



Military Despatches

Vol 75 September 2023

Military blunders

10 blunders during World War II that affected the war

Operation Barras

The SAS raid nickamed “Operation Certain Death”



Master Bomber

South African Edwin Swales VC

Bellum iustum

Is there such a thing as a ‘just war’?

For the military enthusiast



Click on any video below to view



Paratrooper Wings Quiz

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

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



Military Firearms Quiz

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

Army Speak 101
The SADF had their own language. A mixture of English, Afrikaans, slang and techno-speak that few outside the military could hope to understand.

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



New videos each week

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

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



Elite Military Units Quiz

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

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



Who said that?

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

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



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A Just War

Throughout history millions of people have died as a result of war. It is not only combatants that have died in these wars, but also non-combatants including women and children. All too often these wars are justified by claiming the theory of "bellum iustum". In other words, it was a 'just war'. Yet what exactly is a 'just war', and does it really matter if people die in a 'just war' or an 'unjust war'?



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Bullpup Silhouettes

We show you the silhouettes of 15 modern-day bullpup rifles. All you need to do is tell us what they are.

Please remember to subscribe to our channel.

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



Editor's Sitrep

What fun it was putting this issue of the magazine together. It's the afternoon of 31 August and I'm still busy putting the final touches to the mag.

An update on my frostbitten fingers - they are healing, but the pain has not yet diminished. So it's still a lot of fun trying to use my hands for anything.

The good news is that it's been nearly three months since I had my knee replacement surgery. This means that in two weeks time I will be able to drive again. You're not allowed to drive for three months after the surgery.

Interesting developments in Russia, and ones that I'm pretty sure that President Vladimir Putin is not all that happy about.

It's been more than 18 months since Russia invaded Ukraine. What they expected to be over in a few days has dragged on for a year and a half.

It has been a costly exercise for the Russians. They confirm the death of 30,000 Russian troops. Yet it is estimated that between 50,000 and 70,000 Russians have died.

Much of the fighting has been done by the Russian state-funded

private military company (PMC) the Wagner Group.

Until recently it was controlled by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a former close ally of Russia's president Vladimir Putin. He began openly criticizing the Russian Defence Ministry for mishandling the war against Ukraine, eventually saying their reasons for the invasion were lies.

On 23 June 2023, he led the Wagner Group in an armed rebellion after accusing the Defence Ministry of shelling Wagner soldiers.

Prigozhin died in an airplane crash on 23 August 2023. According to Russia's emergency ministry it was an accident. Yet others believe that the aircraft was shot down. Some say on orders from Putin.

The Wagner Group is still a powerful force, and one that is not happy about the current state of affairs. While it is unsure as to how they will react, they have made one statement - "We are coming."

Until next time, stay safe and stay healthy.

Matt

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Edwin Swales

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10 Military blunders of World War II

Ten military operations of World War II that had a major impact on the final outcome of the war.

There is little doubt that World War II was the greatest conflict in modern history and one that continues to impact our world to this day. It is a conflict filled with “what ifs...”.

What if Germany or Japan had won the war? What if Germany had developed an atomic bomb? What if the Invasion of Normandy had failed? What if B had happened instead of A? The world today could have looked very different.

The fact that things turned out the way they did was the result of a number of factors – both positive and negative. What’s perhaps most important in understanding why one side won and the other lost is in recognising that victory was not determined so much by who won the most battles - although ultimately that was a factor - but by who made the fewest costly mistakes.

Tactical blunders, missed opportunities, bad judgement and just plain bad luck by both sides was instrumental in the final result. Here are ten blunders that were instrumental in either lengthening the war or where they managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

10. Philippine Liberation, 1944

While this ended in a victory for the Americans, many consider it an unnecessary operation that may have extended

the war by months. After being kicked out of the Philippines two years earlier, General Douglas MacArthur was keen to get back. He convinced American President Franklin D. Roosevelt that he may lose re-election in 1944 if he didn’t liberate the island chain that MacArthur had ineptly failed to defend in 1942.

The fact is that by 1944 the Japanese air and naval presence on the island had been largely nullified, and it was too far from Japan to use as a base from which to launch raids on the Japanese mainland. There was little reason to invade the place, other than that’s what Douglas MacArthur wanted. And what MacArthur wanted, he usually got.

The time spent securing the island and the resources used in doing so delayed the invasion of Okinawa and probably extended the war by a few months. But at least it gave MacArthur a perfect photo opportunity to wade ashore at Leyte Gulf and proclaim that he had returned.

The liberation of the Philippines commenced with amphibious landings on the eastern Philippine island of Leyte on October 20, 1944. United States and Philippine Commonwealth military forces were progressing in liberating territory and islands when the Japanese forces in the Philippines were ordered to surrender by Tokyo on August 15, 1945, after the dropping of the atomic bombs on mainland Ja-

pan and the Soviet invasion of Manchuria.

The campaign cost the Americans more than 79,000 dead and wounded. They also lost 485 aircraft, had 33 ships sunk, and another 95 ships damaged. Japanese losses were even higher.

9. Kursk, 1943

One thing you’ve got to say about Adolf Hitler was that he sure didn’t learn from his mistakes. Only six months after the débâcle at Stalingrad, Hitler decides that once again it’s time to go on the offensive. He launches *Unternehmen Zitadelle* (Operation Citadel) on 5 July 1943. The operation has the objective of pinching off the Kursk salient with attacks on the base of the salient from north and south simultaneously.

The Germans were suffering at a huge disadvantage in terms of numbers. They had 80,900 men, 2,928 tanks, and 9,966 guns and mortars. The Germans also delayed the offensive while they tried to build up their forces and wait for new weapons. They were relying on the new Panther tank and larger number of the Tiger I heavy tank.

