



Military Despatches

Vol 74 August 2023

Females on the frontline

The role of women in combat

Operation Frankton

The 'Cockleshell Heroes'

Bernard Montgomery

Admired by some, disliked by others

Sniper rifles

One shot - one kill

For the military enthusiast



**Military Despatches
YouTube Channel**



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Special Forces Ops - Operation Frankton

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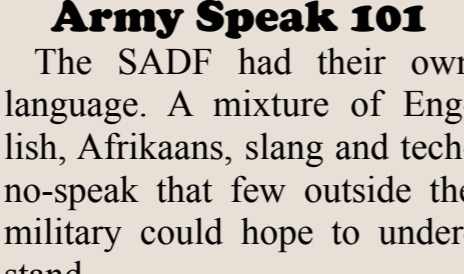


Military Despatches
Paratrooper Wings Quiz

Paratrooper Wings Quiz

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

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



Military Despatches
Army Speak 101

Army Speak 101

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

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



Military Despatches
Army Speak 101
Military slang from the SADF and around the world



Military Despatches
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
Military Firearms Quiz

Military Firearms Quiz

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

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
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Famous military quotes quiz

Who said that?

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Please remember to subscribe to our channel.

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



Editor's Sitrep

It's nearly 21.00 on 31 July and I'm still busy putting the magazine together.

In the last issue I told about the woes with my two index fingers. What I initially thought was a bad infection turned out to be - of all things - frostbite.

And yes, I know, only an Irishman could manage to get this right. The good news is that they are slowly healing. The bad thing is that it is incredibly painful. They can not handle the cold.

My small office at home is really cold, so I can only work for about 20 minutes before I have to rush back to the lounge to the heater.

As my fingers start to warm, the pain is something else and I use up my entire repertoire of profanities - and trust me when I say I know a lot of them.

I was sad to hear of the passing of Howard Shagom. He was a stalwart member of the South African Signals Association and was the Secretary General of the Exco. You couldn't hope to meet a kinder person. He was a true officer and a gentleman. You will be missed sir.

You may notice that in this month's edition there are a num-

ber of articles about the fairer sex. This is because August is Woman's Month and, in fact, 9 August is Woman's Day.

It's that time of the year again. It's my birthday. I realised, not for the first time, that I'm getting old. I'm also getting tired.

I'm tired of loadshedding, tired of the corruption in this country, tired of all the crap spoken by politicians, and damn it, I'm tied of winter. As far as I'm concerned, summer can't get here soon enough.

I read somewhere that it's been the coldest winter in Cape Town for the last 50 years. And me not being able to handle the cold at the moment. Go figure.

Well it's nearly midnight, so I guess I can start sending the magazine out. Then I'm going to crawl into bed and sleep until my name changes to Matt von Winkle.

Until next time, stay safe and stay healthy.

Matt

Hipe! media

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Front Cover

Female soldiers on duty in Europe. Most modern armies have female troops, and many of them serve in combat units.

This month we take a closer look at the role of females in the military.



10 modern day female warriors

History abounds with legends of male warriors, but this is not the case for the fairer sex. Yet that is not to say that they didn't exist.

Throughout history legends of male warriors are aplenty, but the same cannot be said of female warriors. Yet that is not to say that they didn't exist.

Some of these women warriors are well known. Most people will know about Joan of Arc, probably the most popular female warrior in history. This 16 year old girl would go on to lead the French army in battle

against the English.

Another well known female warrior was Boudicca, queen of the Iceni. After her husband died she led an army of 100,000 men and toppled the Roman capital in Britain, Camulodunum.

Yet there are other female warriors in history that are less well known. These include Triệu Thị Trinh (known as the Vietnamese Joan of Arc), Na-

kano Takeko (one of the only known *onna-bugeisha* - female samurai - in Japan's history, Grace O'Malley (the Irish pirate queen), Lozen (Apache warrior), and Rani Lakshmibai (India) are some of them.

In this article, however, we will be looking at modern day female warriors. Those whose achievements have been in the 20th century and beyond. They are in alphabetical order.

Maria Bochkareva

Not only did this Russian soldier fight in World War I, she also formed the Women's Battalion of Death and was the first Russian woman to command a military unit.

When World War I broke out in 1914 she tried to join the 25th Tomsk Reserve Battalion of the Imperial Russian Army, but was rejected. She was told that she should try joining the Red Cross instead.

Undeterred, she secured the personal permission of Tsar Nicholas II. After three months training she began front-line duty with 5th Corps, 28th Regiment of the Second Army. She was decorated for rescuing fifty wounded soldiers from the field.

She was wounded in the arm and leg and worked as a medical sister until she was fit enough to return to the front with the rank of corporal. She suffered another

injury that left her paralyzed for four months.

In 1917 she proposed the creation of an all-female combat unit which she believed would solve the Army's morale problem. She felt that it would shame the men into again supporting the war.

Permission was granted and she was placed in command of the unit. The 1st Russian Women's Battalion of Death initially attracted more than 2,000 women volunteers, but Bochkareva's strict discipline weeded out all but 300 of them.

Her unit was at the front at the time of the October Revolution and did not participate in the defence of the Winter Palace. Bochkareva's unit disbanded after facing increasing hostility from the remaining male troops at the front.

She was briefly detained by the Bolsheviks but released. In early 1918 she was detained a



second time and scheduled to be executed.

She was rescued, however, by a soldier who had served with her in the Imperial Army in 1915 and who convinced the Bolsheviks to stay her execution. She was granted an external passport and allowed to leave the country. In April 1918 she went to America.

Sponsored by socialite Florence Harriman, Bochkareva arrived in San Francisco and made her way to New York City and Washington, D.C. She was

granted a meeting with President Woodrow Wilson on 10 July 1918, during which she begged the president to intervene in Russia. Wilson was apparently so moved by her emotional appeal that he responded with tears in his eyes and promised to do what he could.

After leaving the United States, she travelled to Great Britain where she was granted an audience with King George V. The British War Office gave her 500 rubles of funding to re-

turn to Russia.

Bochkareva arrived in Arkhangelsk in August 1918 and attempted to organise another unit, but failed. In April 1919, she returned to Tomsk and attempted to form a women's medical detachment under White Army Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak, but before she could complete this task she was recaptured by the Bolsheviks.

She was sent to Krasnoyarsk where she was interrogated for four months. Ultimately,

against Lenin's orders, she was sentenced to death and executed as an "enemy of the working class".

She was shot by the Cheka on 16 May 1920. She was posthumously pardoned and exonerated by Lenin.

The Cheka (Secret Police who later became the NKVD and then the KGB) agents who ordered her execution were executed themselves for not following orders.

Kristen Griest, Lisa Jaster and Shaye Haver

The United States Army Ranger School is a 61 day combat leadership course oriented toward small-unit tactics. The course is considered the premiere military leadership course in the world.

It is open to Soldiers (commissioned officer, warrant officer, or non-commissioned officers), Sailors, Airmen, and Marines in the U.S. Armed Forces, as well as select allied military students - as long as you were male.

In April 2015, 19 women were allowed to participate in the course as part of a one-time pilot program to see how women would do in Ranger School. To date, only three women have successfully passed the course.

Kristen Griest graduated from the United States Military Academy in 2011. She also served in Afghanistan as a military police officer.

On 21 August 2015, Griest, along with Shaye Haver, be-

came the first woman to graduate from Ranger School.

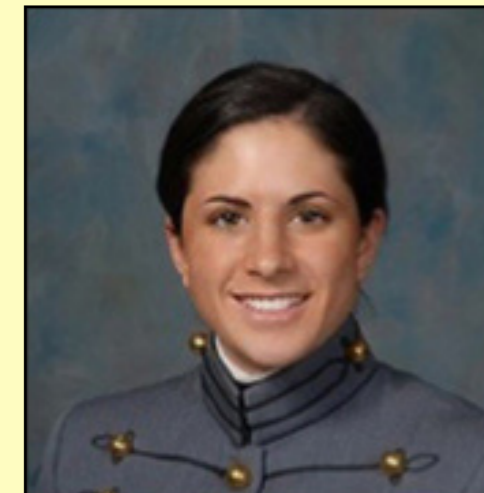
When Griest graduated from Ranger school women were not allowed to serve in Ranger/Infantry roles due to the Pentagon's exclusion policies on women in combat. That policy changed on 3 December 2015 when Secretary of Defence Ash Carter announced the US military would open combat positions to women with no exception.

In 2016, Griest became the first female infantry officer in the US Army when the Army approved her request to transfer there from a military police unit.

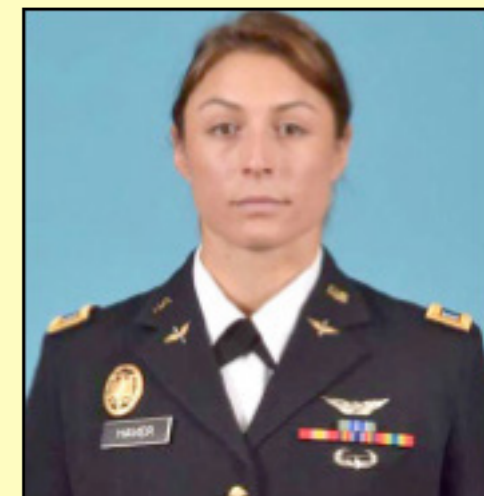
Shaye Haver graduated from the United States Military Academy in 2012.

She followed in her father's footsteps and became a helicopter pilot. She flew an Apache attack helicopter in an aviation brigade.

On 21 August she graduated from Ranger School, receiving



Kristen Griest



Shaye Haver

a certificate of completion and was awarded and authorized to wear the Ranger tab.

On 26 April 2018 Haver took command of Co C, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry of the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division.

Lisa Jaster graduated from the United States Military Academy in 2000 and was commissioned as an engineer officer with the 92nd Engineer Battalion.

She was deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom I and Operation Iraqi Freedom I. She was awarded a Bronze Star medal.

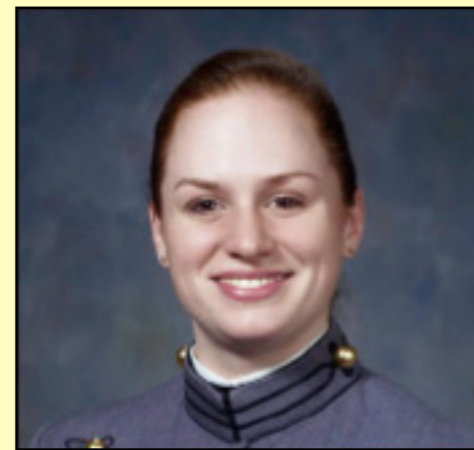
After getting married, she left

active-duty in 2007 and started a family and civilian career with Shell, but returned to the Army as a reservist in 2014.

She was part of the pilot group to attend Ranger School. There were 400 participants on the course, including 19 women.

She graduated later than Kristen Griest and Shaye Haver because she had to repeat one of the phases of the course.

Of the 400 participants that started the course, only 90 earned the Ranger tab. While the average age of the trainees is 23,



Lisa Jaster

Jaster graduated at the age of 37.

She was the first female United States Army Reserve officer to become a Ranger.

The Ranger Tab is a service school military decoration of the United States Army signifying completion of the 61 day long Ranger School course in small-unit infantry combat tactics in woodland, mountain, and swamp operations.

Those graduating from Ranger School are presented with the Ranger Tab, which is worn on the upper shoulder of the left sleeve of the Army Combat Uniform. Wearing the tab is permitted for the remainder of a soldier's military career.



Mary Hallaren

Mary Hallaren joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in 1942. It later became the Women's Army Corps (WAC).

She was barely five feet tall and when a recruiter asked her how someone of her size could help the military, she replied "You don't have to be six feet tall to have a brain that works."

By 1943 she was a captain and she commanded the first women's battalion to go overseas.

She served as director of WAC personnel attached to the 8th and 9th Air Forces, and by 1945, as a lieutenant colonel, she commanded all WAC per-

sonnel in the European theater.

By 1947, Hallaren was a full colonel, and was appointed director of the entire WAC. On June 12, 1948, when the WAC was officially integrated into the Army, she became the first woman to serve as a regular Army officer.

She remained in this post until she retired from the army in 1960. She served in the United States Department of Labour as director of the Women in Community Service division until She retired in 1978, but continued to serve in an advisory capacity.

In the 1990s, she was a leading proponent of the Women's Memorial at Arlington National



Cemetery, which was dedicated in 1997.

She died on 13 February 2005 at the Arleigh Burke Pavilion, an assisted living facility for retired military personnel in McLean, Virginia. She was 97.

Elinor Joseph

Elinor Joseph is the first Arab woman ever to serve in a combat role in the Israeli military.

Her father, Charbel Joseph, served in the Israeli Paratroopers Brigade and when she finished high school he encouraged her to enlist in the Israeli Defence Force (IDF).

Although reluctant at first, she decided that she wanted to serve as a combat medic.

When she arrived at the recruitment base she was informed that she had already been selected to serve as an office clerk.

She was steadfast that she was going to be a combat medic and refused to be transported out to a new base.

Finally, after several days, a meeting was arranged between her and a colonel from the Northern Command. The colonel made Elinor a singular proposal: undergo regular basic training and, on the condition of being selected as an outstanding trainee, go on to attempt the medic's training course.

Elinor agreed. She completed basic training, was the outstanding trainee of her platoon, and subsequently proceeded to the medic's training course.

After successfully completing the medic's training course, Elinor Joseph was stationed in a military police base near the Palestinian city of Qalqilyah.

In response to a transfer request



Elinor made, in 2010 she was reassigned to the Caracal battalion, which operates in the western Negev along Israel's border with Egypt. She thus became the first Arab woman ever to serve in the Israeli army in a combat role.

Lydia Litvyak

A fighter pilot in the Soviet Air Force during World War II, Lydia Litvyak was the first female fighter pilot to shoot down an enemy aircraft, the first of two female fighter pilots who have earned the title of fighter ace and the holder of the record for the greatest number of kills by a female fighter pilot.

Born in Moscow to a Jewish family, she became interested in aviation at an early age. She enrolled at a flying club at the age of 14 and performed her first solo flight at the age of 15.

She became a flight instructor at Kalinin Airclub and by the time the Germans invaded Russia she had already trained 45 pilots.

She tried to join a military aviation unit, but was rejected due to a lack of experience. Not

deterred in the least, she applied again. This time, however, she exaggerated her pre-war flight time by 100 hours.

She was accepted and posted to the all-female 586th Fighter Regiment of the Air Defense Force, a unit formed by Marina Raskova. Lydia trained on a Yakovlev Yak-1 aircraft.

In 1942 Lydia flew her first combat flights over Saratov. On 10 September she moved along with Katya Budanova, Maria M. Kuznetsova and Raisa Beliaeva, the commander of the group, and accompanying female ground crew, to the regiment airfield, at Verkhnaia Akhtuba, on the east bank of the Volga river. But when they arrived the base was empty and under attack, so they soon moved to Srednaia Akhtuba.

On 13 June 1943, she was ap-



pointed flight commander of the 3rd Aviation Squadron within 73rd GvIAP.

On 1 August 1943, at the age of 21, she was shot down and killed by two German fighter aircraft.

Nicknamed the "White Lily of Stalingrad", she was awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union, Order of Lenin, Order of the Red Banner, Order of the Patriotic War 1st class and Order of the Red Star decorations.

Lyudmila Pavlichenko

Nicknamed Lady Death, Lyudmila Pavlichenko was a sniper in the Red Army.

Her total confirmed kills during World War II was 309, and this included 36 enemy snipers, making her the deadliest female sniper in history.

When the Germans invaded Russia in June 1941, Lyudmila was 24 years old and doing her fourth year of studies at Kiev University.

She immediately volunteered to join the army and was one of the first to report to the Odessa recruiting office. She requested that she join the infantry and was assigned to the Red Army's 25th Rifle Division.

She then became one of 2,000 female snipers in the Red Army. Only about 500 of them would survive the war.

In June 1942, she was wounded by mortar fire. Because of her growing status, she was withdrawn from combat less than a month after recovering from her wound.

The government then decided to send Lyudmila on a publicity tour of Canada and the United States. She became the first Soviet citizen to be received by a US President when Franklin Delano Roosevelt welcomed her to the White House.

In Chicago, she stood before large crowds, chiding the men to support the second front.

"Gentlemen," she said, "I am 25 years old and I have killed 309 fascist invaders by now. Don't you think, gentlemen, that you have been hiding behind my back for too long?"

Her words settled on the crowd, then caused a surging



roar of support.

In 1943, she was awarded the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union, and was commemorated on a Soviet postage stamp.

After the war, she finished her education at Kiev University and began a career as a historian.

Lyudmila Pavlichenko died on 10 October 1974 at age 58, and was buried in the Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow.

Milunka Savić

This Serbian war heroine, who fought in the Balkan Wars and in World War I, may be the most decorated female combatant in the entire history of warfare.

When her brother received his call-up papers for mobilization for the Second Balkan War, Milunka chose to go in his place.

She cut her hair, put on men's clothes, and joined the Serbian Army.

It wasn't long before she was in combat. She was promoted to corporal and was awarded a medal during the Battle of Bregalnica.

She was wounded and taken to hospital in order for her wounds

to be treated. Imagine the surprise of the attending physicians when they discovered her true gender.

She was called in front of her commanding officer, but he didn't really want to punish her. After all, she had proved herself in battle on ten separate occasions. But neither was it suitable for a young woman to be in combat.

She was offered a transfer to the Nursing division. Savić stood at attention and insisted she only wanted to fight for her country as a combatant. The officer said he'd think it over and give her his answer the next day. Still standing at attention, Savić responded, "I will wait." It is said he only made her stand



an hour before agreeing to send her back to the infantry."

In 1914, in the early days of World War I, Savić was awarded her first Karadorđe Star with Swords after the Battle of Kolubara. She received her second Karadorđe Star (with Swords)

after the Battle of the Crna Bend in 1916 when she captured 23 Bulgarian soldiers single-handedly.

She was also awarded the French Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour) twice, Russian Cross of St. George, British medal of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael, Serbian Miloš Obilić medal. She was the sole female recipient of the

French Croix de Guerre 1914-1918 with the gold palm attribute for service in World War I.

She was demobilised in 1919, and turned down an offer to move to France, where she was eligible to collect a comfortable French army pension. Instead, she chose to live in Belgrade and found work as a postal worker.

During the German occupation of Serbia in World War II,

Milunka refused to attend a banquet organised by Milan Nedić, which was to be attended by German generals and officers. She was arrested and taken to Banjica concentration camp, where she was imprisoned for ten months.

She died in Belgrade on 5 October 1973, aged 81.

Hannie Schaft

Jannetje Schaft was a Dutch communist resistance fighter during World War II. She became known as *Het meisje met het rode haar* (Dutch for the girl with the red hair). Her secret name in the resistance movement was Hannie..

From a young age she was interested in politics and social justice. This led her to study law because she wanted to become a human rights lawyer.

During her time at the *Universiteit van Amsterdam* she became friends with the Jewish students Philine Polak and Sonja Frenk.

When the Germans occupied the Netherlands in World War II, university students were required to sign a declaration of allegiance to the occupation authorities. When Schaft refused to sign the petition in support of the occupation forces, she could not continue her studies and moved in with her parents again.

She became a member of the *Raad van Verzet* (Council of Resistance), a resistance movement that had close ties to the

Communist Party of the Netherlands.

She was not interested in becoming a courier, but wanted to work with weapons. She was responsible for sabotaging and assassinating various targets.

She carried out various attacks on Germans, Dutch Nazis, collaborators and traitors. She learned to speak German fluently and got involved with German soldiers.

The "girl with the red hair" was soon on the Nazi's most wanted list.

When one of her fellow resistance members was injured, he mistakenly gave her name away. The Dutch nurses that treated him were actually Germans disguised as resistance workers.

Hannie was arrested and in an attempt to get her to confess, her parents were sent to the Vught concentration camp.

Unable to get a confession out of her, Hannie's parents were eventually released. She had to lay low for some time.

She dyed her hair black and returned to resistance work. Once again she contributed to



assassinations and sabotage, as well as courier work, and the transportation of illegal weapons and the dissemination of illegal newspapers.

She was eventually arrested at a military checkpoint in Haarlem on 21 March 1945, while distributing the illegal communist newspaper *de Waarheid*. After much interrogation, torture, and solitary confinement, Schaft was identified by the roots of her red hair.

On 17 April 1945, three weeks before the end of the war, Hannie was executed by Dutch Nazi officials. She was 24 at the time of her death.

Nancy Wake

Born in New Zealand, Nancy Wake ran away from home at the age of 16 and worked as a nurse.

Using £200 that she had inherited from an aunt, she journeyed to New York City, then London where she trained herself as a journalist.

She was working in France in 1937 when she met wealthy French industrialist Henri Edmond Fiocca. They were married on 30 November 1939.

She was living in Marseille, France when Germany invaded. After the fall of France in 1940, she became a courier for the French Resistance and later joined the escape network of Captain Ian Garrow.

In reference to Wake's ability to elude capture, the Gestapo called her the "White Mouse". The Resistance exercised caution with her missions; her life was in constant danger, with the Gestapo tapping her telephone and intercepting her mail.

By November 1942 Wake was the Gestapo's most wanted person in the Marseilles area, with a price of 5 million francs on her head.

When the network was betrayed that same year she decided to flee France. Her husband, Henri Fiocca, stayed behind. He later was captured, tortured, and executed by the Gestapo because he would not betray her.

After reaching Britain, Wake joined the Special Operations Executive and was trained by them in several different training programs.

On 1 March 1944, Wake was parachuted into the Auvergne, becoming a liaison between London and the local maquis group headed by Captain Henri Tardivat in the Forest of Tronçais. Her duties included allocating arms and equipment that were parachuted in and minding the group's finances.

From March 1944 until the liberation of France, her 7,000 plus maquisards fought the Germans by any means they could. Her French companions, especially Henri Tardivat, praised her fighting spirit, amply demonstrated when she killed an SS sentry with her bare hands to prevent him from raising the alarm during a raid.

Immediately after the war,



Wake was awarded the George Medal, the United States Medal of Freedom, the Médaille de la Résistance, and the Croix de Guerre. She was awarded the last medal three times.

She learned that the Gestapo had tortured her husband to death in 1943 for refusing to disclose her whereabouts. After the war, she worked for the intelligence department at the British Air Ministry.

Wake was appointed a Chevalier (knight) of the Legion of Honour in 1970 and was promoted to Officer of the Legion of Honour in 1988.

She died on 7 August 2011 in London at the age of 98.

Mary Edwards Walker

Mary Walker wasn't a soldier, not did she ever serve in the military. Yet she was a true warrior.

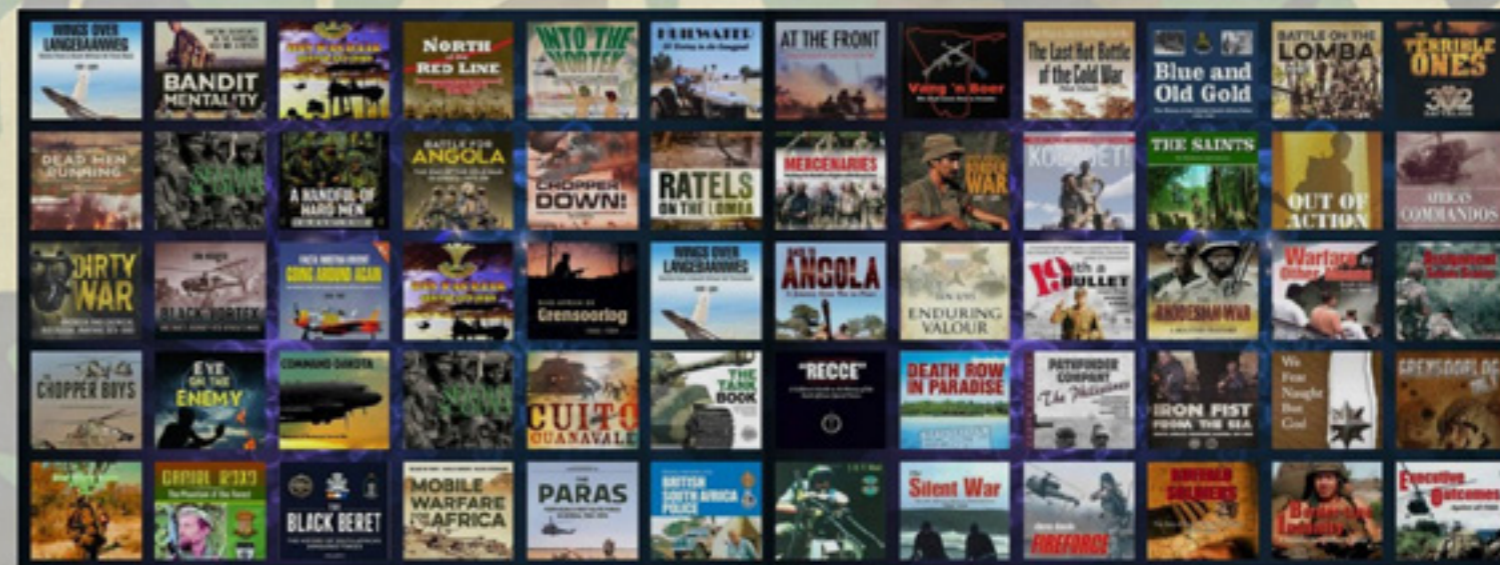
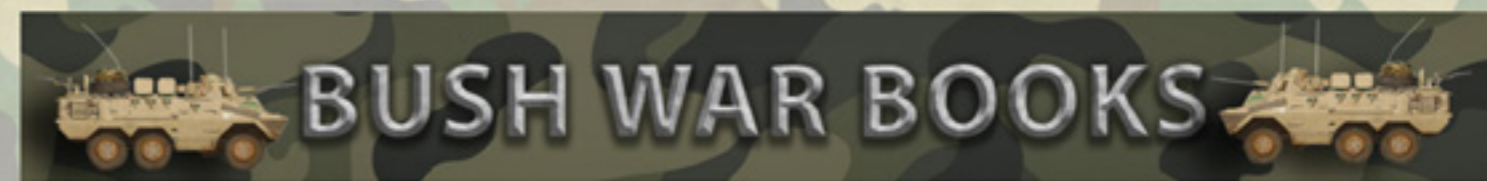
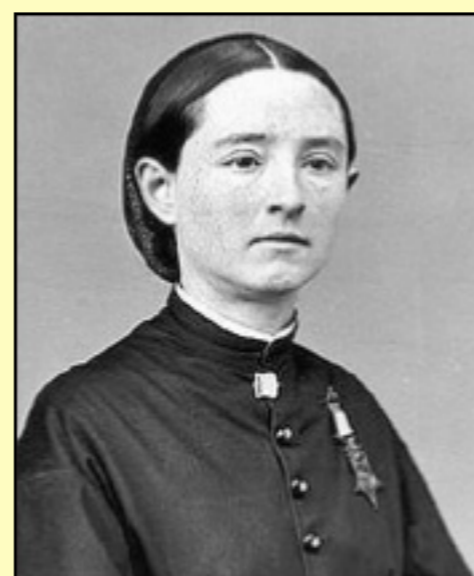
She was a doctor, American abolitionist, prohibitionist, prisoner of war and surgeon during the American Civil War.

During the war she worked as a surgeon for the Union Army. She would often cross enemy lines to treat wounded.

She was captured by Confederate forces and arrested as a spy. She was sent to a POW camp until released in a prisoner exchange.

