reach the Channel near Boulogne.
- **1977** - US raises concern over the presence of Cuban

military advisers in Ethiopia.

- **1977** - Sergeant William Henry Bernard Gildenhuis HC (Posthumous) from the Cape Town Highlanders was killed after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds while detached to Alpha Company, 1 Parachute Battalion for special duties. He was 28.
- **1981** - Special Warrant Officer Antonio Chiwale 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.
- **1982** - Rifleman Daniel de Klerk from 4 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 19.
- **1982** - Private Wayne Peter Lourens from 86 Technical Stores Depot went for dental treatment in Bloemfontein. After receiving a dental injection, he suddenly lapsed into a coma and was rushed to hospital where he later died. He was 21.
- **1982** - Three members from 202 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action during a contact with enemy Forces in Southern Angola. They were: Rifleman G. Muronga (24). Rifleman A.H. Kudumo (25). Rifleman L. Kudumo (26).
- **1983** - Sergeant Alberto Costa 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.

- **1984** - Rifleman Craig Rudolph Olivier from the Durban Light Infantry died in 1 Military Hospital after being critically injured in a military vehicle accident. He was 22.
- **1987** - Two members from 111 Battalion were killed in a military vehicle accident on the Carolina Road approximately 30 km from Amsterdam. They were: Rifleman Menzie Albert Moyo (22). Rifleman Passport Johannes Zulu (21).
- **1994** - The UN arms embargo on South Africa is finally lifted following the election of Nelson Mandela as president of the government of National Unity.
- **1997** - Rebels topple the government of Sierra Leone in a violent coup.

### 26 May

- **1940** - The Dunkirk evacuation began in order to save the British Expeditionary Force trapped by advancing German armies on the northern coast of France. Boats and vessels of all shapes and sizes ferried 200,000 British and 140,000 French and Belgian soldiers across the English Channel by 2 June.
- **1940** - The Crown detains British Fascist Oswald Moseley.
- **1942** - North Africa: Rommel attacks the Gazala Line.

- **1967** - Egyptian premier Gamal Abdel Nasser vows to destroy Israel if war is provoked.
- **1971** - Eleven SAAF members, nine from 21 Squadron and two from 24 Squadron were killed when a formation of three Hawker Siddeley Mercurius HS125 aircraft flew into the side of Devil's Peak during an aircraft formation practice rehearsal for the Republic Day 10th Anniversary celebrations in Cape Town. The casualties were: Major Michael Christiaan de Graaff Genis (37). Captain Daniel du Plessis Lombard (37). Commandant Lourens Adrian Francois Henning (40). Major George Johannes Euvrard (32). Major Nico Beetge (31). Captain Gerald Nicol Snyman (27). Major Herwie Herman Albert Cornelius Lamoral (37). Major Willem Abram Prinsloo (37). Corporal Reiner Nicolaas Grobler (24). Lance Corporal Eugene Hayes (22). Private



Oswald Moseley

Gerhardus Hermanus Wasserman (21).

- **1972** - US-USSR sign SALT I (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty).
- **1973** - Rifleman Jeffrey Gerald Holm from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident, in Eastern Caprivi. Jeffrey was the first SADF soldier to die on service in the Border area after the SADF took over the border area protection role from the South African Police. He was 19.
- **1977** - Rifleman Charles Henry Janse van Noordwyk from 3 SAI was killed after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental hand grenade explosion at Potchefstroom. He was 18.
- **1977** - The Shaba War in Zaire comes to an end.
- **1980** - Rifleman Johannes Stephanus van der Merwe from Sector 10 Headquarters was killed when he was struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while serving at Oshakati. He was 20.
- **1986** - Rifleman Ivan Conradie from the South African Cape Corps, attached to Sector 10 Headquarters, was killed in a military vehicle accident at Oshakati. He was 21.
- **1987** - Corporal Willem Johannes Gysberg Venter from Northern Transvaal Com-

mand was killed in a military motor cycle accident at Cullinan. He was 21.

- **1989** - WO1 Roland Stanley Sheppard from South West Africa Medical Command was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident on the Tsumeb-Ondangwa Road. He was 50.
- **1991** - South African Air Force pioneer Major-General Ken van der Spuy, veteran of both world wars and holder of fourteen decorations from several countries, dies at the age of 99.

### 27 May

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General Lord Roberts crosses the Vaal River and occupies the town of Vereeniging.
- **1918** - Battle of the Aisne: Allies begin pressing back the Germans.
- **1941** - World War II: North Africa. General Erwin Rommel, now reinforced with the 15th Panzer Division, recaptures Halfaya Pass.
- **1941** - The Royal Navy sinks the 'Bismarck'.
- **1956** - The Casbah area of Algiers is sealed off as French troops search for weapons caches.
- **1969** - Two members of 28 Squadron were killed instantly when the private motorcycle they were riding crashed at the notorious "Death Bend" in Johannesburg. They were: Air Sergeant Terence McKelvin (24). Air Mechanic Anthony



- Edward Dwyer (20).
- **1980** - RENAMO denies in Lisbon that the movement is receiving assistance or supplies from South Africa.
- **1981** - Rifleman Terence Rodney le Roux from 5 SAI was Killed in Action while on patrol from Etale base close to the Charlie pipeline. He was 22.
- **1990** - Signaller Alan Vernon Campbell from 2 Signal Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Pietersburg Highway. He was 21.