After the war she was approved for the Medal of Honor, becoming the first, and only woman, to earn the award. She was also one of only eight civilians to ever receive the award.

She died on 21 February 1919 at the age of 86.



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

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

Operation Frankton

Operation Frankton was not the biggest raid of World War II. The results of the operation did not change the course of the war. But it was a raid that showed remarkable courage and endurance.

- **Date:** 7–12 December 1942
- **Location:** Bordeaux, France
- **Units involved:** Royal Marines Boom Patrol Detachment (RMBPD)

Operation Frankton was a commando raid on ships in the German occupied French port of Bordeaux in southwest France during the Second World War.

The raid was carried out by a small unit of Royal Marines known as the Royal Marines Boom Patrol Detachment (RMBPD), part of Combined Operations inserted by HMS Tuna captained by Lieutenant-Commander Dick Raikes who, earlier, had been awarded the DSO for operations while in command of the submarine HMS Seawolf (47S). (The RMBPD would later form the Special Boat Service.)

The plan was for six folding kayaks to be taken to the area of the Gironde estuary by submarine. Twelve men would then paddle by night to Bordeaux.

On arrival they would attack the docked cargo ships with limpet mines and then escape overland to Spain.

Plans are drawn up

Major Hasler was put in command of the RMBPD with Captain J.D. Stewart as his second in command. The detachment consisted of 34 men and was based at Lumps Fort at Southsea, Portsmouth. They would often train in Portsmouth Harbour as well as patrol the harbour boom at night.

The target of Hasler's original plan had been the Bay of Biscay port of Bordeaux in France. It was a major destination for good to support the German war effort.

Hasler's initial plan called

for a force of three canoes to be transported to the Gironde estuary by submarine then paddle by night and hide by day until they reached Bordeaux 97 km from the sea.

To achieve this the group would have to avoid the 32 mixed ships of the Kriegsmarine that patrolled or used the port. On arrival the plan was to sink between six and 12 cargo ships, then escape overland to Spain.

On 13 October 1942, Admiral Louis Mountbatten granted permission for the raid. However, he increased the number of canoes to be used from three to six.

Hasler was originally told that he could not take part in the raid. His experience as the chief canoeing specialist meant

that he could not be risked.

Hasler, however, convinced Mountbatten that he had to go on the raid. He was the only man with experience in small boats. Mountbatten rescinded his order and Hasler was included in the raid.

The RMBPD started training for the raid on 20 October 1942, which included canoe handling, submarine rehearsals, limpet mine handling and escape and evasion exercises. The RMBPD practised for the raid with a simulated attack against Deptford, starting from Margate and canoeing up the Swale.

Mark II canoes were to be used for the raid. They were given the codename of 'Cockle'.

The Mark II was a semi rigid two-man canoe, with the sides made of canvas, a flat bottom, and 4.6 m in length.

When collapsed it had to be capable of negotiating the narrow confines of the submarine to the storage area then, before it was ready to be taken on deck, erected and stored ready to be hauled out via the submarine torpedo hatch.

During the raid each canoe's load would be two men, eight limpet mines, three sets of paddles, a compass, a depth sounding reel, repair bag, torch, camouflage net, waterproof watch, fishing line, two hand grenades, rations and water for six days, a spanner to activate the mines and a magnet to hold the canoe against the side of cargo ships.

The total safe load for the 'Cockle' Mark II was 218 kg. The men also carried a .45 ACP pistol and a Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife.

The men selected for the mission were divided into two divisions, each having their own targets.

A Division

- Major Hasler and Marine Bill Sparks in canoe Catfish.
- Corporal Albert Laver and Marine William Mills in canoe Crayfish.
- Corporal George Sheard and Marine David Moffatt in canoe Conger.

B Division

- Lieutenant John Mackinnon and Marine James Conway in canoe Cuttlefish.
- Sergeant Samuel Wallace and Marine Robert Ewart in canoe Coalfish.
- Marine W.A. Ellery and Marine E. Fisher in canoe Cachalot.

A thirteenth man, Marine Norma Colley, was taken as a reserve.

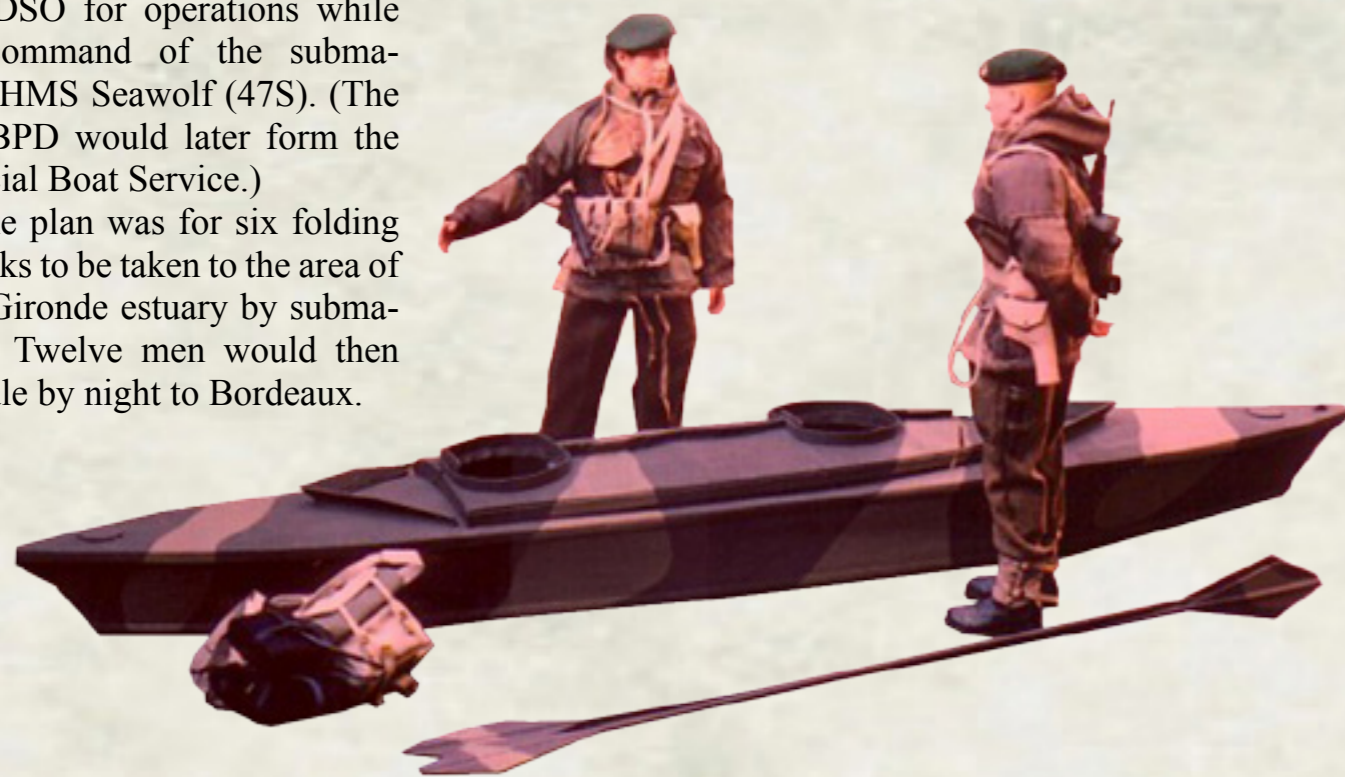
The Mission

On 30 November 1942 the Royal Navy submarine, HMS Tuna, sailed from Holy Loch in Scotland. It was under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Dick Raikes DSO. The six canoes and the raiding team were on board.

The mission was scheduled to start on 6 December 1942. It was delayed because of bad weather en route and the need to negotiate a minefield.

By 7 December 1942 the submarine had reached the Gironde estuary and surfaced some 16 km from the mouth of the estuary.

Canoe Cachalot snagged as it was being brought up. Hasler inspected the craft and pronounced her unseaworthy. Its



**Fairbairn-Sykes
Fighting Knife**

crew, Marines William Ellery and Eric Fisher, would have to return to Britain on Tuna. Fisher wept with frustration, unaware that, in all probability, his life was being saved.

The raiders set off some time between 19h30 and 20h22. The plan called for the crews to paddle for 55 minutes and then rest for five.

On that first night there were strong cross tides and cross winds. Canoe Coalfish disappeared. Further on the crews encountered 1.5 metre high waves and canoe Conger capsized and sank. Sheard and Moffatt, the two crew, held on to two of the remaining canoes. They were carried as close to shore as possible and had to swim ashore.

As the remaining canoes approached a major checkpoint in the river, they came across three German frigates.

By lying flat on their canoes and paddling silently, they were able to pass by the frigates without being discovered. Canoe Cuttlefish, with Mackinnon and Conway, became separated



GETTING READY: Members of the RMBPD train for Operation Frankton. Major Herbert 'Blondie' Hasler is in front.

from the main group.

The three remaining canoes covered 32 km in five hours and landed near St Vivien du Medoc.

While the crews of canoes Catfish and Crayfish hid during the day, they were unaware that Wallace and Eward, in Coalfish, had been captured as they came ashore near the Pointe de Grave lighthouse.

On the second night the two remaining canoes paddled a further 35 km in six hours. On the third night they covered 24 km and on the fourth night they only managed 14 km. This was due to a strong ebb tide.

The raid had been planned for 10 December, but Hasler now changed the plan. Due to the ebb tide they still had a short distance to cover, so Hasler ordered that they hide for another day and set off to reach Bordeaux on the night of 11/12 December.

After a night's rest, the four remaining men spent the day preparing their equipment and limpet mines. Hasler decided that Catfish would cover the western side of the docks and Crayfish the eastern side.

The two canoes reached Bordeaux on the fifth night, 11/12 December. The river was calm and there was a clear sky.

Hasler and Sparks in Catfish placed eight limpet mines on four vessels, including a *Sperbrecher* patrol boat.

After they had planted all their mines they left the harbour with the ebb tide at 00h45 hours.

At the same time Laver and Mills in Crayfish had reached the eastern side of the dock without finding any targets, so returned to deal with the ships docked at Bassens. They placed eight limpet mines on two vessels, five on a large cargo ship and three on a small liner.

On the way down river the two canoes met by chance and continued until they beached their canoes near Genes de Blaye. They tried to hide the canoes by sinking them.

They two crews split up and set out separately, on foot, for the Spanish border. Two days later Laver and Mills were apprehended at Montlieu-la-Garde by the French *Gendarmerie* and handed over to the Germans.



COCKLESHELL HERO: Major Herbert G. 'Blondie' Hasler DSO, OBE.

Hasler and Sparks arrived at the French town of Ruffec, 160 km from where they had

beached their canoe, on 18 December 1942.

They made contact with someone from the French Resistance at the Hotel de la Toque Blanche and were then taken to a local farm. They spent the next 18 days there in hiding. They were then guided across the Pyrenees into Spain.

On 2 April 1943 Hasler arrived back in Britain by air from Gibraltar, having passed through the French Resistance escape organisation. Sparks was sent back by sea and arrived much later.

Aftermath

Six ships were damaged in the raid, one of them extensively. For their part in the raid Hasler was awarded a Distinguished

Service Order and Sparks the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM). Laver and Mills were also recommended for the DSM which at the time could not be awarded posthumously, so instead they were mentioned in despatches.

The six men captured by the Germans were all executed under Hitler's 'Commando Order'. Sheard and Moffatt were not drowned on the first night but died of hypothermia.

Lord Mountbatten later said: "Of the many brave and dashing raids carried out by the men of Combined Operations Command none was more courageous or imaginative than Operation Frankton"

"Blondie" Hasler died on 5 May 1987 at the age of 73.




Royal Marines cap badge

Memorable Order of Tin Hats




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




Warrior's Gate Virtual Tour

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


Photo gallery




Virtual Tour




History



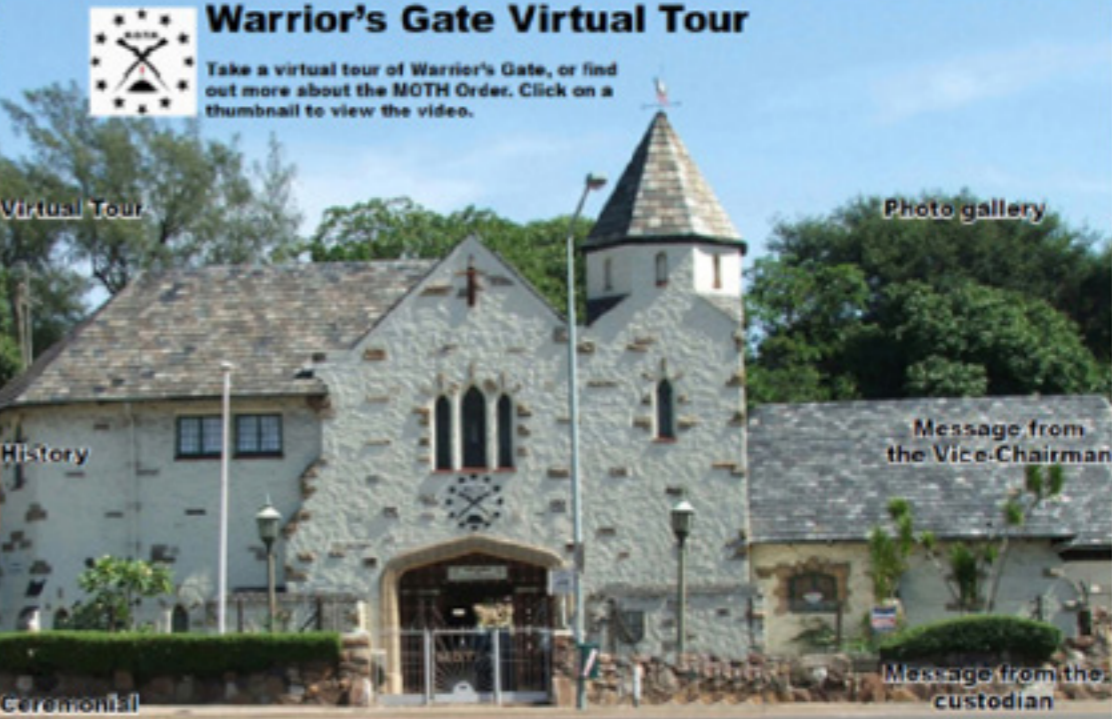
Ceremonial



Message from the Vice-Chairman



Message from the custodian



World War II German Field Marshals (Part Two)

During World War II no country had more field marshals than Nazi Germany. In Part Two of a four part article we will look at seven German field marshals and the role they played in the war.

In the July edition of Military Despatches we looked at seven German Field Marshals of World War II.

They were:

- Werner von Blomberg (Army)
- Hermann Göring (Air Force)
- Erich Raeder (Navy)
- Fedor von Bock (Army)
- Walther von Brauchitsch (Army)
- Albert Kesselring (Air Force)
- Wilhelm Keitel (Army)

This month we will look at another seven German Field Marshals of World War II.

Between 1936 and 1945 no fewer than 27 German officers of the Wehrmacht were promoted to the rank of field marshal or equivalent.

Of these, 20 were members of the *Heer* (Army) and six were from the *Luftwaffe* (Air Force). Two held the rank of *Großadmiral* in the *Kriegsmarine* (Navy).

The *Waffen-SS* was not part of the armed forces, and therefore their members could not be appointed Field Marshal. The highest rank that a member of the *Waffen-SS* could achieve was *SS-Oberst-Gruppenführer und Generaloberst der Waffen-SS* (SS-Supreme group leader and colonel general of the *Waffen-SS*). This was equivalent to the rank of *Generaloberst* (General in the Army).

Members of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) could also not hold *Wehr-*

macht (Defence Force) ranks. This is why someone like Heinrich Himmler could not be granted the rank of field marshal. His official rank was *Reichsführer* of the *Schutzstaffel*.

Let's take a brief look at another seven German field marshal's of World War II.

We've placed them in order of seniority, in other words the date on which they were promoted.



Günther von Kluge

Born: 30 October 1882
Promoted: 19 July 1940

Günther Adolf Ferdinand von Kluge held commands on both the Eastern and Western Fronts. He commanded the 4th Army of the Wehrmacht during the invasion of Poland in 1939 and the Battle of France in 1940, earning a promotion to *Generalfeldmarschall*.

Kluge went on to command the 4th Army in Operation Barbarossa (the invasion of the Soviet Union) and the Battle for Moscow in 1941.

Amid the crisis of the Soviet counter-offensive in December 1941, Kluge was promoted to command Army Group Centre replacing Field Marshal Fedor von Bock.

Several members of the German military resistance to Adolf Hitler served on his staff, including Henning von Tresckow. Kluge was aware of the plotters' activities but refused to offer his support unless Hitler was killed.

His command on the Eastern Front lasted until October 1943 when Kluge was badly injured in a car accident.

Following a lengthy recuperation, Kluge was appointed OB West (Supreme Commander West) in occupied France in July 1944, after his predecessor, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, was dismissed for defeatism.

Kluge's forces were unable to stop the momentum of the Allied invasion of Normandy, and he began to realise that the war in the West was lost.

Although Kluge was not an active conspirator in the 20 July plot, in the aftermath of the failed coup he committed suicide on 19 August 1944, after having been recalled to Berlin for a meeting with Hitler. Kluge was replaced by Field Marshal Walter Model.

Died: 19 August 1944 (aged 61)

Cause of death: Suicide.



Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb

Born: 5 September 1876
Promoted: 19 July 1940

Wilhelm Josef Franz Ritter von Leeb was a highly decorated officer in World War I and was awarded the Military Order of Max Joseph which granted him the title of nobility. During the Battle of France, he commanded Army Group C, responsible for the breakthrough of the Maginot Line.

During Operation Barbarossa Leeb commanded Army Group North, which advanced through the Baltic States towards Leningrad (present day St. Petersburg), eventually laying siege to the city.

Units under Leeb's command committed war crimes against the civilian population and closely cooperated with the *SS Einsatzgruppen*, death squads primarily tasked with the murder of the Jewish population as part of the Holocaust.

Following the war, Leeb was tried in the High Command Trial as part of the Subsequent Nuremberg Trials. He was convicted of transmitting the Barbarossa Decree and its criminal application by subordinate units

and sentenced to three years' imprisonment time served.

Died: 29 April 1956 (aged 79)

Cause of death: Heart attack.



Wilhelm List

Born: 14 May 1880
Promoted: 19 July 1940

Wilhelm List was a German field marshal during World War II who was convicted of war crimes by a US Army tribunal after the war.

List commanded the 14th Army in the invasion of Poland and the 12th Army in the invasions of France, Yugoslavia and Greece.

In 1941 he commanded the German forces in Southeast Europe responsible for the occupation of Greece and Yugoslavia.

In July 1942 during Case Blue, the German summer offensive in Southern Russia, he was appointed commander of Army Group A, responsible for the main thrust towards the Caucasus and Baku.

Following the war, List was charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity and stood trial in the Hostages Trial of 1947. He was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment but was released early in De-

cember 1952 due to poor health.

After his release he lived for another 19 years.

Died: 17 August 1971 (aged 91)

Cause of death: Natural causes.



Erhard Milch

Born: 30 March 1892
Promoted: 19 July 1940

In World War I Erhard Milch was appointed to command a fighter wing, *Jagdgruppe 6*, even though he had never trained as a pilot and could not fly himself.

He oversaw the development of the German *Luftwaffe* as part of the re-armament of Nazi Germany following World War I.

He was State Secretary in the Reich Ministry of Aviation and Inspector General of the Air force.

During most of World War II, he was in charge of all aircraft production and supply.

He was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity during the Milch Trial, which was held before a U.S. military court in 1947, and sentenced to life imprisonment.

However, Milch's sentence was commuted to 15 years in 1951 and he was paroled in

1954. He would live for another 18 years.

Died: 25 January 1972 (aged 79)

Cause of death: Natural causes.



Walter von Reichenau

Born: 8 October 1884

Promoted: 19 July 1940

Walter Karl Ernst August von Reichenau commanded the 6th Army, during the invasions of Belgium and France. During Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union, he continued to command the 6th Army as part of Army Group South as it captured Ukraine and advanced deep into Russia.

While in command of the 6th Army during Operation Barbarossa in 1941, he issued the notorious Severity Order which encouraged German soldiers to murder Jewish civilians on the Eastern Front.

Reichenau's troops cooperated with the *SS Einsatzgruppen* in the commission of the massacre of over 33,000 Jews at Babi Yar, and assisted with other crimes against humanity that occurred in areas under his command during the Holocaust.

Reichenau was a habitual cross-country runner and suf-

fered a stroke after a routine run in cold weather on 14 January 1942.

He then sustained severe head injuries when the flight carrying him back to Leipzig for medical attention crashed on landing in Lemberg.

Whether he died from his stroke or from injuries sustained in the crash is unknown. He was replaced at Army Group South by Fedor von Bock and given a state funeral.

Died: 17 January 1942 (aged 57)

Cause of death: Stroke.



Gerd von Rundstedt

Born: 12 December 1875

Promoted: 19 July 1940

Karl Rudolf Gerd von Rundstedt was born into a Prussian family with a long military tradition. He entered the Prussian Army in 1892.

During World War I, he served mainly as a staff officer. In the inter-war years, he continued his military career, reaching the rank of *Generaloberst* before retiring in 1938.

He was recalled at the beginning of World War II as commander of Army Group South in the invasion of Poland. He commanded Army Group A

during the Battle of France, and requested the Halt Order during the Battle of Dunkirk.

In the invasion of the Soviet Union, he commanded Army Group South, responsible for the largest encirclement in history, the Battle of Kiev. He was relieved of command in December 1941 after authorizing the withdrawal from Rostov but was recalled in 1942 and appointed Commander-in-Chief in the West.

He was dismissed after the German defeat in Normandy in July 1944 but was again recalled as Commander-in-Chief in the West in September, holding this post until his final dismissal by Adolf Hitler in March 1945.

Though aware of the various plots to depose Hitler, von Rundstedt neither supported nor reported them

After the war, he was charged with war crimes, but did not face trial due to his age and poor health. He was released in 1949.

Died: 24 February 1953 (aged 77)

Cause of death: Heart failure.



Hugo Sperrle

Born: 7 February 1885

Promoted: 19 July 1940

Wilhelm Hugo Sperrle was a German military aviator in World War I. He joined the Imperial German Army in 1903. He served in the artillery upon the outbreak of World War I.

In 1914 he joined the *Luftstreitkräfte* as an observer then trained as a pilot. Sperrle ended the war at the rank of *Hauptmann* (Captain) in command of an aerial reconnaissance attachment of a field army.

In the inter-war period Sperrle was appointed to the General Staff in the *Reichswehr*, serving the Weimar Republic in the aerial warfare branch.

In 1934 after the Nazi Party seized power, Sperrle was promoted to *Generalmajor* and transferred from the army to the *Luftwaffe*. Sperrle was given command of the Condor Legion in November 1936 and fought with the expeditionary force in the Spanish Civil War until October 1937.

Sperrle was appointed as

commanding officer of *Luftwaffengruppenkommando 3* (Air Force Group Command 3) the forerunner of *Luftflotte 3* (Air Fleet 3) in February 1938.

Sperrle was used during the Anschluss and Czech crisis by the Nazi leadership to threaten other governments with bombardment. Sperrle attended several important meetings with Austrian and Czech leaders for this purpose upon the invitation of Adolf Hitler.

In September 1939 World War II began with the invasion of Poland. Sperrle and his air fleet served exclusively on the Western Front.

He played a crucial role in the Battle of France and Battle of Britain in 1940. In 1941 Sperrle directed operations during The Blitz over Britain.

From mid-1941 his air fleet became the sole command in the west. Through 1941 and 1942 he defended German-occupied Europe against the Royal Air Force, as well as the

United States Army Air Forces from 1943. Sperrle's command was depleted in the battles of attrition forced on him by the Combined Bomber Offensive.

By mid-1944, Sperrle's air fleet had been reduced to impotence and it could not repel the Allied landings in Western Europe. As a consequence, Sperrle was dismissed to the *Führerreserve* and never held a senior command again.

On 1 May 1945 he was captured by the British. After the war, he was charged with war crimes at the High Command Trial but was acquitted.

Died: 2 April 1953 (aged 68)

Cause of death: Natural causes.

Next month we will look at another seven Germans that became field marshals, or equivalent.

This will include Erwin Rommel, Erich von Manstein, Friedrich Paulus, and Admiral Karl Dönitz.

Field Marshal Baton

The ceremonial baton is a short, thick stick-like object, typically in wood or metal, that is traditionally the sign of a field marshal or a similar high-ranking military officer, and carried as a piece of their uniform.

The baton is distinguished from the swagger stick in being

thicker and effectively without any practical function. A staff of office is rested on the ground; a baton is not. Unlike a royal sceptre that is crowned on one end with an eagle or globe, a baton is typically flat-ended. In Nazi Germany, *Generalfeldmarschalls* and *Großadmirals* carried ceremonial batons, specially manufactured by German

jewellers. Seven styles of batons were awarded to 25 individuals. Hermann Göring earned two different-style batons for his *Generalfeldmarschall* and *Reichsmarschall* promotions.

All the batons, except Erich Raeder's, were designed in a similar way: a shaft decorated with Iron Crosses and Wehrmacht eagles. *Luftwaffe* (air force) shafts showed the *Balkenkreuz* ("beam cross"), whereas *Kriegsmarine* (navy) shafts had fouled anchors.



The baton that belonged to Field Marshal Erwin Rommel.

The Night Witches

The 588th Night Bomber Regiment became a crucial Soviet asset during World War II. They flew nearly 24,000 combat missions and dropped more than 23,000 tons of bombs on German targets. They were both hated and feared by the Germans. And they were an all female regiment.

The Germans nicknamed them the *Nachthexen*, or 'night witches', and they were so feared and hated by the Nazis that any German airman who downed one was automatically awarded the Iron Cross medal.

They flew under the cover of darkness in bare-bones plywood biplanes. They braved bullets and frostbite in the air, while battling scepticism and sexual harassment on the ground.

During World War II they flew 23,672 combat sorties and dropped more than 23,000 tons of bombs, and 26,000 incendiary shells on Nazi targets. They were the 588th Night Bomber Regiment - and they were all female.

The Soviet Amelia Earhart

Marina Raskova was not only the first female navigator in the Soviet Air Force, she also held numerous records for long distance flights. In fact she was known as the 'Soviet Amelia Earhart'.

Women across the Soviet Union had been sending her letters. They all wanted to join the war effort. Many had lost brothers, sweethearts or even husbands while others had seen their homes and villages ravaged by the Germans.

While women had been allowed to participate in support roles, many of them wanted to be pilots or gunners. They

wanted to take an active part in combat and were not content with merely playing a supporting role.

Raskova decided to petition Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin and ask for permission to form an all-female fighting squadron.

Using female pilots in combat wasn't a first choice. While women had been previously barred from combat, the pressure of an encroaching enemy gave Soviet leaders a reason to rethink the policy.

Adolf Hitler had launched Operation Barbarossa, his massive invasion of the Soviet Union, in June 1941. By the fall the Germans were pressing on Moscow, Leningrad was under siege and the Red Army was struggling. The Soviets were desperate.

On 8 October 1941 Stalin gave orders for three all-female air force units to be deployed.

Training begins

The Soviet Union was the first nation to officially allow women to engage in combat. Marina Raskova wanted to take full advantage of this fact and began to recruit her teams.

She selected 400 women from the more than 2,000 applications she received. Their ages ranged from 17 to 26.

Those selected then moved to Engels, a small town north of Stalingrad. They underwent a highly compressed training

schedule at Engels School of Aviation. They were expected to learn in months what it took others years to grasp. Each recruit had to train and perform as pilots, navigators, maintenance and ground crew.

Into action

They were originally known as the 588th Night Bomber Regiment. Later they would become the 46th "Taman" Guards Night Bomber Aviation Regiment, of the Soviet Air Forces. Yevdokia Bershanskaya became the regiment's commanding officer.

The steep learning curve in their training wasn't the only problem facing the regiment. There was open scepticism from many of the male military personnel who believed that the women added no value to the combat effort. The men didn't like 'little girls' at the front line. After all, war was a man's job, wasn't it.

Raskova did her best to prepare her women for these attitudes, but they still faced sexual harassment, long nights and grueling conditions.

Another glaring problem was that the Soviet Air Force was not prepared for women pilots. They had no uniforms available and the women had to make do with hand-me-down uniforms from the men. It was difficult to find boots that were the right size and the women had to



NIGHT WITCHES: Pilots of the 588th Night Bomber Regiment are given a briefing before setting out on a mission.

tear up their bedding and stuff them into the boots, just to get them to fit.

The equipment they were given to use was not much better. The Soviet Air Force provided them with outdated Polikarpov Po-2 biplanes. These light two-seater, open-cockpit planes were never meant for combat, they were crop dusters from the 1920s and had been used as training vehicles.

The Polikarpov Po-2 was made out of plywood with canvas pulled over, the aircraft offered virtually no protection from the elements. Flying at night, pilots endured freezing temperatures, wind and frostbite. In the harsh Soviet winters, the planes became so cold, just touching them would rip off bare skin.

Due to both the planes' limited weight capacity and the military's limited funds, the pilots also lacked other "luxury" items their male counterparts enjoyed. Instead of parachutes (which were too heavy to carry), radar, guns and radios, they were forced to use more rudimentary tools such as rulers,

stopwatches, flashlights, pencils, maps and compasses.

There was, however, a plus side to those old aircraft. Their maximum speed was slower than the stall speed of the Nazi planes, which meant these wooden planes, ironically, could manoeuvre faster than the enemy, making them hard to target.

Tactics

The Polikarpov Po-2 could only carry a single bomb under each wing. The regiment would

sent out up to 40 two-person crews at night. Each crew would carry out between eight and 18 missions per night. They would drop their bombs before heading back to re-arm before setting out once more.

The weight of the bombs forced them to fly at lower altitudes, making them a much easier target. This was why they could only fly missions at night.

Each plane would carry a pilot in front, with a navigator behind her. They would fly in packs, and only at night.

The first planes would go in and act as bait. They would attract German searchlights which provided much needed illumination. The navigator would then release a flare to light up the intended target.

The following planes would cut their engines to an idle and glide in darkness to the target before releasing their bombs.

German soldiers likened the sound of these gliding aircraft to broomsticks and named the pilots *Nachthexen* - Night Witches.



FLYING COFFIN: The Night Witches flew the Polikarpov Po-2, which was nicknamed the 'Flying Coffin'. Constructed from plywood and canvas it would often catch fire if hit by tracers.



LEGENDS: From left to right: **Marina Raskova** was known as the Soviet Amelia Earhart, she started the 588th Night Bomber Regiment. **Yevdokia Bershanskaya** was the regimental commander of the 46th Taman Guards Night Bomber Aviation Regiment during World War II and became the only woman ever awarded the Order of Suvorov. **Irina Sebrova** flew 1,008 sorties in the war and was awarded the title 'Hero of the Soviet Union'.

The Night Witches had 12 commandments that they followed, and the first one was “be proud you are a woman.”

While killing Germans was their job, a job they did very well, when they were off duty they behaved as most women their age did. They enjoyed needlework, patchwork, decorating their planes, listening to music, and dancing. They even put the pencils they used for navigation into double duty as eye liner.

Their record

They became the most highly decorated unit in the Soviet Air Force during the war.

In total the regiment collectively accumulated 28,676 flight hours, flew 23,672 combat sorties, dropped over 3,000 tons of bombs and over 26,000 incendiary shells, damaging or completely destroying 17 river crossings, nine railways, two railway stations, 26 warehouses, 12 fuel depots, 176 armoured cars, 86 firing points,

and 11 searchlights. In addition to bombings the unit performed 155 supply drops of food and ammunition to Soviet forces.

A total of 261 people served in the regiment, of which 32 died of various causes including plane crashes, combat deaths and tuberculosis in addition to 28 aircraft written off.

Twenty-three personnel from the regiment were awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union, two were awarded Hero of the Russian Federation, and one was awarded Hero of Kazakhstan.

Nadia Popova was one of the first female military pilots in the Soviet Union, and also one of the most highly decorated. She was awarded the title ‘Hero of the Soviet Union’, the Gold Star Medal, the Order of Lenin, three Orders of the Red Star in Second World War, and three Orders of the Patriotic War.

Marina Raskova, the mother of the movement, died on 4 January 1943, when she was fi-

nally sent to the front line - her plane never made it. She was given the very first state funeral of World War II and her ashes were buried in the Kremlin.

An inglorious end

They flew their last mission on 4 May 1945, operating within 60 kilometres of Berlin, during the Vistula–Oder Offensive. Three days later, Germany officially surrendered.

Five months later, despite being the most decorated unit in the Soviet Air Force, the Night Witches Regiment was disbanded without ceremony and service members were demobilized.

And when it came to the big victory-day parade in Moscow after the war, the Night Witches were not included. It was decided that their planes were too slow to take part in the parade.

Their determination and dedication proved that not only could women cope with war, they could excel at it.



General Knowledge

This month is all about general knowledge. We ask you 25 questions, you tell us the answer. Some of them you should all know, others are a bit more difficult and will be a true test of your general knowledge regarding military matters. Answers on page 86

- Who was the only member of the South African Air Force to become Chief of the SADF?
- In what year did National Service end in the South African Defence Force?
- What was a Leading Seaman in the South African Navy better known as?
- Which South African army unit was based at Nduduku in Zululand?
- The motto of the South African Corps of Signals is ‘Certa Cito’. What does it mean?
- Who was South Africa’s leading air ace during World War I?
- Situated in the Northern Transvaal, close to the town of Groblersdal, was a farm where the South African Police did their counter insurgency training. What was this training facility called?
- On what date did Operation Reindeer, the attack on Cassinga, take place?
- Who was the first person to be awarded the Honoris Crux?
- How many South Africans were awarded the Victoria Cross during World War II?
- Where was the first place ever bombed by the South African Air Force?
- What was the nickname given to Britain’s Home Guard during World War II?
- By what name was the German Panzerkampfwagen V better known?
- What does the AK stand for in AK-47?
- Who was the top air ace of World War II?
- What were the code-names for the five beaches on D-Day?
- Which big band leader disappeared over the English Channel on 15 December 1944?
- Where did the shortest war on record take place, and how long did it last?
- Which Rhodesian unit was known as “The Saints”?
- What famous American aviation group flew P-51 Mustangs with bright red tails?
- Which former heavyweight boxing champion was a paratrooper during World War II?
- Which country has the smallest army in the world?
- During the Vietnam War, who was known as Hanoi Jane?
- How long did the 100 year war last?
- What was significant about the Battle of Kursk in 1943?



About that medal of yours...

Imagine being awarded with your country's highest medal for bravery. Then imagine having the award revoked and having to return your medal.

Imagine, if you may, standing in front of a large parade while a high ranking officer, or maybe even the president of your country, pins a medal to your chest.

And it's no ordinary medal, mind you, it's your country's highest award for bravery. I don't think I would be wrong in guessing that you'd feel proud of yourself.

Now imagine that some time after - it could be a few days, weeks, months, or even years, the military contacts you with a strange request.

"Listen, about that medal we gave you. Well, we want it back."

Now on a scale of one to very, how upset and angry would you be? After all, it's not like you gave yourself the medal.

Well, the thing is it has happened. Many countries have given awards and honours that were later revoked.

Take the Victoria Cross for example. The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest and most prestigious decoration of the British honours system. It is awarded for valour "in the presence of the enemy" to members of the British Armed Forces and may be awarded posthumously.

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

Many recipients of orders, decorations, and medals of the United Kingdom have had them revoked, often following conviction for crimes or breaches of military discipline, or when their conduct has been widely considered discreditable.

On no fewer than eight occasions the award of a VC was revoked and the names of the recipients struck from the Victoria Cross register.

Valentine Bambrick was awarded the VC in 1858. It was revoked in 1861 after he was convicted of assault and theft of a comrade's medals.

Edward St John Daniel won the VC in 1857. It was revoked in 1861 when he was convicted of desertion and evading court-martial.

James McGuire was awarded the VC in 1858 for acts of valour during the Indian Mutiny. It was revoked in 1862. His terrible crime - he stole a cow.

Four other recipients also had their awards revoked. They were Michael Murphy, Thomas Lane, Frederick Corbett, and James Collis.

The last person to have his Victoria Cross revoked was George Ravenhill. He was awarded his VC in 1901. Seven years later, in 1908, it was revoked after he was convicted of theft.

In the 1920s British monarch King George V overturned the revocations. He claimed that all eight of the men had been

awarded the Victoria Cross for acts of valour and, no matter what had transpired later in life, nothing could take this away from them.

The names of all eight men that had their medals revoked were restored to the Victoria Cross register.

So, the British revoked eight Victoria Crosses, but all of them were later restored. The Americans, on the other hand, did things on a far greater scale.

Medal of Honour

The Medal of Honour (MOH) is the United States Armed Forces' highest military decoration and is awarded to recognize American soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, guardians and coast guardsmen who have distinguished themselves by acts of valour.

The medal is normally awarded by the president of the United States, but as it is presented "in the name of the United States Congress," it is sometimes incorrectly referred to as the "Congressional Medal of Honour".

There are three distinct variants of the medal: one for the Army, awarded to soldiers, one for the Naval Service, awarded to sailors, marines, and coast guardsmen, and one for the Air and Space Forces, awarded to airmen and guardians.

The Medal of Honour was introduced for the Naval Service in 1861, soon followed



REVOKED: George Ravenhill was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1901. It was revoked in 1908 after he was convicted of theft.

by the Army's version in 1862. The Air Force used the Army's version until they received their own distinctive version in 1965. The Medal of Honour is the oldest continuously issued combat decoration of the United States Armed Forces.

The president typically presents the Medal of Honour at a formal ceremony intended to represent the gratitude of the American people, with posthumous presentations made to the primary next of kin.

According to the Medal of Honour Historical Society of the United States, there have been 3,530 Medals of Honour awarded to 3,511 individuals since the decoration's creation, with over 40% awarded for actions during the American Civil War.

Yet in 1917 no fewer than 911 Medals of Honour were revoked. By that stage a total of 2,625 Medals of Honour had been awarded. So why did the United States decide to revoke almost 35% of the Medals of Honour that had been awarded up to that point?

It all started in 1916 when Congress appointed a commis-

ion of five retired Army generals led by Maj. Gen. Nelson Miles, a 42-year veteran who was at the Battle of Chancellorsville, to review each of the 2,625 Medals of Honour that had been awarded up to that point. Congress' direction for the board read:

"Said board shall find and report that said medal was issued for any cause other than that hereinbefore specified the name of the recipient of the medal so issued shall be stricken permanently from the official Medal of Honour list. It shall be a misdemeanour for him to wear or publicly display such medal, and, if he shall be in the Army, he shall be required to return said medal to the War Department for cancellation."

With a new set of criteria for awarding the medal, along with a hierarchy of medals for gallantry and bravery, Congress imposed a new standard for the Medal of Honour and apply it retroactively. The Medal of Honour would be the highest honour on a pyramid of awards, requiring gallantry beyond the call of duty of an officer or enlisted person, at the risk of life and limb.

In some cases the commission didn't have to think too hard.

For example, in 1863 a total of 864 Medals of Honour had been given to the 27th Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

At the time Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia invaded Pennsylvania. The majority of the Union Army headed to Pennsylvania to counter the threat.

This meant that Washington was left with a skeleton crew

of troops to defend the city. To make matters worse the enlistment period for most of these troops was almost up. The general feeling among them was "We've done our time so we're going home."

President Abraham Lincoln authorized Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to offer the the Medal of Honour to any member of the 27th who extended his enlistment to stay in the capital while the Union fought off the Confederates.

Some 309 volunteered, while the rest went home to Maine. Those who stayed ended up staying in Washington - for four days. When the Gettysburg Campaign ended, the capital returned to its previous strength and the Maine troops returned home.

When it came time to award the unit's Medals of Honour, a clerical error lost the names of the men who actually volunteered. So the War Department gave the medal to the entire regiment, even though the majority had not volunteered and none of them actually fought.

The commission also found others that they deemed not worthy of having received the Medal of Honour and they were struck from the Medal of Honour Roll.

This was the case with four officers and 25 enlisted men, all first sergeants, who served as funeral guards for Lincoln's remains after his assassination.

Lieutenant Colonel Asa Bird Gardiner received his medal by writing a letter to the War Department, asking for one as a souvenir.

Private James Hawkins, a

quartermaster from New Jersey, put out a fire in a warehouse, while Private John Lynch of Indiana delivered dispatches, which was his job in the first place. Both were awarded the Medal of Honour for their actions - both were revoked.

Unfortunately, the law affected medals awarded to those who had actually earned them. William Frederick Cody, better known as "Buffalo Bill", and four other scouts had been awarded the Medal of Honour during the Plains Wars against native tribes in the latter half of the 19th century.

All five of these medals were revoked because Cody and the other four scouts were civilians and not members of the U.S. Army. All five of these medals were reinstated on 12 June 1989.

Yet perhaps the strangest case of a Medal of Honour being revoked was the one that was awarded to a certain Doctor Walker. Like Cody and the four scouts, Dr Walker was also a civilian. More over, Dr. Walker was a female.

Dr. Mary Walker was a volunteer surgeon for the Union Army during the Civil War, treating the wounded in Washington and at the Battle of Bull Run.

Later, she became the first female surgeon ever officially employed by the Army, seeing action at Fredericksburg, Chickamauga and Chattanooga.

In 1864, she was captured by Confederate soldiers and spent four months in a prisoner-of-war camp. After the war, she was awarded the Medal of Honour for her service.

She became the first, and

only, woman to be awarded the Medal of Honour.

In 1917, the U.S. government tried to take it back, Walker declined to return it and wore hers for the rest of her life.

In 1977, the Army's board for correction of military records unilaterally restored Walker's medal at the request of a relative.

Medal of Honour trivia

- The most Medals of Honour awarded during a single war or campaign was the American Civil War (1861–1865). A total of 1,523 Medals of Honour were awarded.
- During World War II (1939–1945) 472 Medals of Honour were awarded. The Vietnam War (1955–1975) a further 261 Medals of Honour were awarded.
- Since the end of the Vietnam War only 31 Medals of Honour have been awarded.
- Nineteen service members have been awarded the Medal of Honour twice. The first double Medal of Honour recipient was Thomas Custer (brother of George Armstrong Custer) for two separate actions that took place several days apart during the American Civil War.
- A total of 2,461 Medals of Honour have been awarded to members of the U.S. Army. This is followed by 749 awarded to the U.S. Navy, 300 to the U.S. Marine Corps, 19 to the U.S. Air Force, and one to the U.S. Coast Guard.
- The first, and so far only, Coast Guardsman to be awarded the Medal of Honour was Signalman First



FIRST: Dr Mary Walker became the first, and only, woman to be awarded the Medal of Honour. When the U.S. Government tried to take it away in 1917, she declined to return it.

Class Douglas Munro. He was posthumously awarded it on 27 May 1943, for evacuating 500 marines under fire on 27 September 1942, during the Battle of Guadalcanal.

- Five pairs of brothers have received the Medal of Honour.
- The first black recipients of the Medal of Honour were sixteen Army soldiers and sixteen Navy sailors that fought during the Civil War.
- The first black man to earn the Medal of Honour was William Harvey Carney. He earned the Medal during the Battle of Fort Wagner (1863), but was not presented with it until 1900.
- Bernard John Dowling Irwin was the first (chronologically by action) Medal of Honour recipient during the Apache Wars. His actions on 13 February 1861, are the earliest for which the Medal of Honour was awarded.

Double Recipients

Only 19 individuals have been awarded the Medal of Honour twice.

They were (in alphabetical order):

Frank Dwight Baldwin

First award: 3 Dec 1891. Second award: 27 Nov 1894.

Smedley Butler

First award: 22 April 1914. Second award: 17 Nov 1915.

John Laver Mather Cooper

First award: 31 Dec 1864. Second award: 29 June 1865.

Louis Cukela

Awards: 18 July 1918. He was awarded the Medal of Honour (Army) and Medal of Honour (Navy) for the same action.

Thomas Custer

First award: 3 April 1865. Second award: 6 April 1865.

Daniel Daly

First award: 14 Aug 1900. Second award: 24 Oct 1915.

Henry Hogan

First award: 8 Jan 1877. Second award: 39 Sept 1877.



Ernest A. Janson

Awards: 6 June 1918. He was awarded the Medal of Honour (Army) and Medal of Honour (Navy) for the same action.

John J. Kelly

Awards: 22 Jan 1919. He was awarded the Medal of Honour (Army) and Medal of Honour (Navy) for the same action.

John King

First award: 6 Dec 1901. Second award: 13 Sept 1909.

Matej Kocak

Awards: 7 March 1919. He was awarded the Medal of Honour (Army) and Medal of Honour (Navy) for the same action.

John Lafferty

First award: 31 Dec 1864. Second award: 18 Oct 1884.

John McCloy

First award: 19 July 1901. Second award: 4 Dec 1915.

Patrick Mullen

First award: 22 June 1865. Second award: 29 June 1865.

Ludwig Andreas Olsen

First award: 16 March 1883. Second award: 13 June 1884.

John H. Pruitt

Awards: 3 Oct 1918. He was awarded the Medal of Honour (Army) and Medal of Honour (Navy) for the same action.

Robert Augustus Sweeney

First award: 26 Oct 1881. Second award: 20 Dec 1883.

Albert Weisbogel

First award: 11 Jan 1874. Second award: 27 April 1876.

William Wilson

First award: 27 April 1872. Second award: 29 Sept 1872.

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.

Females on the front line

Nearly every country in the world allows women to serve in its armed forces. In some countries women are eligible for conscription. Yet not that many countries allow women to take part in combat.

Throughout history there has been a long and colourful narrative of women in combat, from the Amazons of Greek mythology to the very real Joan of Arc.

Some of it has been nothing more than mythology, but much of it has been very real.

Amazons

According to Greek mythology, this race of female warriors lived in the Black Sea region before Greek colonization. Legend has it that the Greek hero Heracles led an expedition to capture the girdle of the Amazonian queen, Hippolyte, then conquered and expelled the Amazonians from the region.

But are the Amazons purely myth? Yet there may be a bit of truth in the legend.

Burial grounds used by ancient nomads known as the Sauromatians have yielded skeletons of women buried with weapons including iron swords or daggers and bronze arrowheads. The Sauromatians were said to be descendants of the Amazons and the Scythians, who lived in the 4th and 5th centuries B.C.

Boudicca

Queen Boudicca was very real, and very scary. After the death of her husband left their kingdom of Icenia (now Norfolk, England) at the mercy of the corrupt Emperor Nero, Boud-

icca led a rebellion against the Roman Empire in 60 A.D.

By all accounts she was not a lady you wanted to get on the wrong side of.

Her army wreaked havoc in Roman Britain, defeating the Roman Ninth Legion and destroying the capital at Colchester, as well as Verulamium (St. Albans) and Londinium (London).

Defeated by Paulinus' army, Boudicca allegedly took poison to avoid capture.

Valkyries

Norse mythology celebrates its own female warriors in the form of the Valkyries, a group of maidens who served the god Odin.

Riding horses and wearing helmets and shields, these women were sent to battlefields to choose those slain soldiers worthy of a place in Valhalla.

In reality, Viking women accompanied their men on their infamous raids in Britain starting in 900 A.D.

Almost half of the bodies found in an examination of 14 Viking burial grounds in Britain belonged to women, and some were buried with the swords and shields they presumably used in life.

Joan of Arc

The Maid of Orleans, as she was known, began her short life as a simple peasant but rose

to become the patron saint of France through her leadership on the battlefield.

Believing God had chosen her to save her country during the Hundred Years' War, she commanded the French army in its victory over English forces at Orleans in 1429 and led King Charles VII to his coronation.

Captured by her enemies and tried for witchcraft and heresy, she was burned at the stake.

The 20th Century and beyond

During the two world wars various partisan and resistance groups made use of women in a variety of roles, including combat.

The constant need for troops caused some countries to temporarily ease their restrictions on women in combat.

In World War I, Russia created the Women's Battalion, which attracted thousands of volunteers who saw action at the front against German troops.

During World War II, the Soviets again turned to female soldiers, who served as snipers and fighter pilots.

Even England temporarily eased their restrictions as well, recruiting thousands of women to operate anti-aircraft guns during the Battle of Britain. While they may not have been on the front line, they were still very much in harm's way.

These days most countries allow women to serve in the



WONDER WOMAN: Model, actress and former Miss Israel Gal Gadot (who played the lead role in Wonder Woman) served as a fitness instructor during her national service with the Israeli Defence Force.

armed Forces. Yet not that many countries allow women to participate in active combat roles.

Each of these nations has taken a different approach to integration of their armed forces.

Armed Forces

These are the countries, in alphabetical order, that currently allow women to deploy in combat roles.

Australia

The Australian military began a five-year plan to open combat roles to women in 2011.

Front line combat roles opened in January 2013.

The positions women can now fill are: Navy Ordnance disposal divers, airfield and ground defence guards, infantry, artillery and armoured units.

Canada

In 1989, a tribunal appointed under the Canadian Human

Rights Act ordered full integration of women in the Canadian Armed Forces "with all due speed," at least within the next ten years. Submarines remained closed to women until 2000.

Denmark

In 1988, Denmark created a policy of "total inclusion". They proposed "combat trials" which they used to explore how women fight on the front lines.

A 2010 British Ministry of Defence study concluded that women performed the same as men. All positions in military are open to women - excluding Special Operations Forces because of physical requirements.

Finland

Men are required to enlist whereas for women it is voluntary. If women do choose to enlist they are allowed to train for combat roles.

France

Women comprise nearly one-fifth of the military in France, women can serve in most areas of the military except submarines and riot control.

Women are allowed to serve in combat infantry but many women choose not to. 1.7% of women serve in combat infantry.

Germany

In 2001, Germany opened all combat units to women. This greatly increased recruitment for female soldiers.

Since 2001, the number of women in the German Armed Forces has tripled. By 2009, 800 female soldiers were serving in combat units.

India

Prior to 1992, Indian women could only serve in medical roles in the military. Since then India began recruiting women to non-medical positions in the armed forces.

In 2007 on 19 January, the United Nations first all female peacekeeping force made up of 105 Indian policewomen was deployed to Liberia.

In 2014, India's army had 3 per cent women, the Navy 2.8 per cent and the Air Force performed best with 8.5 per cent women.

In 2015 India opened new combat air force roles for women as fighter pilots, adding to their role as helicopter pilots in the Indian Air Force.

Israel

In its early years, Israel allowed women to serve along-

side men in gender-neutral units, but switched to same-sex units in the 1950s.

Today, however, both men and women are required to do national service. So women make up a large portion of the army and nearly all positions are open to female candidates.

New Zealand

New Zealand has no restrictions on roles for women in its defence force. They are able to serve in the Special Air Service, infantry, armour and artillery. This came into effect in 2001 by subordinate legislation.

Norway

In 1985, Norway became the first country to allow women to serve on its submarines. The first female commander of a Norwegian submarine was Solveig Krey in 1995.

Norway was, along with Israel, the first to allow women to serve in all combat roles in the military in 1988.

In 2015, Norway made women eligible for compulsory military service.

Pakistan

Women have been part of the Pakistani military since 1947 after the establishment of Pakistan. There are currently around 4,000 women who are serving in the Pakistan Armed Forces.

In 2006, the first women fighter pilots batch joined the combat aerial mission command of PAF (Pakistani Air Force).

Sri Lanka

Female personnel of all three services play an active part in



BATS: These three young women are all qualified members of an Israeli Parachute Battalion.

ongoing operations. However, there are certain limitations in 'direct combat' duties such as special forces, pilot branch, and naval fast attack squadrons.

Sweden

Women have been able to serve in all positions in the Swedish military since 1989. Currently, about 5.5% of all officers are women.

Turkey

Turkish women have voluntarily taken tasks in the defence of their country. Nene Hatun, whose monument has been erected in Erzurum, fought during the Ottoman-Russian War. Turkish women also took main roles in combat in World War One and the Independence War.

Sabiha Gökçen was the first Turkish female combat pilot, having flown 22 different types

of aircraft for more than 8,000 hours, 32 hours of which were active combat and bombardment missions.

Women personnel are being employed as officers in the Turkish Armed Forces today. As of 2005, there are 1,245 female officers and NCOs in the Turkish Armed Forces.

Women officers serve in all branches except armour, infantry, and submarines. Assignments, promotions and training are considered on an equal basis with no gender bias.

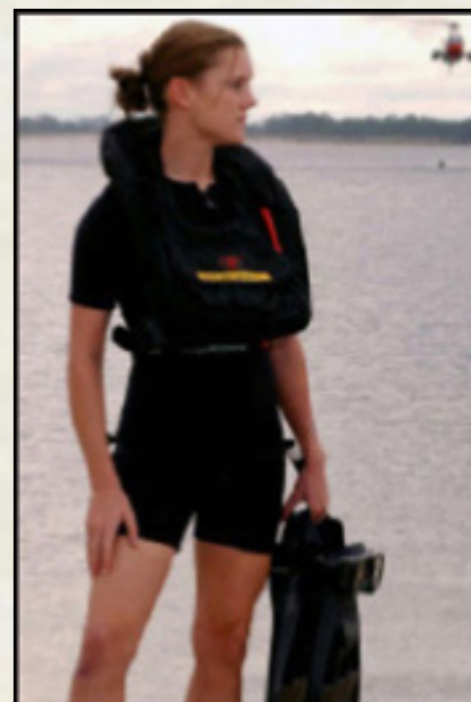
United Kingdom

In July 2016 all exclusions on women serving in Ground Close Combat (GCC) roles were lifted.

All roles in the King's Royal Hussars, the Royal Tank Regiment, and all Army Reserve Royal Armoured Corps units have been opened to women, and women



A Turkish signaller on deployment.



US Navy rescue diver.



French infantry unit on patrol.

will be permitted to join the rest of the previously closed GCC roles in the Royal Armoured Corps, British Army Infantry, Royal Marines and the RAF Regiment by the end of 2018.

It's important to note, however, that even though GCC roles were closed to women until 2016, women have been previously on the "front line" and exposed to combat in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan through other roles, such as all roles in the Royal Artillery, which despite being one of the combat arms is not classed as a GCC role.

Women were permitted to serve in Fire Support Teams and on 105mm L118 Light Gun crews. Women were also permitted to apply to join the Special Reconnaissance Regiment, which is one of the major components of the UK Special Forces alongside the Special Air Service, Special Boat Service and Special Forces Support Group.

Women also served as combat medics attached to Army Infantry, Royal Marines and other GCC units. Some were awarded the prestigious Military Cross for bravery under fire.

Six British women in the Iraq War, and three in the Afghanistan War were killed in action.

United States

In World War I and World War II women served in numerous roles such as the Army Nurse Corps, and the Women's Army Corps (WAC). They carried out various roles such as clerical work, mechanical work, photo analysis, and sheet metal working; in some cases they were utilized as test pilots for fighter

planes as WASPS.