**28 May**

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: The annexation of the Orange Free State is announced by Lord Roberts, and back-dated to coincide with the Queen's birthday on 24 May.
- **1924** - A serious peacetime air force accident takes place when a 20-lb bomb falls from a military DH9 bomber, which was damaged during a forced landing at Kuruman. The bomb explodes among a crowd of spectators, killing three and injuring thirty-nine.
- **1940** - King Leopold III surrenders Belgium to the Germans.
- **1940** - Norway: Anglo-French forces capture Narvik.
- **1941** - World War II: General Jan Smuts, premier of SA, becomes a field marshal of the British army.
- **1942** - World War II: North

- Africa. Colonel General Erwin Rommel begins his third offensive to push the British back into Egypt: Operation 'Venezia'.
- **1970** - Private Bartholomeus Stephanus Diedericks from the Technical Service Corps was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 18.
- **1978** - Candidate Officer Stephanus Rudolph Strydom from the Infantry School Instructor Group was killed after being struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle while at Grootfontein. He was 20.
- **1979** - Special Warrant Officer David Gabriel from the SWA Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was driving from Ondangwa to Oshakati and gave a lift to a man who, unknown to him, was a member of SWAPO/PLAN. Halfway to Oshakati Warrant Gabriel stopped alongside the road to relieve himself, leaving his FN rifle in the vehicle with the passenger. The SWAPO/PLAN passenger took the rifle and shot him dead before successfully making his escape. He was 36.
- **1980** - The first 55 women graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal Frank Pieter Leendert van der Bijl from 101 Field Workshops was killed after he accidentally fell under the wheels of a moving Samil truck. He was 20.

- **1984** - Signaller Daniel Hendrik Klue from the South African Corps of Signals was killed in a military vehicle accident at Olifantshoek. He was 19.
- **1985** - Lieutenant Michael Robert Borthwick from the Personnel Services Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident on the Pietersburg Highway. He was 27.
- **1985** - Two members from the SWA Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Constable Johannes Jurgens Vos (20). Special Constable Frans Bajiyu (24).
- **1986** - Trooper Johann Pretorius from 1 Special Service Battalion was Killed in Action when his armoured car detonated a landmine near the Cut-line. He was 21.
- **1991** - Ethiopian rebels seize Addis Ababa.

**29 May**

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General Louis Botha visits Johannesburg two days before British occupation and asks the residents not to resist and not to destroy the gold mines.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: The Battle of Klipriviersberg or Doornkop starts.
- **1945** - Okinawa: the 5th Marines storm Shuri Castle.
- **1981** - Lieutenant Jeremy

- John van der Wath from 42 Squadron was killed instantly while flying Atlas AM3C Bosbok, Serial No. 958. The aircraft crashed near Eenhana while flying low level ration drops over a shona. He was 20.
- **1981** - Lieutenant Immo Klaus Kruger from 32 Battalion was killed after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental hand grenade explosion in the 32 Battalion training area. He flung himself onto the hand grenade to protect those around him. He was 25.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Adam Cecil Lennox from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment died at Phalaborwa as a result of an accidentally self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head while playing with a privately owned revolver. He was 18.
- **1983** - Rifleman Noreneus Philipus from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with

- SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 23.
- **1984** - WO1 Willem de Ruyter Genis from Northern Logistics Command was killed in a military vehicle accident at Grootfontein. He was 48.
- **1990** - Private Charl de Villiers from the Technical Service Corps was accidentally killed in Pretoria when his Ratel overturned on the road in front of Special Forces Headquarters. He was 19.
- **1998** - Accepting a seventeen-gun salute, outgoing South African National Defence Force (SANDF) chief, General Georg Meiring, formally hands over command of the SANDF to Lt Gen. Sipiwe Nyanda in the sports stadium in Thaba Tshwane, Pretoria.

**30 May**

- **1815** - The British troopship Arniston is wrecked on the rocks at Waenhuiskrans (later called Arniston). 372 of the 378 people on board are drowned.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Lady Edward (Violet) Cecil writes to Lord Salisbury on the conditions in Bloemfontein: "Far more people have been killed in our hospitals than by Boer bullets... Men are dying by the hundreds who could easily be saved."