In 1979 enlistment qualifications became the same for men and women. While women were able to enlist, they were prohibited from direct combat roles or assignments. In 1994 the Department of Defence officially banned women from serving in combat. The United States has more women in its military than any other nation.

On 24 January 2013, Secretary of Defence Leon Panetta removed the military's ban on women serving in combat.

Implementation of these rules is ongoing. There is some speculation that this could lead to women having to register with the Selective Service System.

On 21 November 2013, the first three women to ever complete the United States Marine Corps' Infantry Training Battalion course graduated from the United States Marine Corps School of Infantry in Camp Geiger, North Carolina.

In August 2015, Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver became the first two women to graduate from the U.S. Army Ranger School. In 2016, Griest became the first female infantry officer in the US Army when the Army approved her request to transfer there from a military police unit.

One significant female contribution was recognized on 16 June 2005, when Sgt. Ann Hester was awarded the Silver Star for her actions during a fire fight that took place outside Baghdad. This was the first Silver Star in U.S. military history awarded to a woman soldier.

Sniper rifles

One shot - one kill.

Military sniper rifles traditionally derived from two sources: first, the improved military rifle, fitted with a telescopic sight and firing match-grade ammunition; and secondly, the hunting rifle, which although highly accurate was often insufficiently robust for field conditions.

During the late 1960s, small-arms designers finally began to produce rifles specifically designed for sniping. The M40 and the SS69 led the way, and were followed by a succession of superbly accurate firearms, such as the L96A1.

Recent developments include the introduction of the 50-caliber heavy sniper rifle, and the .300 Winchester and .338 Lapua Magnum



M40 Sniper Rifle



Dragunov SVD



L96A1



Barrett Model 90



Hecate II Sniper Rifle



Steyr SSG69



Heckler & Koch PSG-1



Walther WA2000



C14 Timberwolf Sniper Rifle

rounds, which are increasingly replacing the standard 7.62mm NATO cartridge.

Heckler & Koch PSG1

Date 1985
Origin Germany
Weight 8.1 kg
Barrel 65 cm
Calibre 7.62 × 51mm

Intended as a sniper rifle for the German police, the Heckler & Koch PSG-1 employed a semi-automatic action and was fitted with a heavy free-floating barrel, an adjustable butt stock, and a six-power telescopic sight.

Dragunov SVD

Date 1963
Origin Soviet Union
Weight 4.3 kg
Barrel 61 cm
Calibre 7.62 × 54R

The SVD came to be used as a sharpshooter platoon-support weapon by Warsaw Pact armies in the 1960s. Its four-power PSO-1 telescopic sight has limited infrared capability.

Walther WA2000

Date 1978
Origin Germany
Weight 6.95 kg
Barrel 65 cm
Calibre 300 Win Mag/7.62mm

Developed primarily for police use, the WA2000 employed a “bullpup” configuration and a semi-automatic action fed by a six-round magazine. High manufacturing costs ended its production in 1988

M40 Sniper Rifle

Date 1966
Origin US
Weight 3.1 kg
Barrel 61 cm
Calibre 7.62 × 51mm

A military version of the Remington 700 sporting rifle, the M40 was first used by the US Marine Corps in Vietnam. Subsequent models were equipped with a fibreglass stock and a Unertl ten-power scope.

L96A1

Date 1984
Origin UK
Weight 6.5 kg
Barrel 65.5 cm
Calibre 7.62 × 51mm

The British Army’s L96A1 sniper rifle was the first to be developed specifically for sniping, and it became the forerunner of a whole series of sniper rifles produced in a variety of calibres.

Barrett Model 90

Date 1995
Origin US
Weight 10.7 kg
Barrel 73.7 cm
Calibre .50 BMG

Ronnie Barrett pioneered the anti-materiel (AM) rifle in the early 1980s. This model, noteworthy for its compact “bullpup” design, is an effective sniping weapon for ranges in excess of 1,800 metres

Hecate II Sniper Rifle

Date 1993
Origin France
Weight 13.8 kg
Barrel 70 cm
Calibre .50 BMG

As with other Western heavy sniper rifles, the Hecate II fires the .50 BMG (12.7 × 99mm NATO) round, and is based around PGM’s metallic skeleton system, complete with a high-efficiency muzzle brake.

Steyr SSG69

Date 1969
Origin Austria
Weight 3.9 kg
Barrel 65 cm
Calibre 7.62 × 51mm

Based on a similar pistol, the LeMat Revolver Rifle had two barrels. The lower, charged with shot, acted as the axis pin for the nine-chambered cylinder, which was charged with ball cartridges.

C14 Timberwolf Sniper Rifle

Date 2005
Origin Canada
Weight 6.8 kg
Barrel 66 cm
Calibre .338in Lapua Magnum

Following recent trends in anti-personnel sniper-rifle design, the Timberwolf has been chambered for the powerful .338in Lapua Magnum round, which extends a rifle’s effective range to over 1,200 metres.

Snipers - facts and trivia

- The Germans did not have a word for ‘sniper’. Instead they were referred to as ‘Scharfschütze’ or sharpshooters.
- Wind and gravity can veer a bullet off the target by a whopping 10 metres. A shot was once made where the bullet curved in the wind for 17 metres before hitting the target.
- In today’s combat system, a sniper is almost useless without a spotter. A spotter helps the sniper refine and correctly hit the target. The spotter calculates the range, wind velocity and relays it to the sniper who can then make a kill quickly.
- The camouflage suit a sniper wears is called a ghillie.
- Snipers usually wait for an

artillery or a tank shell to fire, because that will mask the sniper noise, keeping their position hidden. Sniper rifles are powerful and hence very loud. Rifle shot can give away the position of the sniper, which can compromise his life. That’s why, if possible, they shoot only when other shots are fired, so that their rifle sound is drowned in ambient noise.

The reason why officer’s insignia is camouflaged and you are not supposed to salute an officer on field are because of the existence of snipers. Officers are a prime target for snipers.

Snipers use baits such as leaving ammunition and weapons unattended and shoot the enemy when he comes to retrieve them.

Captured snipers are often immediately executed. Thus, when they are about to be captured, they throw away everything they think

- will make the enemy recognize them as snipers.
- Snipers seldom look for head shots. They are largely avoided, because the head is a very small target over a big distance. They look for blood loss, tissue damage and destroying vital organs.
- Finnish Lance Corporal Simo Häyhä, also known as the ‘White Death’ holds the title of the most effective sniper with 505 sniper kills in less than 100 days. And all achieved without the use of a scope.
- The longest recorded and confirmed kill by any sniper was made a Canadian special forces sniper. The soldier shot an IS militant dead from 3,540 metres.
- World War II Soviet sniper Lieutenant Lyudmila Pavlichenko is known to be the most successful female sniper with 309 confirmed kills.
- It is believed that the Soviet Union employed over 2,000 female snipers during the World War II.
- Mike Plumb, a Police SWAT sniper in Columbus, Ohio, prevented a suicide by

Lyudmila Pavlichenko



shooting the revolver out of the person’s hand without any harm done to the target.

Weapons & Equipment - Vietnam War

This month we compare the weapons and equipment of the major combatants in the Vietnam War.

US Army

The Vietnam War was fought between 1 November 1955 and 30 April 1975. Beginning in 1950, American military advisors arrived in what was then French Indochina.

By 1969 there were 530,000 US troops serving in Vietnam.

The standard US rifle was the 5.56 x 45 mm Colt M16A1. It used a 20 round box magazine. Many troops did not like the M16, claiming that it did not have enough stopping power.

Some troops in a squad would carry an M79 grenade launcher, known as the 'Thumper'. It was a single-shot, shoulder-fired, break-action grenade launcher

that fired a 40x46mm grenade.

Other troops would be armed with a 12-gauge Winchester Model 1200 pump-action shotgun. The shotgun could hold six rounds.

Troops would carry at least two M26 fragmentation grenades with them.

The standard side arm was the .45 ACP Colt M1911A1.

Most troops would carry something tucked into the band around their helmet. This was usually a packet of cigarettes, insect repellent, or rifle oil.

Field rations consisted of MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) and these came in a variety of meals.

US Special Forces

Numerous US Special Forces groups and units were deployed during the Vietnam War.

These included Green Berets (Army), Army Rangers, SEALs (Navy), and Marine Force Recon.

Most special force units preferred the 5.56 x 45 mm Cold Automatic Rifle (CAR-15), also known as the Colt Commando. It had a 30 round magazine and was shorter than the M16.

The 5.56 x 45 mm Stoner 93 could be configured as a rifle, a carbine, a top-fed light machine gun, a belt-fed squad automatic weapon.

Besides carrying normal M26

hand grenades, they would also carry M34 white phosphorus grenades.

Some of them would carry a Starlight NVD (Night Vision Device) that allows images to be produced in levels of light approaching total darkness.

If they carried side arms it would usually be a 9 x 19 mm Parabellum Browning Hi-Power pistol or the Smith & Wesson Mark 22 Mod.0 "Hush Puppy". This was a 9 x 19 mm Parabellum pistol that had a detachable suppressor.

They made up their own utility belts that carried two canteens, four ammo pouches, and other items.

Infantry Equipment

- A - Combat boots.
- B - Steel helmet.
- C - M16A1.
- D - M26 Hand grenade.
- E - M79 Grenade Launcher.
- F - Winchester Model 1200.
- G - Colt M1911A1.
- H - M7 Bayonet.
- I - Poncho and sleeping bag.
- J - Canteen.
- K - Mess kit.
- L - Trenching tool.
- M - Torch.
- N - Packback.
- O - MRE rations.
- P - Ammo bandolier.

Special Forces Equipment

- A - Jungle boots.
- B - Boonie hat.
- C - Colt CAR-15.
- D - Winchester Model 1200.
- E - Stoner 93.
- F - M34 WP grenade.
- G - M26 Hand grenade.
- H - Machete.
- I - Starlight night vision scope.
- J - K-Bar knife.
- K - Mess kit.
- L - S&W Mk 22 Mod.0 "Hush Puppy".
- M - MRE rations.
- N - Torch.
- O - Utility belt.
- P - 'Alice' pack.

Viet Cong

The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam was a mass political organization in South Vietnam and Cambodia with its own army – the People's Liberation Armed Forces of South Vietnam (PLAF). They were more commonly known as the Viet Cong.

They were an irregular force and became known for the black pyjama-type uniform they wore.

They mostly wore home-made sandals made from tyres and strips of tyre tube. They became popular with the American troops and were nicknamed 'Ho Chi Minh' sandals.

The most common weapons was the 7.62x39 mm AK-47. It took a 30 round magazine and

was robust and easy to maintain. Other troops would carry the 7.62x39 mm SKS semi-automatic carbine.

It was common for at least one member of a squad to carry a RPG-7 (*Ruchnoy Protivotankoviy Granatomyot*) rocket launcher.

The knives they used were an odd assortment which could include various bayonet, kitchen knives, and even home-made blades.

If they carried a side arm it could be a Tokarev TT-33 pistol or various weapons captured from the Americans, or even weapons captured from the Japanese during World War II or from the French during the Indo-China War.

The most common hand gre-

nade was the RGD-33. It was nicknamed the 'Chi Com' by the Americans.

Rice was the most common ration carried by the Viet Cong and they would have a small pot to store the rice and to cook it.

Infantry Equipment

- A - Sandals.
- B - Floppy hat.
- C - AK-47.
- D - RGD-33 grenade.
- E - SKS carbine.
- F - RPG-7.
- G - Tokarev TT-33.
- H - Knife.
- I - Ammo bandolier.
- J - Canteen.
- K - Backpack.
- L - Rice cooking pot.

North Vietnamese Army

The People's Army of Vietnam (NVA - North Vietnamese Army) was the regular force of North Vietnam.

They were far better trained and equipped than the Viet Cong and had their own air force and navy.

The equipment they carried was similar to that of the Viet Cong, but usually much newer.

Infantry Equipment

- A - Combat boots.
- B - Helmet.
- C - AK-47.
- D - RGD-33 grenade.
- E - SKS carbine.
- F - RPG-7.
- G - Tokarev TT-33.
- H - AK-47 bayonet.

- I - Ammo bandolier.
- J - Canteen.
- K - Rice cooking pot.
- L - Backpack.





US Army

A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K



M



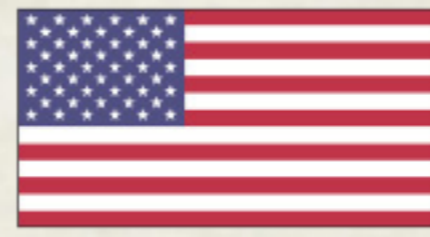
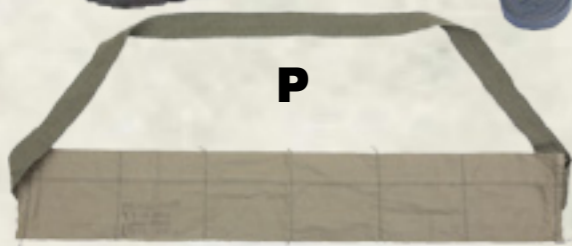
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N



P



US Special Forces

A



B



C



D



E



F



G



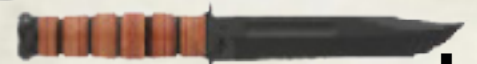
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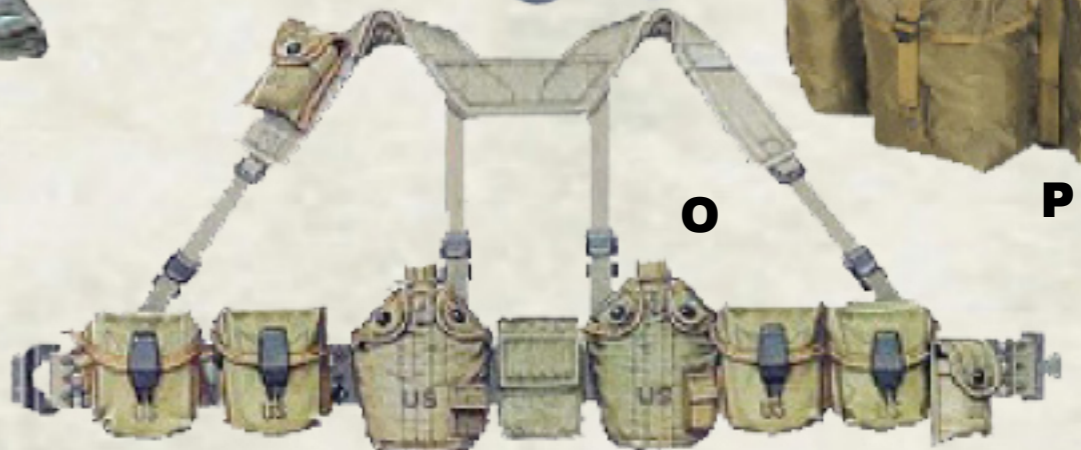
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N

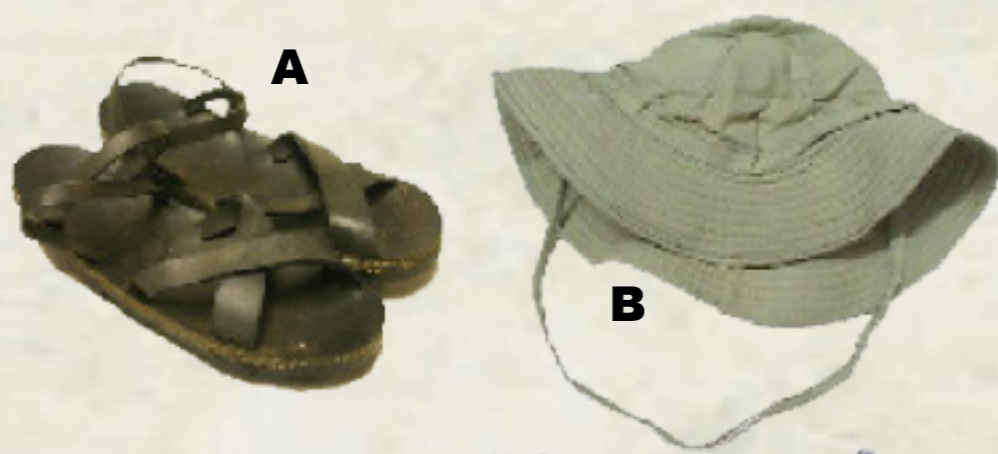


O





Viet Cong



North Vietnamese Army



Bernard Montgomery

Known simply as "Monty", he would go on to command the British Eighth Army, the Allied ground forces in Operation Overlord, and retire as Deputy Supreme Commander of NATO in Europe. He was admired by some, severely disliked by others.

Bernard Law Montgomery was born on 17 November, 1887 in Kennington, Surrey.

He was the fourth of nine children and his father, Henry, was a minister in the Ulster-Scots Church of Ireland.

His mother Maud (née Farrar) was the daughter of The V. Rev. Frederic William Canon Farrar, the famous preacher, and was eighteen years younger than her husband.

The family was not very well off, but his improved slight when Henry was made Bishop of Tasmania, then still a British colony and Bernard spent his formative years there.

Bishop Montgomery spend a lot of time in the rural areas of Tasmania and was away for up to six months at a time.

While he was away, his wife gave the children constant beatings, then ignored them most of the time.

The loveless environment made Bernard something of a bully, as he himself recalled, "I was a dreadful little boy. I don't suppose anybody would put up with my sort of behaviour these days."

Bernard and his brother Harold were sent to be educated at The King's School in Canterbury for a term. Then, when the family returned to London, Bernard attended St Paul's School and then the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. He was almost expelled for rowdiness and violence.

He graduated in September



1908 and was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the 1st Battalion the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Later that year he saw service in India.

He was promoted to lieutenant in 1910, and in 1912 became adjutant of the 1st Battalion of his regiment at Shorncliffe Army Camp.

World War I

In August 1914, Montgomery moved to France with his battalion. He saw action at the Battle of Le Cateau that month and during the retreat from Mons.

On 13 October 1914 during an Allied counter-offensive at Bailleu, he was shot through the right lung by a sniper. He was also hit in the knee. The wound was so critical that a grave was dug in preparation for his death.

Not only did he recover, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for gallant leadership: the citation for this award, published in the London Gazette in December



ARE YOU LADS OKAY THEN: Field Marshal Montgomery inspecting the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade.

1914 reads:

"Conspicuous gallant leading on 13th October, when he turned the enemy out of their trenches with the bayonet. He was severely wounded."

In early 1915 he was appointed as a brigade major. He returned to the Western Front in early 1916 as a general staff officer in the 33rd Division and took part in the Battle of Arras in April/May 1917. He then became a general staff officer with IX Corps.

Montgomery served at the Battle of Passchendaele in late 1917 before finishing the war as General Staff Officer Grade 1 and effectively Chief of Staff of the 47th (2nd London) Division, with the temporary rank of lieutenant colonel.

Between the wars

After the war Montgomery commanded the 17th (Service) Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers,

a battalion in the British Army of the Rhine, before reverting to his substantive rank of captain (brevet major) in November 1919.

He had not been selected for the Staff College and this meant that he would never achieve high command. But at a tennis party in Cologne, he was able to persuade the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the British Army of Occupation, Field Marshal Sir William Robertson, to add his name to the list.

After graduating from the Staff College, he was appointed brigade major in the 17th Infantry Brigade in January 1921. The brigade was stationed in County Cork, Ireland, carrying out counter-insurgency operations during the final stages of the Irish War of Independence.

He returned to the 1st Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment in 1925 as a company commander and was promoted

to major in July 1925. From January 1926 to January 1929 he served as Deputy Assistant Adjutant General at the Staff College, Camberley, in the temporary rank of lieutenant colonel.

In 1927, he met and married Elizabeth (Betty) Carver, née Hobart, widow of Oswald Carver, Olympic rowing medallist who had been killed in the First World War. Betty Carver was the sister of the future Second World War commander, Major General Sir Percy Hobart. She had two sons in their early teens, John and Dick, from her first marriage. Montgomery's son, David, was born in August 1928.

In January 1929, Montgomery was promoted to brevet lieutenant colonel. In 1931 he became the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment with the rank of substantive lieutenant colonel. He saw service in Palestine and British India.

He attended and was then recommended to become an instructor at the Indian Army Staff College (now the Pakistan Army Staff College) in Quetta, British India.

On completion of his tour of duty in India, Montgomery returned to Britain in June 1937 where he took command of the 9th Infantry Brigade with the temporary rank of brigadier.

In 1937 while on holiday in Burnham-on-Sea, his wife Betty suffered an insect bite which became infected. Her leg was amputated and she developed

septicaemia. She died in her husband's arms. It had been a happy marriage and Montgomery was devastated at her loss.

Immediately after her funeral he threw himself back into work. In 1938, he organised an amphibious combined operations landing exercise that impressed the new C-in-C of Southern Command, General Sir Archibald Percival Wavell. He was promoted to major general on 14 October 1938 and took command of the 8th Infantry Division in Palestine.

World War II

In 1939 Montgomery was part of the 3rd Division, which was deployed to Belgium as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF).

During Operation Dynamo - the evacuation of 330,000 BEF and French troops from Dunkirk to Britain - Montgomery assumed command of the II Corps.

On his return to Britain, Montgomery antagonised the War Office with his harsh criticisms of the command of the BEF. He was briefly relegated back to divisional command of 3rd Division, but was made a Companion of the Order of Bath. 3rd Division was at that time the only fully equipped division in Britain.

In July 1940, Montgomery was appointed acting lieutenant general and assumed command of V Corps, responsible for the defence of Hampshire and Dorset. It was also around this time that he started a long-running feud with the new Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of Southern Command, Lieutenant General Claude Auchinleck.

In the Middle East in 1942, Auchinleck was fulfilling both the role of Commander-in-Chief of Middle East Command and commander Eighth Army. Prime Minister Winston Churchill replaced him as C-in-C with General Sir Harold Alexander and command of the Eighth Army in the Western Desert was given to Lieutenant General William Gott.

While flying back to Cairo, Gott was killed in an aircraft accident and General Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, persuaded Churchill to appoint Montgomery to the position.

A story, probably just an urban legend, but popular at the time, is that the appointment caused Montgomery to remark that "After having an easy war, things have now got much more difficult." A colleague is supposed to have told him to cheer up - at which point Montgomery said "I'm not talking about me, I'm talking about Rommel!"

Montgomery's assumption of command transformed the fighting spirit and abilities of the Eighth Army. Taking command on 13 August 1942, he immediately became a whirlwind of activity. He ordered the creation of the X Corps, which contained all armoured divisions to fight alongside his XXX Corps which was all infantry divisions.

Montgomery made a great effort to appear before troops as often as possible, frequently visiting various units and making himself known to the men, often arranging for cigarettes to be distributed.

Although he still wore a standard British officer's cap



YOUR MAJESTY: King George VI and Bernard Montgomery.

on arrival in the desert, he briefly wore an Australian broad-brimmed hat before switching to wearing what was to become his trademark - a black beret with two badges on it. One was the Royal Tank Regiment badge (even though Montgomery was from the Infantry Corps) and the other was his general's badge.

"This beret was given to me by a sergeant in the RTR, the NCO in command of my tank during the Battle of Alamein in October 1942. It was worn by me from Alamein to Tunis when it was so dirty that I got a new one; it was the sergeant's own beret. I added my General's badge to it and have worn the black beret with two badges ever since," Montgomery said.

In mid October Montgomery was promoted to the permanent rank of lieutenant general.

The Second Battle of El Alamein began on 23 October 1942, and ended 12 days later with one of the first large-scale, decisive Allied land victories of the war. Over 30,000 prisoners of war were taken, including the German second-in-command, General von Thoma, as well as eight other general officers.

Field Marshall Erwin Rom-



MONTY: Wearing his trademark black beret with two badges, Montgomery poses for a photograph after the 2nd Battle of El Alamein.

mel, having been in a hospital in Germany at the start of the battle, was forced to return on 25 October 1942 after General Georg Stumme - his replacement as German commander - died of a heart attack in the early hours of the battle.

Montgomery was made a Knight Commander of the Bath (KCB) and promoted to full general. He took part in the Tunisian Campaign and was awarded the Legion of Merit by the United States government for his role in North Africa.

The next major Allied attack was Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily. This was followed in late 1943 by the landings on the mainland of Italy itself, beginning with Operation Baytown. Montgomery continued to command the Eighth Army during this time.

Inter-Allied tensions grew as the American commanders, Generals George Patton and Omar Bradley (then commanding US II Corps under Patton), took umbrage at what they saw as Montgomery's attitudes and boastfulness.

D-Day

In January 1944 Montgomery was assigned to command the 21st Army Group consisting of all Allied ground forces participating in Operation Overlord, the invasion of Normandy. Overall direction was assigned to the Supreme Allied Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, American General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Both Churchill and Eisenhower had found Montgomery difficult to work with in the past and wanted the position to go to the more affable General Sir Harold Alexander. However Montgomery's patron, Alan Brooke, firmly argued that Montgomery was a much superior general to Alexander and ensured his appointment.

After the initial D-Day landings, Montgomery's initial plan was for the Anglo-Canadian troops under his command to break out immediately from their beachheads on the Calvados coast towards Caen with the aim of taking the city on either D Day or two days later. Montgomery attempted to take Caen with the 3rd Infantry Division,

50th (Northumbrian) Infantry Division and the 3rd Canadian Division but was stopped from 6-8 June by 21st Panzer Division and 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend, who hit the advancing Anglo-Canadian troops very hard.

The failure to take Caen immediately has been the source of much historical debate. One school of thought accepts Montgomery's post-war claim that he never intended to take Caen at once, and instead the Anglo-Canadian operations around Caen were a "holding operation" intended to attract the bulk of the German forces towards the Caen sector to allow the Americans to stage the "break out operation" on the left flank of the German positions, which was all part of Montgomery's "Master Plan" that he had conceived long before the Normandy campaign.

The other school of thought claims that when Montgomery's initial plan had failed, he had "evolved" the plan to have the US forces achieve the break-out instead.

Many American officers had found Montgomery a difficult man to work with, and pressured Eisenhower to fire Montgomery. Although the Eisenhower-Montgomery dispute is sometimes depicted in nationalist terms as being an Anglo-American struggle, it was the British Air Marshal Arthur Tedder who was pressing Eisenhower most strongly to fire Montgomery.

On 20 July, Montgomery met Eisenhower and on 21 July Churchill at the TAC in France. One of Montgomery's staff officers wrote afterwards that it

was “common knowledge at Tac that Churchill had come to sack Monty”. No notes were taken at the Eisenhower-Montgomery and Churchill-Montgomery meetings, but Montgomery was able to persuade both men not to fire him.

General Eisenhower took over Ground Forces Command on 1 September, while continuing as Supreme Commander, with Montgomery continuing to command the 21st Army Group, now consisting mainly of British and Canadian units. Montgomery bitterly resented this change, although it had been agreed before the D-Day invasion. Winston Churchill had Montgomery promoted to field marshal by way of compensation.

Operation Market-Garden

Montgomery’s plan for Operation Market Garden (17–25 September 1944) was to outflank the Siegfried Line and cross the Rhine, setting the stage for later offensives into the Ruhr region. The 21st Army Group would attack north from Belgium, 97 km through the Netherlands, across the Rhine and consolidate north of Arnhem on the far side of the Rhine. The risky plan required three Airborne Divisions to capture numerous intact bridges along a single-lane road, on which an entire Corps had to attack and use as its main supply route. The offensive failed to achieve its objectives.

Battle of the Bulge

Since SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) believed the Wehrmacht was no longer capable of launching a major of-



TENSE RELATIONSHIP: Montgomery (right) with US General Dwight D. Eisenhower (centre) and Air Chief Marshall Arthur Tedder. Both men wanted Montgomery fired.

ensive, nor that any offensive could be launched through such rugged terrain as the Ardennes Forest - particularly during winter - the Ardennes was used as an area to send US divisions, which had recently fought and sustained severe casualties, in the Battle of Hürtgen Forest to regroup and refit. It was also used as a place where new units recently from the US were sent to get some field experience in a safe place.

When the attack on the Ardennes took place on 16 December 1944, starting the Battle of the Bulge, it caught the Americans by surprise. Montgomery was the nearest commander on the ground and on 20 December, Eisenhower (who was in Versailles in France) temporarily transferred Courtney Hodges’ US First Army and William Simpson’s US Ninth Army to Montgomery’s 21st Army Group until the “bulge” could be reduced and a simpler line of communications restored, de-

spite Bradley’s vehement objections on national grounds.

Montgomery grasped the situation quickly, visiting all divisional, corps, and field army commanders himself and instituting his ‘Phantom’ network of liaison officers. He grouped the British XXX Corps as a strategic reserve behind the Meuse and reorganised the US defence of the northern shoulder, shortening and strengthening the line and ordering the evacuation of St Vith. The German commander of the 5th Panzer Army, Haso von Manteuffel said:

“The operations of the American First Army had developed into a series of individual holding actions. Montgomery’s contribution to restoring the situation was that he turned a series of isolated actions into a coherent battle fought according to a clear and definite plan. It was his refusal to engage in premature and piecemeal counter-attacks which enabled the Americans to gather their reserves and

frustrate the German attempts to extend their breakthrough.”

Crossing the Rhine

Montgomery’s 21st Army Group (later) advanced to the Rhine with operations Veritable and Grenade in February 1945. A meticulously planned Rhine crossing occurred on 24 March. Montgomery’s river crossing was followed by the encirclement of German Army Group B in the Ruhr. Initially Montgomery’s role was to guard the flank of the American advance. This was altered to forestall any chance of a Red Army advance into Denmark, and the 21st Army Group occupied Hamburg and Rostock and sealed off the Danish peninsula. On 4 May 1945, on Lüneburg Heath, Montgomery accepted the surrender of German forces in north-west Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands.

After the war

After the war Lord Montgomery became the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR), the name given to the British Occupation Forces, and was the British member of the Allied Control Council. He was created 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein in 1946. He was Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) from 1946 to 1948, succeeding Alanbrooke.

He was later appointed Chairman of the Western Union Defence Organization’s C-in-C committee. He became Eisenhower’s deputy in creating the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation’s European forces in 1951. He would continue to serve under Eisenhower’s successors,

Generals Matthew Ridgway and Al Gruenther, until his retirement, aged nearly 71, in 1958.

Lack of tact

Montgomery was notorious for his lack of tact and diplomacy. Even his “patron,” the Chief of the Imperial General Staff Lord Alanbrooke, frequently mentions it in his war diaries: “he is liable to commit untold errors in lack of tact” and “I had to haul him over the coals for his usual lack of tact and egotistical outlook which prevented him from appreciating other people’s feelings”.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill is quoted as saying of Montgomery, “In defeat, unbeatable; in victory, unbearable.”

retirement he publicly supported apartheid after a visit to South Africa in 1962, and after a visit to China declared himself impressed by the Chinese leadership. Montgomery was harshly critical of US strategy in Vietnam.

During a visit to the Alamein battlefields in May 1967, he bluntly told high-ranking Egyptian Army officers that they would lose any war with Israel. He was proved right a few weeks later during the Six-Day War.

Death

Montgomery died from unspecified causes in 1976 at his home Isington Mill in Isington, in the County of Hampshire, aged 88.

After a funeral at St George’s Chapel, Windsor, his body was buried in Holy Cross churchyard, in Binsted, Hampshire.

Honours and Awards



- Viscountcy (UK, January 1946)
- Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter (UK, 1946)
- Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (UK, 1945)
- KCB – 11 November 1942,[82] CB – 11 July 1940
- Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (UK, 1914)
- Mentioned in Despatches - nine times.
- Distinguished Service Medal (US, 1947)
- Chief Commander of the Legion of Merit (US, 10 August 1943)
- Member of the Order of Victory (USSR, 21 June 1945)
- 1st class of the Order of Suworov (USSR, 16 January 1947)
- Croix de Guerre (France, 1919)
- Knight of the Order of the Elephant (Denmark, 2 August 1945)
- Grand Commander of the Order of George I (Greece, 20 June 1944)
- Silver Cross (V Class) of the Virtuti Militari (Poland, 31 October 1944)
- Grand Cross of the Order of the White Lion (Czechoslovakia, 1947)
- Grand Cordon of the Seal of Solomon (Ethiopia, 1949)
- Plus two other awards from Belgium, and one each from the Netherlands and Norway.

FN FAL Assault Rifle

During the Cold War it was given the title 'The right arm of the Free World' and used by more than 90 countries. The FN FAL is a weapon that was forged in battle.

The FAL (French: *Fusil Automatique Léger*) is a battle rifle designed by Belgian small arms designers Dieudonné Saive and Ernest Vervier and manufactured by *Fabrique Nationale Herstal* (FN Herstal).

During the Cold War the FAL was adopted by many countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), with the notable exception of the United States. It is one of the most widely used rifles in history, having been used by more than 90 countries.

Because of its prevalence and widespread usage among the militaries of many NATO and first world countries during the Cold War it was given the ti-

tle "The right arm of the Free World".

It is chambered for the 7.62×51mm NATO cartridge (although originally designed for the .280 British intermediate cartridge). The British Commonwealth variant of the FAL was redesigned from FN's metric FAL into British imperial units and was produced under licence as the L1A1 Self-Loading Rifle.

FN created what is possibly the classic post-war battle rifle. Formally introduced by its designers Dieudonné Saive and Ernest Vervier in 1951, and produced

two years later.

The FAL battle rifle has its Warsaw Pact counterpart in the AKM, each being fielded by dozens of countries and produced in many of them. A few, such as Israel and South Africa, manufactured and issued both designs at various times. Unlike the Soviet AKM assault rifle, the FAL utilized a heavier full-power rifle cartridge.

Design

The FAL operates by means of a gas-operated action very similar to that of the Russian SVT-40.

The gas system is driven by a short-stroke,



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE: Above is the British L1A1 rifle with the FN FAL below.

spring-loaded piston housed above the barrel, and the locking mechanism is what is known as a tilting breechblock. To lock, it drops down into a solid shoulder of metal in the heavy receiver much like the bolts of the Russian SKS carbine and French MAS-49 series of semi-automatic rifles.

The gas system is fitted with a gas regulator behind the front sight base, allowing adjustment of the gas system in response to environmental conditions. The piston system can be bypassed completely, using the gas plug, to allow for the firing of rifle grenades and manual operation.

The FAL's magazine capacity ranges from five to 30 rounds, with most magazines holding 20 rounds. In fixed stock versions of the FAL, the recoil spring is housed in the stock, while in folding-stock versions it is housed in the receiver cover, necessitating a slightly different receiver cover, recoil spring, and bolt carrier, and a modified lower receiver for the stock.

FAL rifles have also been manufactured in both light and heavy-barrel configurations, with the heavy barrel intended

for automatic fire as a section or squad light support weapon. Most heavy barrel FALs are equipped with bipods, although some light barrel models were equipped with bipods, such as the Austrian StG58 and the German G1, and a bipod was later made available as an accessory.


Among other 7.62×51mm NATO battle rifles at the time, the FN FAL had relatively light recoil, due to the gas system being able to be tuned via regulator in fore-end of the rifle, which allowed for excess gas which would simply increase recoil to bleed off. In fully automatic mode, however, the shooter receives considerable abuse from recoil, and the weapon climbs off-target quickly, making automatic fire only of marginal effectiveness.

Many military forces using the FAL eventually eliminated full-automatic firearms training in the light-barrel FAL.

Production and use

The FAL has been used by over 90 countries, and over two million have been produced. The FAL was originally made by *Fabrique Nationale de Herstal* (FN) in Liège, Belgium,

FN FAL



Weight: 4.3 kg

Length: 1,090 mm

Barrel Length: 533 mm

Cartridge: 7.62x51 NATO

Action: Gas operated

Rate of fire: 700 rounds/min

Muzzle Velocity: 840 m/s

Feed System: 20 or 30 round detachable box magazine

Sights: Aperture rear sight, post front sight; sight radius:

but it has also been made under license in fifteen countries. As of August 2006, new examples were still being produced by at least four different manufacturers worldwide.

A distinct sub-family was the Commonwealth inch-dimensioned versions that were manufactured in the United Kingdom and Australia (as the L1A1 Self Loading Rifle or SLR), and in Canada as the C1. The standard metric-dimensioned FAL was manufactured in South Africa (where it was known as the R1), Brazil, Israel, Austria and Argentina. Both the SLR and FAL were also produced without license by India.

Mexico assembled FN-made components into complete rifles at its national arsenal in



Mexico City. The FAL was also exported to many other countries, such as Venezuela, where a small-arms industry produces some basically unchanged variants, as well as ammunition.

By modern standards, one disadvantage of the FAL is the amount of work which goes into machining the complex receiver, bolt and bolt carrier. Some theorized that the movement of the tilting bolt mechanism tends to return differently with each shot, affecting inherent accuracy of the weapon, but this has been proven to be false. The FAL's receiver is machined, while most other modern military rifles use quicker stamping or casting techniques.

Modern FALs have many improvements over those produced by FN and others in the mid-20th-century.

Conflicts

In the more than 60 years of use worldwide, the FAL has seen use in conflicts all over the world. During the Falklands War, the FN FAL was used by both sides. The FAL was used by the Argentine armed forces and the L1A1 Self Loading Rifle (SLR), a semi-automatic only version of the FAL, was used by the armed forces of the UK and other Commonwealth nations.

The FAL has been used in no fewer than 31 conflicts and wars. These include:

- Mau Mau Uprising.
- Bay of Pigs Invasion.
- Nigerian Civil War.
- Six-Day War.
- Yom Kippur War.
- Angolan Civil War.
- Rhodesian Bush War.
- Falklands War.
- South African Border War.

R1 rifle

The FAL was produced under license by ARMSCOR by Lytleton Engineering Works.

After a competition between the German G3 rifle, the Armalite AR-10, and the FN FAL, the South African Defence Force adopted three main variants of the FAL: a rifle with the designation R1, a "lightweight" variant of the FN FAL 50.64 with folding butt, fabricated locally under the designation R2, and a model designed for police use not capable of automatic fire under the designation R3.

A number of other variants of the R1 were built, the R1 HB, which had a heavy barrel and bipod, the R1 Sniper, which could be fitted with a scope and the R1 Para Carbine, which used a Single Point IR sight and had a shorter barrel.

The R1 was standard issue in

the SADF until the introduction of the R4 in the early 1980s. It is still used by the SANDF as a designated marksman rifle.

5.56 mm vs 7.62 mm

Many countries that used the 7.62 mm FAL have now switched to weapons that use the 5.56×45 mm NATO round.

South Africa adopted the R4, which is based on the Israeli IMI Galil.

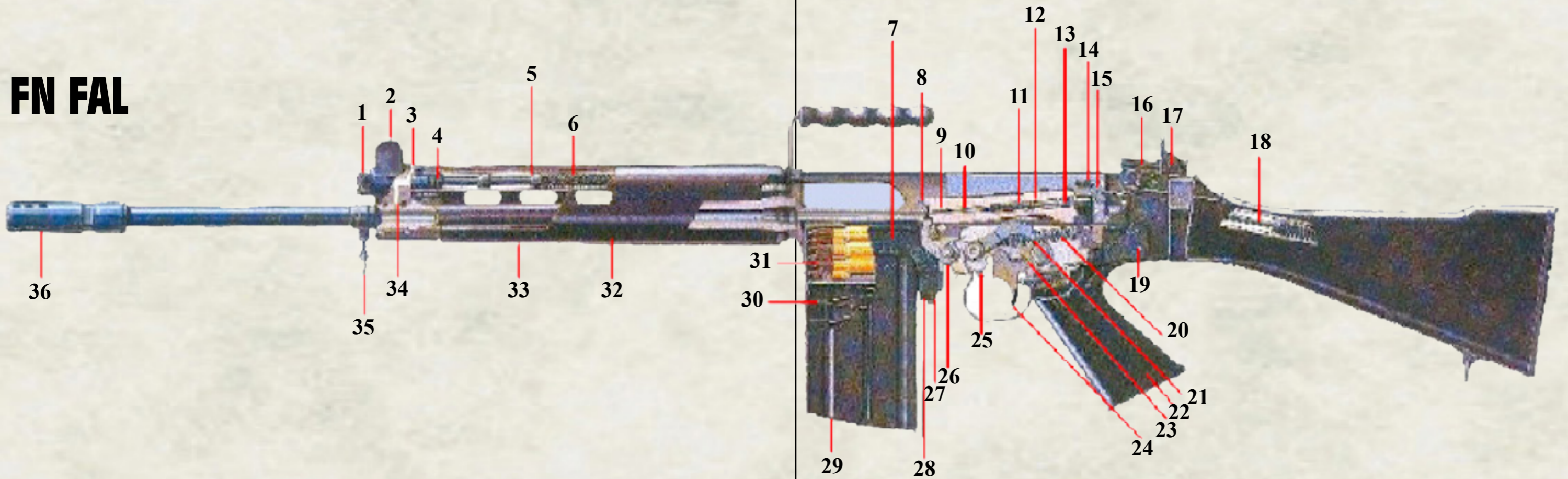
Many countries have also switched to bullpup assault rifles. For example, Britain now uses the 5.56 mm SA80. Both Austria and the Irish Defence Forces use the Steyr AUG. France uses the FAMAS F1.

Yet there are still many countries that use the FN FAL, a weapon that was forged in battle.

KEY

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Gasplug. | 21. Axis change lever. |
| 2. Foresight Protector. | 22. Pistol grip. |
| 3. Gas outlet vent. | 23. Plunger. |
| 4. Gas regulator sleeve. | 24. Trigger. |
| 5. Piston. | 25. Sear. |
| 6. Piston spring. | 26. Locking shoulder. |
| 7. Ejector. | 27. Safety sear. |
| 8. Extractor. | 28. Magazine catch. |
| 9. Firing pin. | 29. Magazine. |
| 10. Slide. | 30. Spring for magazine platform. |
| 11. Firing pin spring. | 31. 7.62 mm NATO round. |
| 12. Hammer. | 32. Hand guard. |
| 13. Pin retraining firing gun. | 33. Barrel. |
| 14. Slip rod spring. | 34. Gas port. |
| 15. Plunger spring slip rod. | 35. Front sling swivel. |
| 16. Backsight adjuster screw. | 36. Flash hider. |
| 17. Backsight. | |
| 18. Slide rod. | |
| 19. Lever activating butt catch. | |
| 20. Hammer spring. | |

FN FAL



With the Allies planning the invasion of Sicily, it was vital to try and convince the Germans that the actual target of the invasion was Greece, and not Italy. This is where Operation Mincemeat was put into action.

The planned Allied invasion of Sicily, codenamed Operation Husky, was set for July 1943. There was, however, one small problem. The Germans had a pretty good idea of where and when the invasion would take place.

What the Allies needed to do was convince the Germans that the target of the invasion would not be Sicily, but rather somewhere else. It was with this in mind that Operation Mincemeat was born.

Background

In late 1942, with the Allied success in the North African campaign, military planners turned their attention to the next target.

British planners considered that an invasion of France from Britain could not take place until 1944 and the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, wanted to use the Allied forces from North Africa to attack Europe's "soft underbelly".

There were two possible targets for the Allies to attack. The first option was Sicily; control of the island would open the Mediterranean Sea to Allied shipping and allow the invasion of continental Europe through Italy.

The second option was to go into Greece and the Balkans, to trap the German forces between the British and American invaders and the Soviets.

At the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, Allied planners agreed on the selection of Sicily – codenamed Operation Husky – and decided to undertake the invasion no later than July.

There was concern among the Allied planners that Sicily was an obvious choice – Churchill is reputed to have said "Everyone but a bloody fool would know that it's Sicily" – and that the build-up of resources for the invasion would be detected.

Adolf Hitler was concerned about a Balkan invasion, as the area had been the source of

raw materials for the German war industry, including copper, bauxite, chrome and oil. The Allies knew of Hitler's fears, and they launched Operation Barclay, a deception operation to play upon his concerns and to mislead the Germans into thinking the Balkans were the objective, diverting resources from Sicily.

The deception reinforced German strategic thinking about the likely British target. To suggest the eastern Mediterranean was the target, the Allies set up a headquarters in Cairo, Egypt, for a fictional formation, the Twelfth Army, consisting of twelve divisions.

Military manoeuvres were conducted in Syria, with numbers inflated by dummy tanks and armoured vehicles to deceive observers. Greek interpreters were recruited and the Allies stockpiled Greek maps and currency.

False communications about troop movements were generated from the Twelfth Army headquarters, while the Allied command post in Tunis – which was to be the headquarters of the Sicily invasion – reduced radio traffic by using landlines wherever possible.

Yet they needed something more. Something to fully convince the Germans that Greece would be the target of the Allied invasion. This is where Operation Mincemeat



Lieutenant Commander Ian Fleming

came in. The Allies hoped that it would be the final straw to convince the Germans.

The plan

Operation Mincemeat was based on a memo, written by Rear Admiral John Godfrey, the Director of the Naval Intelligence Division, and his personal assistant, Lieutenant Commander Ian Fleming. And yes, we are talking about that Ian Fleming - the man that would later create James Bond.

And while Admiral Godfrey took the credit for the plan, it bore all the hallmarks of something that would have been dreamt up by Fleming.

The plan was to take a corpse, dress it in the uniform of a British officer, place 'secret' documents on the corpse, and then release it from a submarine near the coast of Spain.

The body would wash up on the Spanish coast and be turned over to the Spanish authorities. Spain was a neutral country, so they would be obliged to turn the body over to the British embassy.

British Intelligence knew,

however, that any documents found on the body would first be shared with the *Abwehr*, the German military intelligence organisation, before the originals were returned to the British.

Charles Cholmondeley and Ewen Montagu were tasked with carrying out the plan. Cholmondeley was a flight lieutenant in the Royal Air Force (RAF) who had been seconded to MI5, Britain's domestic counter-intelligence and security service. Montagu was a judge and Royal Navy intelligence officer.

As there was a naval connection to the plan, Montagu was assigned as the naval representative, to work with Cholmondeley to develop the plan further.

Major William Martin

The ruse was to produce a body of a British officer that had been killed when an aircraft had crashed into the sea.

The first priority on the list was to find a suitable corpse. Montagu approached the pathologist Sir Bernard Spilsbury to determine what kind of body they needed and what factors they would need to take into account to fool a Spanish pathologist.

Spilsbury informed him that those who died in an air crash often did so from shock and not drowning; the lungs would not necessarily be filled with water.

He added that "Spaniards, as Roman Catholics, were averse to post-mortems and did not hold them unless the cause of death was of great importance".

This meant that not only would they have a better degree

of success than they previously thought, but that there would be a larger number of corpses potentially available for selection when the time came.

When Montagu discussed the possibility of obtaining a corpse with Bentley Purchase, the coroner for the Northern District of London, he was told there would be practical and legal difficulties:

"I should think bodies are the only commodities not in short supply at the moment [but] even with bodies all over the place, each one has to be accounted for".

Purchase promised to look out for a body that was suitable, with no relatives who would claim the corpse for burial.

On 28 January 1943 Purchase contacted Montagu with the news he had located a suitable body, probably that of Glyndwr Michael, a tramp who died from eating rat poison that contained phosphorus.

Purchase informed Montagu and Cholmondeley that the small amount of poison in the system would not be identified in a body that was supposed to have been floating in the sea for several days.

When Montagu commented that the under-nourished corpse did not look like a fit field officer, Purchase informed him that "he does not have to look like an officer – only a staff officer", more used to office work.

Purchase agreed to keep the body in the mortuary refrigerator at a temperature of 4 °C – any colder and the flesh would freeze, which would be obvious after the body defrosted.

He warned Montagu and

Cholmondeley that the body had to be used within three months, after which it would have decomposed past the point of usefulness.

Montagu and Cholmondeley began to create a “legend” – a fictitious background and character – for the body.

The name and rank chosen was Captain (Acting Major) William Martin, of the Royal Marines assigned to Combined Operations Headquarters. The name “Martin” was selected because there were several men with that name of about that rank in the Royal Marines.

As a Royal Marine, Major Martin came under Admiralty authority, and it would be easy to ensure that all official inquiries and messages about his death would be routed to the Naval Intelligence Division.

Additionally, Royal Marines would wear battledress, which was easily obtainable and came in standard sizes.

The rank of acting major made him senior enough to be entrusted with sensitive documents, but not so prominent that anyone would expect to know him.

To reinforce the impression of Martin being a real person, Montagu and Cholmondeley provided corroborative details to be carried on his person – known in espionage circles as wallet or pocket litter.

These included a photograph of an invented fiancée named Pam; the image was of an MI5 clerk, Jean Leslie. Two love letters from Pam were included in the pocket litter, as was a receipt for a diamond engagement ring costing £53 10s 6d from a Bond



FAKE ID: The naval identity card created for Major Martin. The person in the photograph was Captain Ronnie Reed of MI5.

Street jewellery shop.

Additional personal correspondence was included, consisting of a letter from the fictitious Martin’s father – described by Macintyre as “pompous and pedantic as only an Edwardian father could be” – which included a note from the family solicitor, and a message from Lloyds Bank, demanding payment of an overdraft of £79 19s 2d.

To ensure that the letters would remain legible after immersion in seawater, Montagu asked MI5 scientists to conduct tests on different inks to see which would last longest in the water, and they provided him with a suitable list of popular and available ink brands.

Other items of pocket litter placed on Martin included a book of stamps, a silver cross and a St. Christopher’s medalion, cigarettes, matches, a pencil stub, keys and a receipt from Gieves for a new shirt.

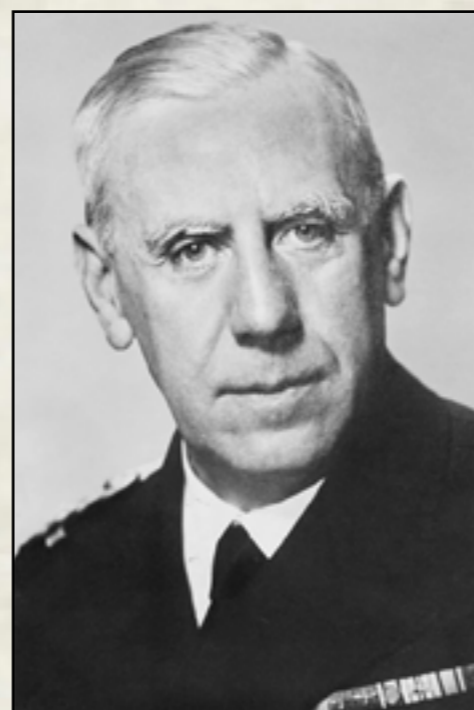
To provide a date that Martin had been in London, ticket

stubs from a London theatre and a bill for four nights’ lodging at the Naval and Military Club were added. Along with the other items placed on him, an itinerary of his activity in London could be constructed from 18 to 24 April.

Attempts were made to photograph the corpse for the naval identity card Martin would have to carry, but the results were unsatisfactory, and it was obvious that the images were of a cadaver.

Montagu and Cholmondeley conducted a search for people who resembled the corpse, finding Captain Ronnie Reed of MI5; Reed agreed to be photographed for the identity card, wearing a Royal Marine uniform.

As the three cards and passes needed to look not too new for a long-serving officer, they were issued as recent replacements for lost originals. Montagu spent the next few weeks rubbing all three cards on his trousers to provide a used sheen



ABWEHR HEAD: Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, the head of the Abwehr, who intervened to obtain the Mincemeat documents

to them. To provide a used look to the uniform, it was worn by Cholmondeley, who was about the same build.

The deception documents

Montagu outlined three criteria for the document that contained the details of the falsified plans to land in the Balkans.

He said that the target should be casually but clearly identified, that it should name Sicily and another location as cover, and that it should be in an unofficial correspondence that would not normally be sent by diplomatic courier, or encoded signal.

The main document was a personal letter from Lieutenant General Sir Archibald Nye, the vice chief of the Imperial General Staff – who had a deep knowledge of ongoing military operations – to General Sir Harold Alexander, commander of the Anglo-American 18th Army

Group in Algeria and Tunisia under General Eisenhower.

After several attempts at drafting the document did not generate something that was considered natural, it was suggested that Nye should draw up the letter himself to cover the required points.

The letter covered several purportedly sensitive subjects, such as the (unwanted) award of Purple Heart medals by US forces to British servicemen serving with them and the appointment of a new commander of the Brigade of Guards. Montagu thought the result was “quite brilliant”.

There was also a letter of introduction for Martin from his putative commanding officer, Vice-Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, the chief of Combined Operations, to Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham, the commander-in-chief Mediterranean Fleet and Allied naval commander in the Mediterranean.

Martin was referred to in the letter as an amphibious warfare expert on loan until “the assault is over”. The document included a clumsy joke about sardines, which Montagu inserted in the hope that the Germans would see it as a reference to a planned invasion of Sardinia.

A single black eyelash was placed within the letter to check if the Germans or Spanish had opened it.

Montagu considered that there would be a possible “Roman Catholic prejudice against tampering with corpses”, which could miss the documents stored in the corpse’s pockets, so they added them to an offi-

cial briefcase that would not be overlooked.

To justify carrying documents in a briefcase, Major Martin was given two proof copies of the official pamphlet on combined operations written by the author Hilary Saunders – then on Mountbatten’s staff – and a letter from Mountbatten to Eisenhower, asking him to write a brief foreword for the pamphlet’s US edition.

The planning team first thought of having the handle clutched in the corpse’s hand, held in place by rigour mortis, but the rigour would probably wear off and the briefcase would drift away. They therefore equipped Martin with a leather-covered chain, such as was used by bank and jewellery couriers to secure their cases against snatching. The chain unobtrusively runs down a sleeve to the case.

To Montagu it seemed unlikely that the major would keep the bag secured to his wrist during the long flight from Britain, so the chain was looped around the belt of his trench coat.

Execution of the plan

In the early hours of 17 April 1943 the corpse of Michael was dressed as Martin, although there was one last-minute hitch: the feet had frozen.

Purchase, Montagu and Cholmondeley could not put the boots on, so an electric heater was located and the feet defrosted enough to put the boots on properly.

The pocket litter was placed on the body, and the briefcase attached. The body was placed in the canister, which was filled with 9.5 kg of dry ice and sealed

up. When the dry ice sublimated, it filled the canister with carbon dioxide and drove out any oxygen, thus preserving the body without refrigeration.

The canister was transported to Greenock, west Scotland, and loaded on board the submarine HMS Seraph, which was preparing for a deployment to the Mediterranean.

Seraph's commander, Lt. Bill Jewell, and crew had previous special operations experience. Jewell told his men that the canister contained a top secret meteorological device to be deployed near Spain.

On 19 April Seraph set sail and arrived just off the coast of Huelva on 29 April after having been bombed twice en route.

After spending the day reconnoitring the coastline, at 4:15 am on 30 April, Seraph surfaced. Jewell had the canister brought up on deck, then sent all his crew below except the officers. They opened the container and lowered the body into the water.