**Georg Meiring**

- **1902** - Second Anglo-Boer War: The officially reported camp population of the White concentration camps is 116,572 and the deaths for May are 196.
- **1902** - Second Anglo-Boer War: The officially reported Black concentration camp population in the sixty-six Black camps reach 115,700. 523 deaths are recorded for May. The total recorded deaths are calculated at a minimum of 14,154 (more than 1 in 10). 81% of the fatalities are children.
- **1941** - The Luftwaffe bombs Dublin.
- **1942** - First Allied air raid on Cologne.
- **1942** - World War II: East Africa. Japanese submarines shell Sydney and Diego Suarez naval bases on Madagascar.
- **1966** - 300 US airplanes bomb North Vietnam.
- **1967** - Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser and Jordan's King Hussein sign a mutual defence treaty, prompting Israel to strike pre-emptively a week later, starting the Six-Day War.
- **1970** - 2nd Lieutenant Johannes Jacobus Theron from 4 Artillery Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident at Messina. He was 19.
- **1974** - South Africa tells Britain that unless the Wasp helicopter is delivered, the Simonstown Agreement on naval cooperation will have to be reviewed.

- **1982** - Spain becomes the 16th member of NATO.
- **1997** - US Marines evacuate 900 civilians from Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, wracked by looting and violence after a military coup.
- **2003** - The UN Security Council votes unanimously to send a peacekeeping force to Congo's north-eastern Ituri province. The European Union approves the force to restore order and security in a region plagued by violence among ethnic militias.

**31 May**

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: British troops under Lord Roberts enter Johannesburg as the Boers withdraw to Pretoria. The British flag is hoisted in Johannesburg.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: At Vlakkfontein (the present day Derby), General Kemp attacks Brigadier-General Dixon and captures the field guns. Dixon launches a counter-attack and Kemp withdraws.
- **1902** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Boer delegates at the Vereeniging national delegation agree fifty-four to six to accept the British proposals for peace. Representatives of both sides at Melrose House, Pretoria, sign the Treaty of Vereeniging.
- **1915** - Zeppelin 'LZ-38' makes the first airship raid on London, dropping 1.5 tons of bombs, killing seven people
- **1916** - The Battle of Jutland: The British Grand Fleet wins a strategic victory over the German High Sea Fleet, which never goes to sea again.
- **1937** - German ships bombard Almeria, Spain, retaliating for an accidental air attack on a German warship.
- **1943** - World War II: North Africa. Charles de Gaulle and Henri Honoré Giraud set up the Committee of National Liberation in Algiers to represent France until the end of the war.
- **1962** - Adolf Eichmann, war criminal, is hanged in Israel at the age of 55.
- **1966** - The Republic of South Africa celebrates its fifth anniversary with a massive military demonstration in Pretoria. A crowd of more than 500,000 sees nearly 20,000 troops and 200 aircraft take part in the proceedings.
- **1966** - Brigadier Jan Harmse Burger SM OBE from 16 Combat Group collapsed and died after suffering a fatal heart attack while attending a Parade at Voortrekkerhoogte. He was 49.
- **1977** - Salisbury announces that Rhodesian troops have captured and occupied the town of Mapai, 100 km inside Mozambique.
- **1978** - Lance Corporal Yvan Mark L'Hoest from 1 SAI Died of Wounds in 1 Military Hospital after suffering

multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental hand grenade explosion in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.

- **1982** - Corporal Mario Jose from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 26.
- **1984** - Rifleman Kevin James Morrow from Regiment Port Natal was killed in a military vehicle accident on the road to Ondangwa. He was 29.
- **1991** - The civil war in Angola ends officially after seventeen years, though fighting still occurs occasionally.



**Adolf Eichmann**



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# Armed Forces

- 1. Israeli Army
- 2. French Navy
- 3. Indian Air Force
- 4. South African Defence Force (SADF)
- 5. Egyptian Air Force
- 6. Russian Armed Forces
- 7. Australian Army
- 8. Rhodesian Air Force
- 9. SA Army (SADF)
- 10. British Armed Forces
- 11. Italian Army
- 12. People's Liberation Army (China)
- 13. South African National Defence Force (SANDF)
- 14. Armed Forces of the Republic of Argentina
- 15. Nigerian Army



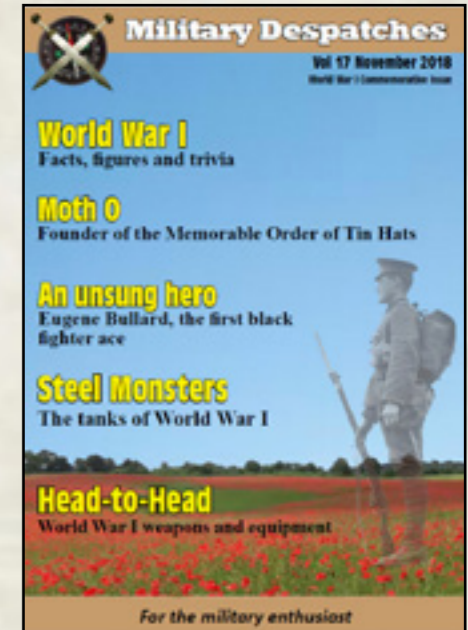
## Useful links

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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