Jewell read Psalm 39 and ordered the engines to full astern; the wash from the screws pushed the corpse toward the shore.

Spanish reaction

The body of "Major Martin" was found at around 9:30 am on 30 April 1943 by a local fisherman; it was taken to Huelva by Spanish soldiers, where it was handed over to a naval judge. Haselden, as vice-consul, was officially informed by the Spaniards; he reported back to the Admiralty that the body and briefcase had been found.

At midday on 1 May an autop-

sy was undertaken on Michael's body; Haselden was present and – in order to minimise the possibilities that the two Spanish doctors identified that the body was a three-month-old corpse – Haselden asked if, in the heat of the day and smell of the corpse, the doctors should bring the post mortem to a close and have lunch.

They agreed and signed a death certificate for Major William Martin for "asphyxiation through immersion in the sea"; the body was released by the Spanish and, as Major Martin, was buried in the San Marco section of Nuestra Señora cemetery in Huelva, with full military honours on 2 May.

The Spanish navy retained the briefcase and, despite pressure from Abwehr agents, neither it nor its contents were handed over to the Germans.

On 5 May the briefcase was passed to the naval headquarters at San Fernando near Cadiz, for forwarding to Madrid.

While at San Fernando the contents were photographed by German sympathisers, but the letters were not opened.

Once the briefcase arrived in Madrid, its contents became the focus of attention of Karl-Erich Kuhlenthal, one of the most senior Abwehr agents in Spain.

He asked Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, the head of the Abwehr, to personally intervene and persuade the Spanish to surrender the documents.

Acceding to the request, the Spanish removed the still-damp paper by tightly winding it around a probe into a cylindrical shape, and then pulling it out between the envelope flap –



THE MAN WHO NEVER WAS: The body of 'Major Martin', complete with briefcase, prior to it being released off the coast of Spain.

which was still closed by a wax seal – and the envelope body.

The letters were dried and photographed, then soaked in salt water for 24 hours before being re-inserted into their envelopes, without the eyelash that had been planted there. The information was passed to the Germans on 8 May.

This was deemed so important by the Abwehr agents in Spain that Kuhlenthal personally took the documents to Germany.

On 11 May the briefcase, complete with the documents, was returned to Haselden by the Spanish authorities; he forwarded it to London in the diplomatic bag. On receipt, the documents were forensically examined, and the absence of the eyelash noted. Further tests revealed that the documents had indeed been copied.

Final proof that the Germans had been passed the informa-



FINAL RESTING PLACE: The grave of Glyndwr Michael in Huelva, Spain. His body was used as that of Major Martin, RM.

tion from the letters came on 14 May when a German communication was decrypted by the Ultra source of signals intelligence produced by the Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) at Bletchley Park.

The message, which had been sent two days previously, warned that the invasion was to be in the Balkans, with a feint to the Dodecanese.

A message was sent by Brigadier Leslie Hollis – the secretary to the Chiefs of Staff Committee – to Churchill, then in the United States. It read "Mince-meat swallowed rod, line and sinker by the right people and from the best information they look like acting on it."

German reaction

On 14 May 1943 Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz met Hitler to discuss Dönitz's recent visit to Italy, his meeting with the Italian leader Benito Mussolini and the progress of the war.

Hitler informed Mussolini that Greece, Sardinia and Corsica must be defended "at all costs", and that German troops would be best placed to do the job. He ordered that the experienced 1st Panzer Division be transferred from France to Salonika, Greece.

The order was intercepted by GC&CS on 21 May. By the end of June, German troop strength on Sardinia had been doubled to 10,000, with fighter aircraft also based there as support. German torpedo boats were moved from Sicily to the Greek islands in preparation.

Seven German divisions transferred to Greece, raising the number present to eight, and ten were posted to the Balkans, raising the number present to 18.

On 9 July the Allies invaded Sicily in Operation Husky. German signals intercepted by GC&CS showed that even four hours after the invasion of Sicily began, twenty-one aircraft left Sicily to reinforce Sardinia.

For a considerable time after the initial invasion, Hitler was still convinced that an attack on the Balkans was imminent, and in late July he sent General Erwin Rommel to Salonika to prepare the defence of the region.

By the time the German high command realised the mistake, it was too late to make a difference.

Aftermath

On 25 July 1943, as the battle for Sicily went against the Axis forces, the Italian Grand Council of Fascism voted to limit the power of Mussolini, and handed control of the Italian armed

forces over to King Victor Emmanuel III.

The following day Mussolini met the King, who dismissed him as prime minister; the former dictator was then imprisoned. A new Italian government took power and began secret negotiations with the Allies.

Sicily fell on 17 August after a force of 65,000 Germans held off 400,000 American and British troops long enough to allow many of the Germans to evacuate to the Italian mainland.

The military historian Michael Howard, while describing Mince-meat as "perhaps the most successful single deception operation of the entire war", considered Mince-meat and Barclay to have less impact on the course of the Sicily campaign than Hitler's "congenital obsession with the Balkans".

The exact impact of Mince-meat is impossible to calculate. Although the British had expected 10,000 killed or wounded in the first week of fighting, only a seventh of that number became casualties; the navy expected 300 ships would be sunk in the action, but they lost 12. The predicted 90-day campaign was over in 38.

As a result of Husky, Hitler suspended the Kursk offensive on 13 July. This was partly because of the performance of the Soviet army, but partly because he still assumed that the Allied landing on Sicily was a feint that preceded the invasion in the Balkans, and he wanted to have troops available for fast deployment to meet them. Once Hitler gave up the initiative to the Soviets, he never regained it.



MATT 'MAD MERC' O'BRIEN *has been hired to rescue the president of Grand Chien. His team of mercenaries are ready for action. Unfortunately his limited budget means he can't afford the best mercs.*

Back in February 2018 I reviewed a game called Jagged Alliance 2: Back in Action. It was a game that I enjoyed and I gave it a rating of 8.5/10.

The slight problem was that the game was released in 2012. Now, finally, on 14 July 2023, Jagged Alliance 3 has been released.

The publishers of the game, THQ Nordic, had this to say about the game, "The country of Grand Chien is thrown into chaos when the elected president goes missing and the paramilitary force known as "the Legion" seizes control. Hire mercs, meet interesting characters, and fight in tactically deep turn-based combat in this true successor to a beloved franchise."

The game starts when you are contacted by the president's daughter. She wants you to hire a team of mercenaries to go up against the Legion, rescue her father, and return him to power.

The first thing you do is go onto the A.I.M (Association of International Mercenaries) website and hire some mercenaries.

There four different classes of mercenaries available. They are Recruit, Veteran, Elite and Legendary.

There are 10 recruits, nine

veterans, eight elite, and eight legendary mercenaries. Some of them may be offline at the start of the game, which means you cannot hire them.

You hire a mercenary on contract for between one and 14 days. You can hire up to three teams of mercenaries and each team can have between one and six members in a team.

The problem is that you have a limited budget at the start so you can not afford the really good mercenaries. And, even if you had the money, you cannot hire legendary mercenaries. To do so you need a Gold membership of A.I.M - and this costs \$20,000.

Each mercenary comes with certain attributes. These are Health, Agility, Dexterity, Strength, Wisdom, Leadership, Marksmanship, Mechanical, Explosives and Medical.

These attributes determine how well, or bad, they perform. Some mercenaries are specialists. For example a mechanic can repair and modify weapons, can pick locks, and can hack electronic devices.

An explosive expert can detect and defuse landmines and booby traps and can use explosives to blow down doors and walls. They are also good with explosive weapons such as the RPG-7, mortar and grenade

launcher. They can even manufacture their own explosives.

While most mercs are able to bandage themselves to stop bleeding, if a merc is seriously wounded they will need someone with a high medical skill to treat them.

When hired, each merc brings their own equipment with them. This will usually consist of a firearm with limited ammunition. To begin with these weapons are not great. Most will have a pistol or revolver. Some of the veteran or elite mercs may be armed with a shotgun or submachine gun. One of the elite mercenaries, Russian Ivan Dolvich, at least has an AK-47.

Talking about weapons, there are tons of them available. Everything from side arms, shotguns, SMGs, assault rifles, machine guns, sniper rifles, melee weapons, grenades, and even heavy weapons.

You will need the correct ammo for a weapon. Ammunition is available in various types such as standard, hollow point, tracer or armoured piercing. Grenades can be high-explosive, gas, or smoke.

Equipment can consist of armour (vest, helmet, and leggings), lock picks, first aid kits, medical bags, wire cutters, crowbar and much more.

Weapons, ammo and equip-



ment can be looted from some enemies after combat, found in stashes, or purchased from other NPCs (non-player characters) in the game.

Once you're hired your initial team, you set off to Grand Chien. The country consists of a number of islands, each divided into sectors. Once you've killed any enemies in a sector you take control of it. This means you can interact with NPCs, search for stashes and loot, or carry out operations.

These operations can include treating any of your team that are wounded, scouting adjacent sectors, train your own mercenaries, recruit and train local militia, repair items, or even enjoy a bit of R&R.

You can freely move your team around a sector. Movement and postures include standing, crouching, prone or stealth. In stealth mode you move in a crouched position and move slower. It does, how-

ever, make it more difficult for an enemy to spot you.

Once you are spotted by an enemy or initiate combat, the game changes to turn-based combat.

You will have a turn, the enemy has a turn, and civilians have a turn. Each of your characters has a certain amount of AP (action points). AP are used to move, change stance, reload weapons, aim, and fire.

When aiming you can aim for the head, arms, torso, groin, or legs. Always use cover to your best advantage. It makes it more difficult for an enemy to hit you.

Terrain varies from open plains, thick bush, villages and built up areas.

Four sectors contain diamond mines. Once you capture these sectors they will provide you with a daily income. This means that you will be able to recruit better mercenaries and buy better equipment.

One of the good things with the game is that the developers have allowed modding. After only two weeks there are already 285 mods for the game.

This is a fun and challenging game and well worth the cost.



Publisher - THQ Nordic

Genre - Turn-based combat

Score - 9/10

Price - R 639.00 (on Steam)



Movie Review

Enemy at the Gates

Released: 2001
Running time: 131 minutes
Director: Peter Jean-Jacques Annaud

Enemy at the Gates is a 2001 film loosely based on a true story. It is a fictionalized version of sniper Vasily Zaytsev, a Hero of the Soviet Union during World War II.

In 1942 Zaytsev, a young shepherd from the Ural Mountains, finds himself on the front lines during the Battle of Stalingrad.

After a failed attack on a German position Zaytsev uses his impressive shooting skills, taught to him at a young age by his grandfather, to save both himself and a Russian Political Commissar, Danilov.

Shortly afterwards Nikita Khrushchev arrives in Stalingrad to take over the defence of the city. He demands ideas to improve the morale of the Soviet troops.

Danilov suggests that people need to have heroes to give them hope and that the army newspaper needs to be publishing stories about the exploits of these heroes.

Khrushchev asks Danilov if he knows any heroes in Stalingrad and he says that he knows of one.

The army newspaper paints Zaytsev as a national hero and a propaganda icon. He is transferred to the sniper division and he and Danilov become friends.

Both become romantically interested in Tania Chernova, a resident of Stalingrad who has become a private in the local militia. Seeing as how she stud-

ied German at Moscow University Danilov has her transferred to an intelligence unit away from the battlefield.

With the Soviet snipers, and Zaytsev in particular, taking an increasing toll on German officers the director of the Wehrmacht sniper school at Zossen, Major Erwin König, is deployed to Stalingrad to take out Zaytsev. When the Red Army command learns of König's mission, they dispatch König's former student Koulikov to help Zaytsev kill him.

Sacha Filippova, a young Soviet boy, volunteers to act as a double agent by passing König false information about Zaytsev's whereabouts, thus giving Zaytsev a chance to ambush the major.

Zaytsev and Tania have fallen in love and this causes a great deal of jealousy from Danilov who disparages Zaytsev in a letter to his superiors

What follows is a deadly game of cat-and-mouse as the two snipers hunt each other in the ruined city.

While Vasily Zaytsev was a real person, the story of his duel with König is fictional. No sniper named König has ever been identified in the German records.

Enemy at the Gates is well worth watching. There are a couple of really good scenes such as when König sets a trap for Zaytsev in an old factory.

The film was based on the book *Enemy at the Gates: The*

Battle for Stalingrad by William Craig and the movie runs for 131 minutes.

Cast

- Jude Law – Vasily Zaytsev
- Joseph Fiennes – Commisar Danilov
- Rachel Weisz – Tania Chernova
- Bob Hoskins – Nikita Khrushchev
- Ed Harris – Major Erwin König
- Ron Perlman – Koulikov
- Eva Mattes – Mother Filippova
- Gabriel Marshall-Thomson – Sasha Filippova
- Matthias Habich – General Friedrich Paulus



Click on the box cover to watch a trailer of the film.

Cuito Cuanavale - Frontline Accounts by Soviet Soldiers

Compiled and edited by Gennady Shubin, Igor Zhdarkin, Vyacheslav Barabulya and Alexandra Kuznetsova-Timonova this book is a follow-up to the very successful *Bush War* which provided personal, first-hand encounters of Soviet military advisors to the Angolan Army.

This volume concentrates on the climax of this conflict - the 1987/8 Battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

It was the largest battle on African soil since World War II. South Africa and Unita went up against Angolan FAPLA troops and their Cuban allies. It was a battle that to this day is hotly debated with both sides claiming victory.

The Soviet soldier's experi-

ence of the war and their views and assessment of their South African enemies as well as their Cuban and Angolan allies will fascinate South African readers. At the same time they offer new insights into the conflict.

Having known quite a few people that took part in the battle I've been lucky enough to listen to first-hand accounts. I also read a number of books on the battle, mostly written from the South African perspective.

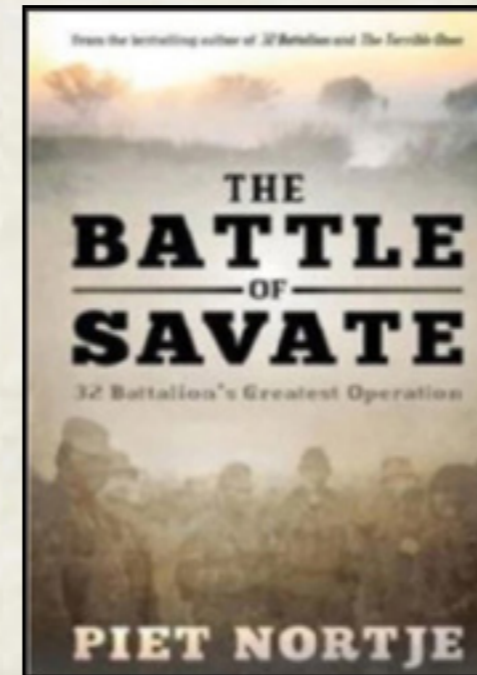
This book gives a fresh and unique perspective in that it gives a glimpse of how the 'other' side saw the battle.

The book is well written and the accounts really are personal. Anyone that served in combat will find themselves nodding their heads and identifying with



many of the stories. After all, no matter in which army you were, soldiers remain soldiers.

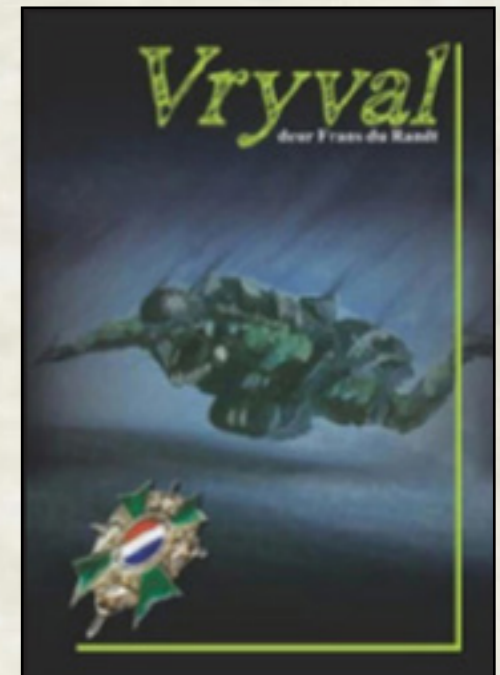
Softcover: 208 pages
Price: R255.00



The Battle of Savate
R300



We Conquer from Above
R395



Vryval
R275

All books are available from [Bush War Books](#)

This month in military history

Some of the significant military events that happened in July. Highlighted in blue are the names of those members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that lost their lives during the month of August.

1 August

- **1798** - The British fleet under Lord Nelson defeats the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile, at Aboukir Bay, Egypt, thus thwarting Napoleon's conquest of the Middle East. Napoleon Bonaparte and his forces are left stranded in Egypt.
- **1900** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War General Ian Hamilton, commanding a force of about 6,000 men with twenty-six field guns, is sent to capture Commando Nek and Silkaatsnek, between Brits and Pretoria, and to cover Baden-Powell's retreat to Pretoria.
- **1901** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War the British parliament votes an additional £12,500 00 for munitions.
- **1901** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War Sir G. Lagden, formerly Resident Commissioner in Basutoland, is appointed by the British as the Commissioner of Native Affairs in the Transvaal and the 'Orange River Colony'.
- **1938** - Air Force Base Waterkloof is founded with two hangars, a runway and No's 1 and 2 Fighter-bomber Squadrons and No 3 Communication Squadron, mainly equipped with Hawker Hartebeest Aircraft. Lt. Col.

- H.G. Willmot is first permanent Officer Commanding.
- **1944** - The Warsaw Uprising began as the Polish Home Army, numbering about 40,000 Polish patriots, began shooting at German troops in the streets. The Nazis then sent eight divisions to battle the Poles, who had hoped for, but did not receive, assistance from the Allies. Two months later, the rebellion was quashed.
- **1946** - Andrei Vlasov, Russian general (who fought for both the Red Army and the German Wehrmacht) is executed at age 45.
- **1957** - The United States and Canada form the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD).
- **1975** - An order is issued withdrawing the remaining South African Police from Rhodesia.
- **1979** - Lieutenant Sidney Edward Watts from 1 South West Africa Squadron SWATF was killed when his private Cessna 182 aircraft crashed at Eros Airport outside Windhoek during Squadron night flying exercises. He was 28.
- **1981** - Private Rocco Bernard Du Plooy from 2 Squadron was accidentally killed while on official duty but the exact cause of his

- death is unknown. He was 17.
- **1982** - The Kenyan Air Force disbands following an attempted coup by non-commissioned officers in which 159 died.
- **1987** - Corporal Marius Albertus van Zyl from Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident at Oudshoorn while on weekend pass. He was 20.
- **1988** - Seaman Willem Schalk van der Merwe from SAS Rand was killed in a military bus accident in Durban. He was 19.
- **1990** - ANC and its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) suspends armed actions after twenty-nine years.
- **1990** - Two members of the Cape Regiment were killed in a military vehicle accident at Hammersdale. The casualties were: Rifleman Johannes Jacobus Lourens (27). Rifleman Cupido Johannes Mentoor (21).
- **1992** - Corporal Michael Paul Bankenberg from Group 39 was shot dead by a fellow soldier in Queens-town. He was 21. The soldier who did the shooting then committed suicide. He was 21.
- **1993** - Two members from 3 SAI were killed when their

Mamba Armoured Personnel Carrier overturned near Table Mountain outside Pietermaritzburg. The casualties were: Lance Corporal L. P. Petersen (19). Lance Corporal Johnathan Mervin Thomas (20).

- **1996** - Mohammed Farah Aidid, who has controlled much of Somalia during its civil war, dies of wounds suffered during a skirmish with another faction.

2 August

- **1900** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War Lord Roberts sends his Chief of Staff, Lord Kitchener, to take overall command of the forces engaged against Gen. De Wet.
- **1934** - Paul von Hindenburg, German WW1 general and President of Germany (1925-34), dies of lung cancer at 86.
- **1956** - Having held talks on the escalating crisis over control of the Suez Canal with France and the US, Britain mobilises its forces.
- **1965** - Assistant Veldkornet N.R. Pullen from the 42 Army Air Reconnaissance Squadron was killed when his Cessna 185A crashed near Derby while on a routine low level reconnaissance training flight. He was 20.
- **1976** - French officials disclose that France is to supply South Africa with two destroyer escorts.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Matheus Bambi from 32

Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 27.

- **1983** - Rifleman Schaullum Lennox Silverton from Regiment Christiaan Beyers was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion in the Kaokoveld. He was 21.
- **1989** - Private Jacobus Petrus Du Plessis from Quartermaster General was shot dead while on duty at the Karl Kling Building in Pretoria. He was 18.
- **1989** - Rifleman Rudolph Ernst Thiel from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was accidentally killed in the Duku-Duku Forest Training area near Mtubatuba when his Unimog overturned on a gravel road during a training exercise. He was 19.
- **1990** - The Iraqi army invaded Kuwait amid claims that Kuwait threatened Iraq's economic existence by overproducing oil and driving prices down on the world market. An Iraqi military government was then installed in Kuwait which was annexed by Iraq on the claim that Kuwait was historically part of Iraq. This resulted in Desert Shield, the massive Allied military buildup, and later the 100-hour war against Iraq, Desert Storm.
- **1999** - At least twelve people are killed in rebel attacks on

a police station, airport and the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in and around Katima Mulilo.

- **2007** - Holden Roberto, Angolan founder and leader of the FNLA, dies at 84.

3 August

- **1900** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War, in a breach of neutrality, Colonel Stowe, Consul-General of the USA, allows a British Intelligence officer, carrying important papers from Milner to Kitchener, to hide from Danie Theron in his railway carriage.
- **1900** - War correspondent Ernie Pyle (1900-1945) was born in Dana, Indiana. His syndicated column offered sympathetic insights into the experiences of common soldiers during World War II. He received a Pulitzer Prize for his reports of the bombing of London in 1940 and later war reports from Africa, Sicily, Italy and France. He was killed by machine-gun fire near Okinawa in the South Pacific on April 18, 1945.



Jonas Savimbi

- **1900** - President Paul Kruger and Commandant General Louis Botha issued a proclamation in Pretoria which promised to pay those Burghers who remained active with their Commandos for damage done to their farms by the British troops.
- **1911** - An Italian, Commander Piazza, is the world's first pilot to fly a military mission he flies reconnaissance missions over Tripoli.
- **1934** - Jonas Savimbi, former leader of Unita, was born on this day in Munchango, Angola.
- **1940** - Italy begins occupation of British Somaliland.
- **1956** - An event unique in the SAAF history takes place. The SAAF squadron that was placed at the disposal of the United Nations Organisation during the Korean War, is presented with the prestigious United States presidential unit citation, awarded for 'extraordinary heroism against the armed enemy of the United Nations from November 1951 to April 1952'.
- **1974** - Lieutenant Henri Cornelius Lotz from 41 Squadron was killed when his AM-3C Bosbok crashed near Johannesburg. He was 25.
- **1978** - Captain Anthony Howard Brinkworth from 24 Squadron was Reported Missing when his Buccaneer SMk.50, flown by Captain Dries Marais, suffered a double flame-out

and crashed into the sea 28 miles off Green Point near Scottburgh and exploded on impact with the water. He was 27.

- **1979** - President Francisco Macías Nguema of Equatorial Guinea is overthrown in a military coup by his nephew Colonel Teodoro Obiang Ngueme Mbasogo.
- **1980** - Two members from 32 Battalion were Killed in Action in Southern Angola when they triggered a booby trap inside an enemy bunker during Operation Vastrap. They were: Corporal Michael Christian Coetzee (26). Corporal Daniel Heinrich Grobler (20).
- **1983** - Rifleman Adriaan Jacobus Booysen Thirion from the Boksborg Commando was killed in an accidental mortar bomb explosion during operations in Southern Angola. He was 25.
- **1985** - Rifleman Mark John Littrell from 1 Parachute Battalion Died of Wounds accidentally sustained while based in the Northern Operational Area. He was 19.
- **1986** - Three members from Durban Regiment were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Durban. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Robert Dennis Sterling (26). Rifleman Trevor Reginald William Holland (24). Rifleman Eric Cornelius Koekemoer (21).
- **2004** - General Muhamed

Lamari, head of Algeria's army, resigns for health reasons.

- **2005** - The Military Council for Justice and Democracy overthrows President Taya of Mauritania in a coup, while he is in Saudi Arabia for the funeral of King Fahd.

4 August

- **1578** - A Portuguese attempt at an invasion against the Moors of Morocco is thwarted at the Battle of Alcazar-el-Kebir. King Sebastian of Portugal, the King of Fez and the Moorish pretender to the throne of Fez, are all killed.
- **1900** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War the Battle of Elands River (Brakfontein), near present-day Swartruggens, that lasted several days, starts.
- **1901** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War Lord Methuen, British general, destroys the village of Schweizer-Reneke, leaving only the church standing.
- **1907** - The French fleet bombards Casablanca, northwest Morocco, following anti-foreign outbreaks.
- **1914** - Germany invades Belgium and when London's ultimatum to Berlin to withdraw expires at midnight, Britain declares war on Germany.
- **1940** - Italy invades British Somaliland and occupies some towns in Sudan and Kenya. General Godwin-Austin and his small

garrison of British troops was unable to stop the Duke d'Acota's 25,000 soldiers who swarmed across the border.

- **1967** - Military conscription became compulsory for all White men in South Africa over the age of 16. Deferment to complete schooling or a university degree was granted, but hardly any White men were exempt from conscription.
- **1972** - Signaler Victor Donald Devenish from 23 Squadron, 2 Signals Regiment was accidentally killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Binga in Rhodesia while deployed there during Ops Falcon (Clandestine Electronic Warfare Deployment). He was 18.
- **1978** - Corporal Barend Phillippus Hendrikus Du Plessis from the South African Air Force died in H.F. Verwoerd Hospital in Pretoria from injuries sustained in a private motor cycle accident. He was 21.
- **1983** - Captain Thomas Sankara seizes power in a military coup in Burkina Faso.
- **1987** - Private Francois du Preez Smit from the Provost School was killed in a military vehicle accident at the Far North Command Headquarters Unit in Pietersburg. He was 18.
- **1988** - Staff Sergeant Marius Horn from 5 SAI was accidentally killed near Eshowe. He was 27.
- **1990** - Lance Corporal

Craig Adrian Maguire from the Army Battle School died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained in the Army Battle School training area. He was 21

- **2003** - The first 200 members of a West African peacekeeping force arrive in Liberia in an effort to stop more than two months of fighting between government forces and rebels, and allow food and medicine to enter Monrovia.

5 August

- **1815** - A peace treaty with Tripoli, which follows treaties with Algeria and Tunis, brings an end to the Barbary Wars.
- **1863** - The Alabama, an American Civil War raider, captures the Northern bark, Sea Bride, outside Table Bay. The Alabama was built during the American Civil War to prey on the mercantile shipping of the Northern states. Her captain and officers were Southerners, her crew British. The Malays composed the well-known folksong *Daar Kom Die Alibama* with reference to this ship.
- **1916** - The British navy defeats the Ottomans at the naval battle off Port Said, Egypt.
- **1971** - PW Botha, the Minister of Defence, says that South Africa has become

self-sufficient in the manufacture of arms. The country is considering exporting weapons.

- **1983** - Rifleman Johannes Jacobus Christoffel Stols from 3 SAI Support Company attached to 52 Battalion, was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a boosted TMA-3 Cheese Mine while on patrol near Ogongo. He was 20.
- **1990** - The United States sends a Marine company into Monrovia, Liberia's capital, to evacuate US citizens because of a rebel threat to arrest Americans in order to provoke foreign intervention in the civil war.
- **1985** - Gunner Riaan Jakob Rautenbach from 61 Mechanised Battalion was accidentally killed when a 120mm Mortar Tube exploded after firing an over-boosted mortar bomb during training at Omuthiya. He was 20.
- **1986** - Four members from the Intelligence School in Kimberley were killed when their SAMIL 50 vehicle overturned approximately



Hugo Bierman

5 km from the Unit Headquarters. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Alan Bernard Clarke (18). Lance Corporal Jacob Johannes de Jager (18). Lance Corporal Jacques Delpont (18). Lance Corporal Jacobus Frans Hamman (18).

- **1998** - Otto Kretschmer, German U-boat commander, dies at 86.

6 August

- **1891** - British Field Marshall William Joseph Slim is born on this day.
- **1900** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War the Battle of Elands River takes place. British Gen. Carrington retreats to the Marico River and Zeerust, Western Transvaal, pursued for part of the way by Boer forces. He burns his baggage train and surplus supplies and retires towards Mafeking.
- **1916** - Admiral Hugo (Hendrik) Bierman, former Chief of the Navy and Chief of the SADF, is born in Johannesburg.
- **1945** - The first Atomic Bomb was dropped over the center of Hiroshima at 08h15, by the American B-29 bomber Enola Gay. The bomb detonated about 850 metres above ground, killing over 105,000 persons and destroying the city. Another estimated 100,000 persons later died as a result of radiation effects.
- **1980** - Rifleman Petrus Ja-

cob from 35 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.

- **1980** - Rifleman Neels Jacobus Reynolds from 41 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 18.
- **1986** - Lance Corporal Jacobus Andries Cornelius Nel from the Intelligence School in Kimberley died in the Universitas Hospital after being critically injured on 05 August 1986 when his SAMIL 50 vehicle overturned 5km from the Unit Headquarters. He was 18.
- **1997** - The SA Air Force announces that Mirages will be phased out because of a cut to the defence budget.

7 August

- **1795** - The Battle of Muizenberg takes place during the Napoleonic War when British troops disembark at Muizenberg and move towards Cape Town, notwithstanding brave defence by Lieut. P.W. Marnitz and Capt. C. Kemper after De Lille vacated his position.
- **1876** - International spy Mata Hari (1876-1917) was born (as Margaret Gertrude Zelle) in Leewarden, Netherlands. Arrested by the French in 1917 as a German spy, she was tried, convicted and sentenced to death. At

her execution, she refused a blindfold and instead threw a kiss to the French firing squad.

- **1900** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War the Battle of Tygerpoort (Venterskroon) takes place between the British under Lord Methuen and the Boers under De Wet. De Wet, with the aid of Capt. Danie Theron and fourteen of his men, escapes and Methuen falls back to regroup.
- **1901** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War Lord Kitchenier publishes his most famous of what the Boers call his 'paper bombs', proclaiming that all officers of the 'late Republics still engaged in fighting and all members of their governments will be permanently banished from South Africa unless they surrender before 15 September.
- **1901** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War the Battle of Fort Mpisane, the final big battle of this war fought in the Lowveld, takes place.
- **1901** - During the 2nd Anglo-Boer War Commandant Manie Maritz attacks Vanrhynsdorp in the Cape Province. Many vehicles, including three laden supply wagons, are taken from the British.
- **1942** - The U.S. 1st Marine Division lands on the islands of Guadalcanal and Tulagi in the Solomon Islands. It is the first American amphibious landing of the war.

- **1963** - The United States (US) informed the United Nations (UN) that it would suspend sales of arms to South Africa. The Security Council adopted Resolution 181 calling upon all states to cease the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition and military vehicles to South Africa. The arms embargo was made mandatory on 4 November, 1977.
- **1964** - Following an attack on two U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin off North Vietnam, the U.S. Congress approved the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, granting President Lyndon B. Johnson authority "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression."
- **1970** - Fighting along the Egyptian-Israeli border is brought to a halt as a new 90-day cease-fire takes effect.
- **1973** - Three members from 2 SAI were killed while undergoing Driver and Maintenance training when their Bedford truck collided with an Eland Armoured Car on a narrow bridge on the Walvis Bay to Windhoek road and overturned. The casualties were: Rifleman Kenneth Frampton Beghin (18). Rifleman Christos Constatinou (18). Rifleman Ralph George Leggett (18).
- **1981** - Lance Corporal Jan Mathys de Beer from Air Force Base Waterkloof died

in the H.F. Verwoerd Hospital in Pretoria after being critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 21.

- **1983** - Two members from 202 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. The casualties were: Rifleman S. Kavarata (21). Rifleman A.H. Katanga (22).
- **1984** - Rifleman Johannes Hendrik Strydom from the Infantry School died from a gunshot wound sustained as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle while at the De Brug Training Area. He was 19.
- **1987** - Two members from 121 Battalion were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Ngwavuma near Pongola. They were: Rifleman Sikhumbuzo Eric Mbambo (21). Rifleman Alpheus Dumdum Mbambo (24).
- **1988** - Angola, Cuba and South Africa agreed to a formal ceasefire. Under the terms of the ceasefire and later treaty, Cuba was to withdraw its forces from Angola, and South Africa was to grant Namibia independence and withdraw its forces and elections were to be held in Angola. The treaty was signed on 22 December 1988.

- **1989** - Rifleman Jacques Stefan Barkhuizen from Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident at Hopetown while on route to a tug of war competition. He was 19.
- **1990** - Just five days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, President George Bush ordered Desert Shield, a massive military buildup to prevent further Iraqi advances.
- **1991** - Commandant Frederick Marthinus Ferreira from Eastern Province Command was killed when his military vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with a civilian vehicle at Grahams-town. He was 51.
- **1998** - Terrorist bombs detonate within minutes of each other outside US embassies in buildings in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania killing more than 250 people and wounding approximately 5,000.

8 August

- **1802** - Tjaart van der Walt, frontier farmer and field commandant who played an important role in the third



George H. Bush

frontier war against the combined force of the Xhosa and Khoi-Khoi, is killed in a skirmish in the Kouga mountains, district Humansdorp.

- **1945** - Soviet Russia declared war on Japan and sent troops into Japanese-held Manchuria.
- **1960** - Dag Hammarskjöld, UN secretary-general, instructs Belgium to withdraw its troops from the Congo.
- **1963** - During Operation CAPEX (Cape Exercise), a joint training exercise involving elements of Britain's Royal Navy and both the SA Navy and Air Force, a 35 Squadron Avro MR. Mk 3 Shackleton struck high ground before crashing into the Wemmershook mountain range just outside the town of Worcester, some 96 km east of its destination. All thirteen crew members on board were killed. The casualties were: Captain Thomas Howard Sivertsen (34). Captain Jaques Guillaume Labuschagne (29). 2nd Lieutenant George James Smith (21). Lieutenant Abraham Gert Willem Coetzee (24). 2nd Lieutenant Charles Alwyn du Plooy (19). Candidate Officer Derrick Ian Strauss (19). Warrant Officer II Sydney Shields Scully (46). Flight Sergeant David Hope Sheasby (27). Lance Corporal Charl Paul Viljoen (28). Lance Corporal Marthienus Christoffel Vorster (23).

Lance Corporal Michel Adolf Brodreiss (21). Lance Corporal Matthys Johannes Taljaard (27). Air Mechanic Johannes Chamberlain (20).

- **1988** - South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha announces agreement has been reached for a cease-fire in the Angolan conflict between South Africa, Angola and Cuba. This ends twenty years of bush warfare. The treaty is formally signed at Ruacana in late August.
- **1945** - The second Atomic bombing of Japan occurred as an American B-29 bomber headed for the city of Kokura, but because of poor visibility then chose a secondary target, Nagasaki. About noon, the bomb detonated killing an estimated 70,000 persons and destroying about half the city.
- **1967** - Biafran troops, under the command of Colonel Ojukwu, have crossed the Niger River into Nigeria's Mid-Western State and are heading towards Benin City. Nigeria's leader General Yakubu Gowon, promoted since his reinstatement of Federal rule, is planning an offensive against the Biafran capital Enugu.
- **1975** - The French government has decided to supply no further continental (ground or air) armaments to South Africa. This political decision does not affect naval armaments or existing contracts.
- **1981** - Two members from

5 Reconnaissance Regiment were Killed in Action while carrying out pseudo operations in enemy territory. They were: Rifleman Mahlomola Samuel Mokoena (25). Lance Corporal I van Maleta (23).

- **1983** - Rifleman M. Frans from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action while carrying out operations against enemy forces. He was 22.
- **1983** - Two members from 40 Squadron were killed when their Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I crashed near Centurion. The casualties were: Lieutenant Leon Jacobs (22). Lance Corporal Pieter Johannes Terburgh (21).
- **1984** - Rifleman Stephanus Badenhorst from 1 Parachute Battalion died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained at the De Brug Training Area during COIN OPS Training. He was 19.
- **1985** - Bombardier Hendrik Petrus Uys from the School of Artillery was killed in a military vehicle accident near Potchefstroom. He was 20.
- **1985** - Rifleman Edwin Williams from 8 SAI died from a gunshot wound resulting from the accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while he was stationed at Ondangwa. He was 23.
- **1986** - Rifleman M.C. Joao from 32 Battalion was burnt to death at Buffalo when his house caught fire and burnt

down during the night. He was 32.

- **2004** - Several military officers and civilians are arrested in Mauritania for plotting a coup.

10 August

- **1900** - British General Carrington reaches Mafeking and narrowly avoids being court-martialled for his inexplicable flight from Elands River (Brakfontein). He later explains his actions to Lord Roberts in Pretoria but a furious Roberts transfers him back to Bulawayo in Rhodesia.
- **1945** - Japan offers to surrender in World War 2 if Emperor Hirohito is permitted to keep his throne.
- **1961** - First use of the Agent Orange in Vietnam by the U.S. Army.
- **1972** - Naval Headquarters at Simon's Town announce that the second series of joint British South African exercises off the Cape Coast will begin on 14 August 1972 and will continue for seven days.
- **1973** - Leading Seaman Hendrik van der Merwe from SAS Protea was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 27.
- **1978** - Two members from 5 SAI attached to "B" Company, 2nd Platoon, 54 Battalion SWATF, were killed after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental Rifle Grenade explosion. The casualties were: Lance Cor-

poral Karl Paul Viljoen (22). Rifleman Johannes Gerber le Roux (18).

- **1983** - With support from Libya in their long-running civil war, Chadian insurgents overrun the outpost of Faya-Largeau in northern Chad.
- **1985** - Two members from Sector 30 SWATF were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Welinitschia. The casualties were: Corporal Albert Johan Kotze (19). Rifleman Johannes Frederik Louw (20).

11 August

- **1940** - A week before Mussolini orders General Rodolfo Graziani to invade Egypt from Libya, the British RAF raids airfields and Italian military bases.
- **1977** - Rifleman Michael Gerrard Lemmer from 2 SAI was accidentally killed during a training exercise near Otjiwarongo. He left the confines of the Temporary Base (TB) during the night and on returning, was shot dead by the Bren Gunner who mistook him for an insurgent. He was 18.
- **1982** - The South African government has released details of a South African Defence Force (SADF) raid into Southern Angola. Between two and three hundred South West African People's

Organisation (SWAPO) fighters are believed to have been killed, with upwards of another hundred injured at a forward base in the Cambeno Valley. A significant amount of equipment and material was taken and destroyed, including rations originally obtained from the UN High Commission for Refugees.

- **1990** - Egyptian and Moroccan troops land in Saudi Arabia to prevent Iraqi invasion.
- **1993** - UN forces kill seven Somali gunmen who shot at a surveillance helicopter, as militias of warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid intensify an offensive against peacekeepers.
- **1998** - Congolese rebels fighting President Laurent Kabila say they are closing in on the capital, while the government rounds up Tut-sis, suspected of supporting the rebellion.



Emperor Hitohito

12 August

- **1900** - The rearguard of the Boer forces under De Wet fights a running battle with Lord Methuen's British force. Methuen seizes wagons and prisoners abandoned by the Republicans, as well as one of the Armstrong guns captured at Stormberg.
- **1918** - Wing Commander Guy Penrose Gibson, VC, DSO & Bar, DFC & Bar, was the first Commanding Officer of the Royal Air Force's No. 617 Squadron, which he led in the "Dam Busters" raid in 1943, was born on this day.
- **1960** - UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and UN troops enter rebel province of Katanga in Zaire.
- **1968** - Over 5,000 soldiers supported by tanks, armoured cars and air force units begin manoeuvres in an exercise code named Operation Subasa designed to test the ability of South African defence forces to deal with terrorist activities.
- **1970** - Rifleman Christopher Coetzee from 2 Parachute Regiment was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 21.
- **1975** - Able Seaman Hugo Johan Jacobus Bus from SAS Kimberley accidentally drowned at East London when the boat in which he was a passenger, capsized near Stoney Point during a Naval beach landing exercise. He was 23.

- **1978** - Three members from 1 Parachute Battalion were Killed in Action after walking into an enemy ambush in Southern Angola while in hot pursuit of a SWAPO/PLAN insurgent group approximately 45 men strong. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Pierre Johannes Du Bois (19). Rifleman Johannes Barend Greyling (20). Rifleman Cornelis Frederik van der Nest (20).
- **1981** - Two members from 6 SAI were Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola near the Cut-line. They were: Corporal Marthinus Johannes van Staden (19). Rifleman Jacob Jacobus Blom (19).
- **1981** - Four rockets exploded in Voortrekkerhoogte (renamed Thaba Tshwane on 19 May 1998), a large military base in Verwoerdburg (now Centurion) close to Pretoria. The African National Congress (ANC) accepted responsibility.
- **1993** - US marines open fire on 3,000 Somali demonstrators protesting against the US presence in the country.

13 August

- **1900** - During the Battle of Elands River, one of Col. Hore's men, having sneaked through the besieger's lines, reaches the British lines near Mafeking and confirms that the Australians and Rhodesians are still holding out. Lord Roberts orders Kitch-

ener to divert three brigades from the hunt on De Wet to relieve Col. Hore.

- **1926** - Communist revolutionary and President of Cuba, Fidel Castro, was born on this day.
- **1967** - Umkhonto we Sizwe's (MK) Luthuli Detachment in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) guerrillas engaged Rhodesian forces in Wankie (now Hwange) Game Reserve, near the border of Zambia and Botswana. The operation became known as the Wankie Campaign.
- **1973** - Captain Dietlof Ziegfried Weyers from 2 SAI died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while stationed at Walvis Bay. He was 31.
- **1975** - Lance Corporal Machiel Casparus Eksteen Potgieter was accidentally shot dead after being struck by a bullet resulting from the accidental discharge of a 7.62 MAG machine-gun. He was 18.
- **1980** - Rifleman Johan Calitz from 3 SAI Died of Wounds received while on patrol in the Okatopi area when his Section was ambushed by approximately 50 PLAN insurgents. He was 20.
- **1981** - Two members from SWATF were killed while returning to Sector 50 Headquarters when the privately owned civilian aircraft in which they were flying as passengers, crashed shortly

after take-off from Gobabis. The casualties were: Colonel Jacobus Cornelius Theron (63). Lieutenant Josef Johannes Fourie (41).

- **1983** - Rifleman Gavin Viljoen from 7 SAI was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident near Phalaborwa. He was 19.
- **1984** - Two members from the South African Cape Corps were killed when their Buffel Troop carrier overturned at Eersterivier. The casualties were: Rifleman Jannie van Wyk (18). Rifleman Jan Johannes Jacobus Wildschutt (20).
- **1988** - Lance Corporal Arthur Mark Fletcher from 5 SAI died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained due to an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle while undergoing training at Henley Dam. He was 18.
- **1988** - Special Constable Andreas Ipinge from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.
- **1997** - Heavy fighting rages in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, between forces of the president and those of a former military ruler.
- **1998** - Rebels fighting Congolese President Laurent Kabila capture a power transformer in western Congo, sending the capital, Kin-

shasa, into darkness.

14 August

- **1870** - David Farragut, American Admiral who coined the phrase "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!", dies at 69.
- **1896** - English World War I fighter pilot Albert Ball VC, DSO & Two Bars, MC was born on this day. At the time of his death he was the United Kingdom's leading flying ace, with 44 victories.
- **1900** - End of the 'first De Wet hunt'. De Wet's entire force crosses the unoccupied Olifants Nek Pass near Rustenburg and camps on the banks of the Hex River. He has achieved all his objectives: captured a train, inflicted losses on the enemy, increased his own numbers and managed to rest some of his burghers, while occupying the attention of 50,000 British troops.
- **1945** - Following the two Atomic Bomb drops and believing that continuation of the war would only result in further loss of Japanese lives, delegates of Emperor Hirohito accepted Allied surrender terms originally issued at Potsdam on 26 July 1945, with the exception that the Japanese Emperor's sovereignty would be maintained. Japanese

Emperor Hirohito, who had never spoken on radio, then recorded an announcement admitting Japan's surrender, without actually using the word. The announcement was broadcast via radio to the Japanese people at noon the next day. The formal surrender ceremony occurred later, on 2 September 1945, on board the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

- **1960** - UN peace-keeping forces finally replace Belgian troops in the Republic of Congo.
- **1974** - A sharp increase in South African defence expenditure is announced.
- **1980** - Three members from 6 SAI were Killed in Action when their patrol was ambushed by a numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near Eenhana. The casualties were: Corporal Daniel Johannes Deyzel (20). Lance Corporal Avril Jewaskiewitz (19). Rifleman Christoffel Jaco-



Carlos the Jackal

bus Mijburgh (20).

- **1981** - Corporal Cecil Charles McAlister from Regiment Schoonspruit, was Killed in Action during an attack on their TB by SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near Opuwa in the Kaokoveld. He was 27.
- **1981** - Lance Corporal Wynand Spies from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was Reported Missing in Action during operations in Southern Angola while acting as part of a 3-man rearguard protecting the evacuation of two wounded personnel after an attack. He was shot and presumably killed during this rear-guard action but owing to extremely heavy and concentrated enemy fire, his body could not be recovered. After prolonged political negotiations, his remains were eventually returned to South Africa three years later. He was 20.
- **1986** - Sergeant Johannes Petrus Coetzer from 911 Battalion SWATF was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Keetmanshoop. He was 22.
- **2004** - Germany apologises for the massacre of some 65,000 Hereros in South-West Africa (Namibia) by their soldiers during the 1904 rebellion, but rules out compensation.

15 August

- **1769** - French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) was born on the island

of Corsica. Originally an officer in King Louis' Army, he rose to become Emperor amid the political chaos that followed the French Revolution.

- **1865** - Comdt Louw Wepener (53) is killed in combat during an attack on Moshesh at Thaba Bosigo in the Free State.
- **1973** - Leading Seaman Ivan William Kearns from SAS Protea died from injuries received in a military vehicle accident near Bredasdorp on 10 August 1973. He was 26.
- **1973** - Rifleman Mark Cornelius van Heerden from 1 SAI died at Potchefstroom after contracting meningitis while on his way to participate in a military exercise in Gazankulu. He was 18.
- **1979** - Sergeant Barend Cornelius Roux from the Regiment De Wet, attached to 53 Battalion was Killed in Action in Southern Angola when his patrol was ambushed by a numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents just North of Oshigambo. He was 26.
- **1981** - Rifleman Melato Chamba from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action when his patrol was ambushed by a numerically superior enemy force in Southern Angola. He was 24.
- **1988** - Rifleman Brink Stander from 1 SAI was killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the Brandfort to Bloemfontein Road

while he was on a weekend pass. He was 31.

- **1994** - Carlos the Jackal, freelance terrorist, is arrested in Sudan and flown to Paris for trial. He is eventually sentenced to life in prison by a Paris court for the 1975 murders of two French secret agents and an alleged informer.

16 August

- **1777** - During the American Revolutionary War, the Battle of Bennington, Vermont, occurred as militiamen from Vermont, aided by Massachusetts troops, wiped out a detachment of 800 German-Hessians sent by British General Burgoyne to seize horses.
- **1780** - The Battle of Camden in South Carolina occurred during the American Revolutionary War. The battle was a big defeat for the Americans as forces under General Gates were defeated by troops of British General Charles Cornwallis, resulting in 900 Americans killed and 1,000 captured.
- **1888** - Thomas Edward Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia (1888-1935), British adventurer, soldier, and author, is born in Tremadoc, Wales.
- **1917** - In a renewed thrust of the Allied offensive launched at the end of July in the Flanders region of Belgium - known as the Third Battle of Ypres, or simply as Passchendaele,

for the village that saw the heaviest fighting - British troops capture the village of Langemarck from the Germans.

- **1901** - General De la Rey protests the British mistreatment of women and children.
- **1942** - US Army Air Force planes see action for the first time in North Africa, bombing German military positions from their base in Egypt.
- **1959** - William "Bull" F Halsey, US vice-admiral (WW II Pacific), dies.
- **1979** - Rifleman Erasmus Albertus Venter from 4 SAI was killed during Operation Safraan after a fellow soldier picked up an unexploded SAAF Impala DEFA 30 mm High Explosive cannon projectile and between the two of them, attempted to take the shell apart with a Swiss Army knife. During this process, the cannon projectile exploded, killing him instantly. He was 20.
- **1980** - Lance Corporal Hendrik Jacobus van der Walt from 16 Maintenance Unit was killed at Luhebu in South West Africa when the military vehicle he was driving, overturned. He was 18.
- **1981** - Rifleman B Jacob from 101 Battalion SWATF was critically wounded on 14 August 1981 during a contact with PLAN insurgents in the Koakoveld. He succumbed to his wounds in hospital on 16 August 1981.

He was 22.

- **1982** - Rifleman William Edwin van Heerden from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 19.
- **1986** - Lance Corporal Andre Hercoll Erasmus from the Cape Regiment was Killed in Action after suffering shrapnel wounds during a SWAPO/PLAN stand-off attack on Ruacana. He was 20.
- **1986** - Candidate Officer Christopher Hugh Snyman from 101 Air Commando Squadron was killed when his private aircraft flew into High Tension wires and crashed near Hoedspruit. He was 37.
- **1988** - Staff Sergeant Gideon van Rooyen from 2 Special Service Battalion was killed instantly when his Armoured Car overturned at the Rooisloot Training Area, crushing him in the turret hatch. He was 26.
- **1991** - Rifleman Mark William Hein from 8 SAI was accidentally shot dead while on duty in Tokoza Township by a fellow soldier who was playing around with his loaded rifle. He was 18.
- **2003** - Ugandan military ruler Idi Amin, 78, who presided over an eight-year reign of terror from 1971-

1979, where an estimated 300,000 people were killed and tortured to death, dies of multiple organ failure.

17 August

- **1901** - The ZAR Executive Council instructs Commandant-General Louis Botha to investigate and, if necessary, to punish Assistant Commandant-General Tobias Smuts for the burning of Bremersdorp, because his actions were not according to the 'customs of civilized warfare'.
- **1940** - The Italian invasion of British Somaliland, which began on August 4, is complete. The Royal Navy successfully evacuated British troops via the port of Berbera. There is now little to stop the Italians controlling the southern entrance to the Red Sea. Meanwhile the 5th Indian Division, newly arrived in East Africa, is deployed along the Sudan-Abyssinia and Sudan-Eritrea border as part of the Sudan Defence Force, and a revolt



Rudolph Hess

is started in Abyssinia by those loyal to the Emperor, Haile Selassie.

- **1943** - During World War II in Europe, the Allies completed the conquest of the island of Sicily after just 38 days. This gave the Allies control of the Mediterranean and also led to the downfall of Benito Mussolini and Italy's eventual withdrawal from the war. However, the Germans managed to evacuate 39,569 troops, 47 tanks, 94 heavy guns, over 9,000 vehicles and 2,000 tons of ammunition back to the Italian mainland from Sicily.
- **1962** - The South African Minister of Defence, J.J. Fouché, announces that the striking power of the Defence Force has been increased twenty-fold as compared with two years earlier, while that of Navy is to be increased ten-fold in the next few years.
- **1962** - Two members from 17 Squadron were killed when their Alouette II Helicopter flew into High Tension Cables in Du Toit's Kloof and crashed in flames. The crew were: Lieutenant Keith Lynford Martin (22). Sergeant Andrew Robert Foote (39).
- **1963** - Captain Richard William Davies from 40 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard, Serial No. 7322 struck High Tension Cables and crashed near Benoni. He was 27.

- **1977** - Lance Corporal George Allen Deacon from 2 Field Engineer Regiment was killed in an accidental explosion at Okalongo. He was 19.
- **1977** - Two members, one from 5 Squadron and the other from 8 Squadron were killed when their Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I crashed at Riemvasmaak Bombing Range near Upington while carrying out a night bombing exercise. The crew were: Major James McFarlane Wilson Kerr (30). Major Barry Leonard Moody (38).
- **1981** - Two members from 4 Field Regiment were killed in Military Vehicle accident at Oshivello. The casualties were: Lance Bombardier Henri Victor Louis Olver (19). Gunner Dirk Jacobus Loubser (20).
- **1988** - Special Constable Filimon Ndevaumba from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 29.
- **1990** - Two members from Eastern Transvaal Command were killed when their Samil 20 vehicle overturned at Pafuri. The casualties were: Rifleman Agus Mlahlekm Khoza (28). Rifleman Mphakati Isaiah Mkhombo (age unknown).
- **1991** - Major Harper Martin

Geldenhuis from 32 Battalion was accidentally killed at Pomfret while making a video of a C-47 Dakota as it was taking off from the runway. He was standing on the end of the runway and as the aircraft passed overhead, the aircraft tail wheel struck him on the head, killing him instantly. He was 26.

18 August

- **1914** - Germany declares war on Russia while President Woodrow Wilson issues his Proclamation of Neutrality.
- **1957** - The first two Avro Shackleton Mk III anti-submarine aircraft arrive in South Africa.
- **1979** - Rifleman Glen Colin Coppard from 4 SAI was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion when he stepped on the device while assisting with a wounded soldier. He was 20.
- **1979** - Three members from 3 SAI were Killed in Action in Southern Angola when they triggered a Soviet POMZ-2M anti-personnel picket mine during clearing operations inside an enemy base. The casualties were: Corporal Johannes Petrus Maritz (20). Lance Corporal Frank Nienaber (21). Rifleman Joseph Benjamin Ruben Jordaan (20).
- **1981** - Rifleman Gavin Dickenson Elliott from 5 SAI died from multiple shrapnel wounds accidentally sus-

tained when a 90mm High Explosive Shell exploded. He was 22.

- **1982** - Two members from 44 Parachute Pathfinder Company and one member from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment were Reported Missing approximately 40 miles inside Matabeleland during Operation Drama, a clandestine mission in Zimbabwe. All three men have no known grave and remain unaccounted for. The casualties were: Staff Sergeant Peter David Berry (33). Sergeant Robert Trevor Beech (27). Sergeant John Andrew Wessels (24).
- **1982** - Private Wynand van Rhynd from the South African Medical Corps, attached to 2 Military Hospital, Wynberg was Reported Missing when he failed to return after going hiking alone on Table Mountain. His body was later located by other hikers the following day and recovered. It appeared that he had lost his way and in the dark, fallen and broken his leg and had subsequently died from shock and exposure during the night. He was 19.
- **1993** - Sergeant M. Dube from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was accidentally killed when his parachute failed to deploy while carrying out a freefall parachute jump. He was 35.
- **1998** - Congolese rebels send President Laurent Kabila's troops fleeing as

they advance to within 200 km of the capital, now deprived of electricity.

19 August

- **1901** - At Graaff-Reinet, P.J. Fourie, J. van Rensburg and L.F.S. Pfeiffer are executed by a British firing squad for treason and the murder of British troops.
- **1940** - First flight of the B-25 Mitchell medium bomber.
- **1942** - Dieppe Raid. An Allied force of 7,000 men carry out a large daytime raid against German positions at the French seaport of Dieppe. Aided by tanks and aircraft, the commando force—made up of approximately 5,000 Canadians, 2,000 British soldiers, and a handful of American and Free French troops—gained a foothold on the beach in the face of a furious German defense. During nine hours of fighting, the Allies failed to destroy more than a handful of their targets and suffered the death of 3,600 men. More than 100 aircraft, a destroyer, 33 landing craft, and 30 tanks were also lost.
- **1944** - The 6th Division entered Florence, Italy and was active there until 1945.
- **1968** - Nigeria's Federal troops have launched a major offensive against multiple targets in Biafra. Despite

claims of 2,000 people being massacred, the leader of the Nigerian military government, General Yakubu Gowon, has stated that his troops are 'behaving correctly.'

- **1976** - Lance Corporal Carlos Alberto Correia Pinto Ribeiro from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Reported Missing in South Eastern Angola during a contact with enemy forces between Luenge and Coutada de Mucusso. He was driving a Unimog loaded with a ton or more of High Explosive. The South African Force was ambushed while the company was returning to Buffalo. His vehicle was hit by a Soviet RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket causing the explosive cargo to detonate. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. For administrative purposes, he was officially declared dead in 1983. He was 25.
- **1982** - Rifleman R. Moses from 101 Battalion SWATF



Michael Collins

was killed in a military vehicle accident in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.

- **1984** - Corporal Albert Ryan from 32 Battalion died of injuries sustained in a private motor vehicle accident at Port Shepstone. He was 25.
- **1987** - Rudolf Hess, German Nazi official (Deputy Fuhrer who dramatically escaped to Britain in 1941, sentenced to life in Spandau Prison), commits suicide at 93.
- **1988** - Lance Corporal Raymond Victor Jagga, an Ops Medic from the Central Medical Command was assigned to F Squadron School of Armour and attached to 61 Mechanised Brigade. He was Killed in Action when his Ratel was struck by two rockets. He was 19.
- **1988** - Gunner Jaco Petrus van der Merwe from 10 Artillery Brigade was Reported Missing after he went swimming in the Cunene river and disappeared. It is thought that he was taken by a crocodile. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 20.
- **1993** - Lance Corporal Douglas Gardiner Scott from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed when two Rooikat armoured cars were involved in a collision and overturned at Deduza. He was 18.

20 August

- **1955** - Simultaneous attacks by Algerian rebels against French targets in the Con-

stantine district of Algeria have resulted in over 500 deaths and 200 wounded. At the same time nationalists have taken to the streets in Morocco. The attacks and demonstrations mark the second anniversary of the French deposition of the Sultan of Morocco, Siyyidi Mohammed V ibn Youssef, in favour of Muhammad Ben Aarafa.

- **1968** - Approximately 200,000 Warsaw Pact troops and 5,000 tanks invade Czechoslovakia to crush the "Prague Spring"—a brief period of liberalization in the communist country.
- **1975** - Trooper Leon William Bessinger from the Prince Alfred's Guard was killed in a military vehicle accident near Peddie in the Eastern Cape. He was 26.
- **1977** - Two members from 40 Squadron were killed when their AT-6 Harvard crashed while carrying out a routine general flying sortie. The aircraft went into a spin from which the pilot was unable to recover and the aircraft crashed near Delmas. The casualties were: Captain Keith Neil Smith (27). 2nd Lieutenant Paul Christopher Sarbutt (24).
- **1978** - Private Jacobus Johannes Etienne Bothma from the Defence Headquarters Personnel Unit died from a gunshot wound to the neck, accidentally sustained in a shooting incident while he was on duty in Pretoria.

He was rushed to 1 Military Hospital but succumbed to his injuries the same day. He was 19.

- **1988** - Lance Corporal Brian Albert Hoy from Regiment Noord Transvaal was accidentally killed after being crushed in the Commanders turret when his Ratel overturned approximately 40km South of Ruacana. He was 26.
- **1995** - Liberia's main warring factions signed a peace accord calling for a ceasefire after more than five years of civil war and the start of democratic rule in one year.
- **1998** - US military forces attack a chemical plant in Sudan and what they describe as a terrorist camp in Afghanistan. Said to be linked with terrorists, the attacks are in response to the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania 13 days earlier.
- **1998** - Zimbabwe intervenes in the Democratic Republic of Congo to support the regime against a rebellion. The last Zimbabwean soldiers withdraw at the end of 2002. Troops from Angola, Namibia, Chad, and Sudan also intervened to support the Kinshasa regime.

21 August

- **1863** - During the American Civil War, William Quantrill led 450 irregular Confederate raiders on a pre-dawn terrorist raid of Lawrence,

Kansas, leaving 150 civilians dead, 30 wounded and much of the town a smoking ruin. In 1862, Quantrill had been denied a Confederate commission by the Confederate Secretary of War, who labeled Quantrill's notions of war as 'barbarism.'

- **1900** - The Battle of Bergendal, near Vanwyksvlei, starts. Gen. Joachim Fourie's men force the 11th Hussars to retreat at 20.00, with 7 killed, 3 missing, presumed dead, and 26 wounded.
- **1918** - The Second Battle of the Somme begins.
- **1912** - Lord Roberts, commander-in-chief of the British forces during the 3rd Anglo-Boer War, congratulates Gen. Louis Botha on his appointment as honorary general in the British army.
- **1939** - The Soviet Union and Germany sign the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, a 10-year non-aggression treaty, with a secret addendum, to partition Poland.
- **1940** - Leon Trotsky, Russian Marxist revolutionary, political theorist and founder of the Red Army, assassinated at 62 by an ice-pick wielding Ramón Mercader.
- **1965** - Air Mechanic James Roland Bolzern from 3 Satellite Radar Station died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained in a shooting incident at Mafeking. He was 24.
- **1973** - Four members from 85 Advanced Flying School were killed when an Atlas

MB326M Impala Mk I was involved in a mid-air collision with another Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I during a training exercise near Pietersburg. The casualties were: Captain Christiaan Lemmer Smith (29). 2nd Lieutenant David Lanian James Snadden (22). Captain Frans Reitz van Zyl (29). 2nd Lieutenant Clifford Yates (23).

- **1976** - Rifleman Dale Robert Whitter from 2 SAI died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained at the Farm "Woodholme No. 202". He was 18.
- **1978** - Rifleman Jacobus Alwyn van der Berg from the Kaffrarian Rifles died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained at Oshakati due to the accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle. He was 25.
- **1980** - The United States and Somalia sign an agreement giving US naval and air forces access to military facilities in the East African country in return for American military aid.
- **1981** - Rifleman Jan Jacobus Minnie from the Infantry School was accidentally killed when he inadvertently used a dud high explosive mortar bomb as a hammer, causing the device to explode, killing him instantly. He was 18.

Eugene Bullard

- **1986** - Staff Sergeant Johannes Petrus van Niekerk from Sector 20 Headquarters Intelligence Section died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained at Rundu. He was 32.
- **1987** - Rifleman C.A. Augusto from 32 Battalion died from causes unknown while stationed at Buffalo. He was 27.
- **1994** - The last French troops pull out of Rwanda, ending their controversial humanitarian mission.
- **1998** - Angolan troops enter the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) war on Laurent Kabila's side.

22 August

- **1864** - The first Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field is signed by 12 countries. The international treaty, known as the Geneva Convention, also guarantees the neutrality of members of the Red Cross and is honoured in



- South Africa.
- **1922** - Michael Collins, Irish nationalist leader, killed in ambush by anti-treaty forces during the Irish Civil War at 31.
- **1934** - General Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf Jr (1934-2012) was born on this day. While serving as Commander-in-chief, United States Central Command, he led all coalition forces in the Gulf War in 1990/1991.
- **1979** - Rifleman Barend Gabriel Bester from 1 SAI died of wounds in 3 Military Hospital in Bloemfontein after being struck in the chest by a piece of shrapnel in an accidental hand grenade explosion at the General De Wet Training Range. He was 19.
- **1980** - Two members from 4 SAI were Killed in Action when their Section was ambushed by SWAPO/PLAN insurgents between Eenhana and Oshigambo whilst sweeping the road for landmines. The casualties were: Rifleman Pieter Jacobus De Beer (19). Rifleman Andries Petrus Wiese (19).
- **1984** - Private Udo Louis Gevers from the South African Intelligence Corps attached to Sector 20 Headquarters was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Kavangoland. He was 20.

23 August

- **1901** - A group of eight surrendered Boer prisoners of

war are shot by the Bushveld Carbineers and a German missionary, Reverend C.A. Daniel Heese murdered, because he may have witnessed the atrocity.

- **1974** - Two members from the School of Artillery were killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the Potchefstroom to Johannesburg road while on weekend pass when their vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with another vehicle while overtaking. The casualties were: Lance Bombardier Michael David Loxton (18). Gunner Joseph Spedding Baggott (18).
- **1976** - Rifleman Reinhard Walter Klingenberg from Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident at Three Sisters while on Weekend Pass. He was 19.
- **1976** - Two members from 1 Reconnaissance Commando were Killed in Action during a patrol near the Okavango river when the Wolf vehicle in which they were traveling detonated a landmine and overturned killing Sergeant Soeiro instantly and crushing Staff Sergeant Roxo underneath. The casualties in this incident were: Staff Sergeant Francisco Daniel Roxo HC (43). Sergeant Ponciano Gomes Silva Soeiro (35).
- **1978** - Eight members from 1 Special Service Battalion, one member from 2 Special Service Battalion and one

member from the South African Medical Corps were Killed in Action during the early hours of the morning when the Bungalow in which they were sleeping at Katima Mulilo received a direct hit from a Soviet GRAD-P 122mm High Explosive Katyusha Rocket. The casualties were: Trooper Kevin John Biggs (18). Private Willem Hendrik Christoffel Britz (18). Trooper Hendrik Willem De Lange (18). Trooper Dennis Michael Elworthy (20). Trooper Gerhardus Petrus Erasmus (18). Trooper Laurie Johannes Lesch (19). Trooper Jan Jurgens Rotschutte (20). Trooper Gideon Johannes Smit (18). Trooper Willem Stephanus Smuts (19). Trooper Abraham Daniel van der Merwe (18).

- **1980** - Rifleman Helgard Brink Colling from SWA SPES (SWATF) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1981** - Rifleman Antonio Catamba from 32 Battalion died from a gunshot wound sustained during a shooting incident at Buffalo. He was 42.
- **1994** - Eugene Bullard, the only black pilot in World War I, is posthumously commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force.

24 August

- **1814** - During the War of 1812, Washington, D.C., was invaded by British forces that burned the Capitol, the White House and most other public buildings along with a number of private homes. The burning was in retaliation for the earlier American burning of York (Toronto).
- **1951** - The Mau Mau rebellion starts in Kenya.
- **1973** - Private Waldemar Adriaan Nelson from the Technical Service Corps was accidentally killed in a military vehicle accident in Bloemfontein. He was 19.
- **1980** - Lance Corporal Daniel Langman from 41 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.
- **1981** - Rifleman Adao Joaquim from 32 Battalion was accidentally killed by friendly fire during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 26.
- **1981** - Two members from 1 SAI were Killed in Action during the attack on "Target Yankee" in Southern Angola during Ops Protea. The casualties in this incident were: Rifleman Florence Cornelius Smit (18). Rifleman Martinus Godfrey Stapelberg (19).
- **1986** - Sapper Leon Bryan Kuyler from 1 Construction Regiment died from a gunshot wound accidentally

sustained in a shooting incident at the Unit while he was on Guard Duty. He was 20.

- **1986** - Lance Corporal Conrad du Bois Nelson from the Intelligence School in Kimberley succumbed to injuries in the Universitas Hospital after being critically injured on 05 August 1986 when his SAMIL vehicle overturned 5km from the Unit Headquarters. He was 18.
- **1987** - Rifleman Maliphathwe Godfrey Ndela from 21 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident in Soweto. He was 21.
- **1988** - Gunner William Faul van Niekerk from the Witwatersrand Command Intelligence Section was killed in a military vehicle accident at Doornkop. He was 19.
- 1991 - Two members from 113 Battalion were killed when their water tanker vehicle overturned at Tzaneen. The casualties were: Lance Corporal John Sidney Shisari (26). Rifleman Milleon Bullus Khoza (31).

25 August

- **1911** - Võ Nguyên Giáp (1911-2013) was born on this day. Giáp was a general in the Vietnam People's Army and a politician. He is considered one of the greatest military strategists of the 20th century.
- **1966** - Candidate Officer

Roger Bushell

G.A.K. Howson from 41 Squadron was killed when his Cessna 185D crashed near Krugersdorp while on a low level reconnaissance flight. He was 23.

- **1976** - Sergeant José Correia Pinto Ribeiro from 1 Reconnaissance Commando was killed in a military vehicle accident while evacuating battle casualties to a hospital in South West Africa. He was 27.
- **1978** - Rifleman Johannes Hendrik De Jager from 5 SAI was killed in a private motor vehicle accident 5km outside Ladysmith on the Colenso Road. He was 19.
- **1981** - One member from 17 Squadron and one member from 87 Helicopter Flying School were Killed in Action when their Alouette III Helicopter Gunship was shot down by enemy 14,5mm anti-aircraft fire about 500m from the target area while providing close-air support operations over Mongua in Southern Angola just prior to the launch of Ops Protea



in Angola. The crew were: Lieutenant Johannes Gysbertus Roos (24). Sergeant Clifton Stacey (21).

- **1981** - Captain Louis Harmse from 1 SAI was Killed in Action during Ops Protea in Southern Angola during enemy bunker clearing operations. He was 27.
- **1981** - Lance Bombardier Hendrik Abraham Johannes Grobler from 4 Artillery Regiment was Killed in Action in Southern Angola during Ops Protea. He was 20.
- **1988** - Trooper Owen Leon Wolfaardt from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed when his armoured car overturned during an exercise at the General de Wet Training Area. He was 20.
- **1988** - Special Constable Tsaanda Mbunguha from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.
- **1989** - Signaller Andre' Rousseau from 2 Signals Regiment died in the Klerksdorp Hospital from injuries received in a motor vehicle accident at Sannieshof. He was 20.
- **1991** - Rifleman Ambros Nijanyana Sekonjela from 21 Battalion was Killed in Action after being shot dead by persons unknown at Mandelaview during a riot-related incident while he was on foot patrol in Katlehong. He

was 21.

26 August

- **1944** - French General Charles de Gaulle enters Paris, which had formally been liberated the day before. As he entered the Place de l'Hotel, French collaborationists took a few sniper shots at him.
- **1966** - The People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), the armed wing of SWAPO, fought in a battle against South African occupying forces at Omugulugwombashe in northern South West Africa (Namibia).
- **1974** - A Defence Bill is passed in South Africa laying down penalties for any person or organization inciting anyone to avoid military service.
- **1976** - Two members of Bravo Group were killed when their Unimog overturned near Rundu. They were: Rifleman Harry Albert Bekker (19). Rifleman Andries Jacobus Pretorius (19).
- **1978** - Lance Corporal Francois Louw from the South African Cape Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Ruacana. He was 21.
- **2011** - John McAleese, British SAS Trooper, Team leader during 1980 Iranian Embassy Siege, dies aged 62.

27 August

- **1914** - German Togo is occupied by British and French troops.

- **1916** - Romania declares war on Austria-Hungary, formally entering World War I. Romanian troops cross the border of the Austro-Hungarian Empire into the much-contested province of Transylvania.
- **1945** - US troops land in Japan after Japanese surrender.
- **1965** - Air Mechanic Johann Andre' Venter from Central Flying School Dunnottar was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed on the farm "Rusplaas" near Piet Retief while on a routine low level navigation exercise. He was 17.
- **1969** - Israeli commando force penetrates deep into Egyptian territory to stage mortar attack on regional army headquarters in Nile Valley of Upper Egypt.
- **1974** - 2nd Lieutenant Albertus Stephanus Gouws from 4 Squadron was killed when his Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I crashed near Potchefstroom while on a routing training exercise. He was 21.
- **1975** - Rifleman Gert Antonie Senekal from 2 SAI was Killed in Action during the attack to capture the town of Pereira D'Eca (Ongiva) in Southern Angola during Ops Savannah. He was 19.
- **1977** - Ordinary Seaman (Diver) Barry Juan Moolman from SAS Donkin accidentally drowned during a diving training exercise at Port Elizabeth. He was 27.
- **1979** - Rifleman Frans Lilungwe from Sector 70 Head-

quarters SWATF was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 23.

- **1979** - Louis Mountbatten, 1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma, British naval officer and statesman, last Viceroy of India (1947), is assassinated by an IRA bomb on his boat in Ireland at 79.
- **1981** - Two members from 5 SAI were Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces near Ongiva in Southern Angola during Ops Protea. The casualties were: Rifleman David Nicolas Janse van Rensburg (20). Rifleman Etienne Marius Snyman (19).
- **1983** - two members attached to 54 Battalion were killed in action. The casualties were: Rifleman Joseph Wayne Muller (20). Rifleman David Prins (24).
- **1985** - Rifleman Jan Buijense from the North West Command Maintenance Unit died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained at Potchefstroom as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle. He was 21.
- **1988** - Lance Corporal Gary

Lamb from 1 SAI, attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was shot dead by a fellow soldier during an argument while they were stationed at Lohatla. He was 19.

- **1990** - Rifleman Jose' Joaquim from 201 Battalion SWATF was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 24.
- **1992** - Former commander of the Simon's Town naval base Dieter Gerhard is released from prison where he has been serving a life sentence since 1983 after being convicted of acting as an agent for the Soviet Union. He is deported to Switzerland.
- **1993** - Colonel Pieter Jacobus Bakkes from the South African Military Health Service died from cancer in 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria. He was 49.

28 August

- **1940** - The South African Air Force flying out from Kenya bombs Italian bases in Somaliland.
- **1941** - SS General Franz Jaeckeln marched more than 23,000 Hungarian Jews to bomb craters at Kamenets

Podolsk, ordered them to undress, and riddled them with machine gun fire. Those who didn't die from the spray of bullets were buried alive under the weight of corpses that piled atop them. All told, more than 600,000 Jews had been murdered in Ukraine by war's end.

- **1974** - Rifleman Albino Moreira Christello from 11 Commando Regiment was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident 140km East of Rundu. He was 18.
- **1980** - Two members from 41 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Rifleman Jacob Fredericks (18). Rifleman Joseph van Rensburg (19).
- **1981** - A member from 6 SAI and a member from the South African Medical Corps were both Killed in Action while on patrol in Southern Angola. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Petrus Kruger (20). Lance Corporal Mark Anthony Plateel (19).
- **1981** - Rifleman Domingos Paulo from 32 Battalion died from a gunshot wound sus-



Battle of Alam al-Halfa

tained in a shooting accident at Fort Doppies in the Caprivi Strip. He was 32.

- **1983** - Rifleman Jorge Nambi from 32 Battalion was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident while in pursuit of an enemy patrol in Southern Angola. He was 28.
- **1990** - Rifleman Laurens Stef Mdaka from the Kruger National Park Commando was critically injured in a military vehicle accident at Letaba Bridge on 17 August 1990. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries on 28 August 1990. He was 25.

29 August

- **1792** - In one of the worst maritime disasters, 900 men drowned on the British battleship Royal George. As the ship was being repaired, a gust of wind allowed water to flood into open gun ports. The ship sank within minutes.
- **1848** - The Battle of Boomplaats, where the British under Governor Harry Smith conquer the Voortrekkers under Commandant Andries W. Pretorius, takes place.
- **1973** - Constable M.C. Mancini from the South African Police was Killed in Action during a contact with insurgents when his patrol was ambushed at Mount Darwin, Rhodesia. He was 22.
- **1974** - Lance Corporal Stephanus Marais from 1 Reconnaissance Commando drowned in a diving accident

in Mossel Bay Harbour during a Training Exercise. His body was recovered the following day. He was 19.

- **1985** - Sergeant Petrus Cornelius Frederick Du Plessis Cohen from the Soutpansberg Military Area Provost Unit was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Messina. He was 27.
- **1985** - Lance Corporal Marcell Stephen Lombard from 2 Field Engineer Regiment was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 29.
- **1986** - Sapper Willem Jacobus Coad from 1 Construction Regiment was killed when the water tanker vehicle he was driving, overturned at Komatipoort. He was 18.
- **1987** - Corporal Kirk Hendriksen from 5 SAI was killed when he accidentally fell off a moving train while trying to prevent a prisoner in his custody from escaping. He was 22.
- **1987** - Rifleman Cornelis Dilman from 1 Special Service Battalion died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained during a shooting incident in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.

30 August

- **1900** - General Ben Viljoen releases about 2,000 British prisoners of war from the camp at Nooitgedacht.
- **1910** - Squadron Leader Roger Joyce Bushell (1910-

1944) was a South African-born British military aviator, who became famous as the organiser of a mass escape from a German prisoner of war camp in 1944 was born on this day. The film *The Great Escape* was based on this event.

- **1977** - Corporal Johannes Jacobus Basson from Regiment Mooi River Died of Wounds after being grievously burned during a mortar bomb attack by SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near Etale Base. He was 19.
- **1978** - Rifleman Howard D'Arcy Remington from Infantry School was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Oshivello during a night pursuit of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in the Tsumeb area. He was 20.
- **1978** - Rifleman Jacobus Paulus Jansen from Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Oudtshoorn when his vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with a delivery truck in Victoria Street. He was 18.
- **1980** - Lance Corporal Willem Hendrik Smit from 2 SAI was Killed in Action while searching as Kraal in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1980** - Rifleman Jose Cabinda from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola, just north

of Rundu. He was 23.

- **1980** - Private Herman Nico Booysen from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed in a motorcycle accident between Stilfontein and Klerksdorp while on leave. He lost control of his motor cycle and hit a lamp post. He was thrown clear of his motorcycle but was struck by another motorcycle and killed instantly. He was 19.
- **1982** - Corporal Josef Johannes de Beer from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed in a private motorcycle accident at Christiana. He was 19.
- **1982** - Rifleman Reginald Chivovo from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was killed when his parachute failed to open during a practice jump at Phalaborwa. He was 23.
- **1986** - Private Andrew Morris Byrd from the South African Medical Corps was killed in a self-inflicted shooting accident. He was 20.
- **1990** - Rifleman Tears Mashile from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was killed

31 August

- **1900** - Commandant Danie Theron captures a train and 30 soldiers at Klip Station, near the present-day Soweto.
- **1942** - The British army under General Bernard Law Montgomery defeats Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps in the Battle of Alam al-Halfa in Egypt, thereby stopping the German offensive in North Africa.
- **1965** - Air Mechanic (Pilot Under Training) Johannes Jurie Delpoort was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed near Ermelo during a solo night navigation exercise. He was 21.
- **1976** - Captain Jack Steven Cloete from the Danie Theron Combat School was killed when his military vehicle overturned at Wolmaranstad. He was 36.
- **1977** - Rifleman George Frederick Morkel Langenhoven from 4 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident

at Alldays. He was 18.

- **1979** - Sapper Leon Lambert from 2 Field Engineer Regiment, attached to 5 Military Works Unit at the Army Battle School in Lohatla, was accidentally killed when the Bedford truck in which he was traveling as a passenger, overturned 30km outside Vryburg on the Lohatla to Vryburg road after the vehicles front tyre burst. He was 18.
- **1979** - 2nd Lieutenant Frederick Francois de Wit from 2 Signal Regiment was accidentally killed at Carolina in a non-military related incident. He was 23.
- **1980** - Rifleman Izak Gabriel Du Plessis from Noordvaal Commando was killed in a private motor cycle accident while on duty. He was 24.
- **1981** - The US vetoes a UN Security Council resolution criticising South Africa for raids in Angola.
- **1983** - Rifleman Pieter Frederik van Eeden from 1 SAI was accidentally killed at the General De Wet Training Terrain in Bloemfontein when he picked up an unexploded 40mm High Explosive "Snotneus" grenade in the veld. While he was handling the device, it exploded, killing him instantly. He was 19.



Battle of Alam al-Halfa



General Knowledge

- General Rudolph Hiemstra.
- 1993.
- A killick.
- 5 Reconnaissance Commando. They only became 5 Reconnaissance Regiment after they moved to Phalaborwa.
- Swift and sure.
- Anthony Beauchamp-Proctor.
- Maleoskop.
- 4 May 1978.
- Cpl Pieter Arnoldus Swanepoel, 2 SAI, HCS, 11 November 1975.
- Five. George Gristock, John Nettleton, Gerhard Norton, Quentin Smythe, and Edwin Swales.
- Brixton Ridge in Johannesburg. It was during the Rand Rebellion in 1922.
- Dad's Army.
- The Panther.
- Avtomat Kalashnikova.
- Erich 'Bubi' Hartmann of the German Luftwaffe with 352 kills.
- Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword.
- Glenn Miller.
- Zanzibar. They declared war on Britain and then surrendered 38 minutes later.
- The Rhodesian Light Infantry, or RLI.
- 20.332nd Fighter Group (The Tuskegee Airmen).
- Max Schmeling.
- The Vatican. The Swiss Guard consists of just 110 men.
- American actress Jane Fonda.
- 116 years.
- It was the largest tank battle ever to take place.

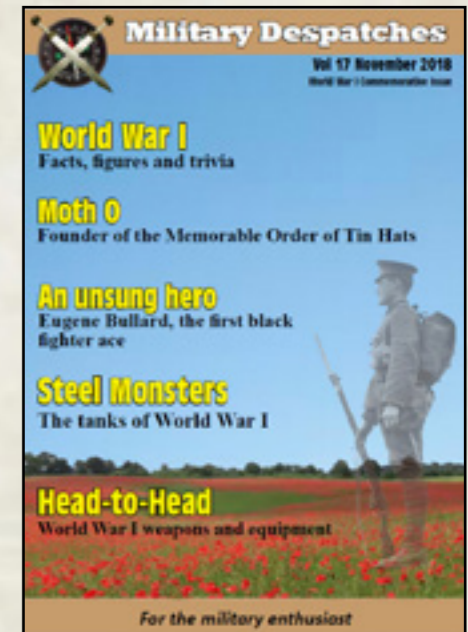
Useful links

Every month we feature a few useful links to military websites, newsletters and online magazines. Stuff that we think our readers will appreciate.

Here are two of our favourites. The first one is Nongqai, the unofficial police newsletter for veterans of the former South African Police Force and for those interested in Police History. The second is Jimmy's Own, the official newsletter of the South African Signals Association. Click on the magazine covers to go to the respective websites.



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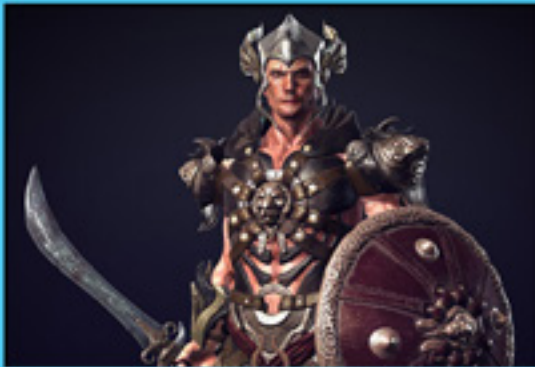
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