The problem was that the Russian had been aware months in advance that the German attack would fall on the neck of the Kursk salient. This gave the Red Army time to construct a series of deep defensive positions. These included minefields, for-



TOLD YOU I'D BE BACK: General MacArthur wades ashore on his return to the Philippines.

tifications, artillery fire zones and anti-tank strong points that extended about 300 km in depth. Their mobile formations were moved out of the salient and a large reserve force was formed, ready for strategic counter-offensives. The Russians had 1,910,361 men, 5,128 tanks, and 25,013 guns and mortars ready to meet the Germans.

Many German generals argued strongly against the operation, saying that the attack was pointless.

On 10 May 1943, General Heinz Guderian asked Hitler, “Is it really necessary to attack Kursk, and indeed in the east this year at all? Do you think anyone even knows where Kursk is? The entire world doesn’t care if we capture Kursk or not. What is the reason that is forcing us to attack this year on Kursk, or even more, on the Eastern Front?”

Although Hitler did have reservations, he was committed to the offensive.

The German offensive stalled on the northern side of the salient. While the Russian lines bent, they did not break. On 12 July the Soviets launched Operation Kutuzov against the rear of the German forces on the northern side of the salient.

On the southern side the Soviets launched a counter-attack on the same day. This would lead to the Battle of Prohorovka, one of the largest tank battles in military history. On 3 August the Soviets began their second phase of the counter-attack, Operation Polkovodets Rumyantsev.

As if this was not enough, on the night of 9/10 July 1943 the Allies launched Operation Husky – the invasion of Sicily. Hitler was forced to divert troops training in France to

meet the Allied threats in the Mediterranean, rather than use them as a strategic reserve for the Eastern Front. Hitler then cancelled the offensive at Kursk after only a week, in part to divert forces to Italy, resulting in a reduction of German strength on the Eastern Front.

During Operation Citadel the Germans suffered 54,182 casualties. Between 250 and 300 tanks and assault guns were destroyed, and between 600 and 1,600 were damaged. They also lost 159 aircraft and 500 guns. During the Battle of Kursk another 50,000 men were killed or missing, and 134,000 were wounded. They also lost about 760 tanks and assault guns and 681 aircraft.

Russian casualties were even higher. Operation Citadel cost them 177,847 casualties. Between 1,614 and 1,956 tanks and assault guns were destroyed, and between 459 and 1,000 aircraft. At the Battle of Kursk 254,470 men were killed, missing or captured. 608,833 were wounded or became seriously ill. 6,064 tanks and assault guns were destroyed, and between 1,626 and 1,961 aircraft. The Russians also lost 5,244 guns.

While the Russians could absorb the losses, the Germans could not.

Kursk was the final strategic offensive that the Germans were able to launch on the Eastern Front. From there the retreat that would finally end in Berlin began.

8. Anzio, 1944

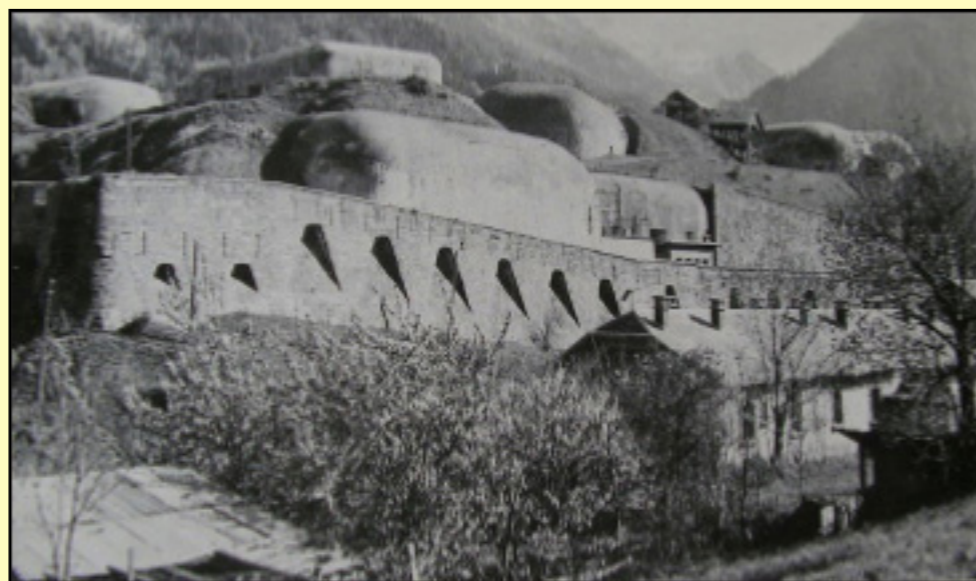
When the Allies launched the Invasion of Italy at the end of 1943, they became bogged down at the Gustav Line. This German defensive line stretched across Italy south of the strategic objective of Rome. The terrain was ideally suited to defence, something that German commander Field Marshal Albert Kesselring took full advantage of.

It was none other than British Prime Minister Winston Churchill who conceived Operation Shingle. The plan was to land two divisions at Anzio, north of the Gustav Line and only 62,4 km from Rome. Not only would the Allies be able to take Rome, they would also cut off the German defenders to the south.

The landing at Anzio on 22 January 1944 took the Germans totally by surprise. Not only was there no opposition, an American Jeep patrol drove as far as the outskirts of Rome without any hindrance. It was a golden opportunity for the Allies, except for one small problem - Major General John P. Lucas.

General Lucas, of the American Army, was in command of the operation. From the start he had little confidence in the operation as planned. He failed to take advantage of the element of surprise and he ordered his men to dig in and wait until he judged his position was sufficiently consolidated and he had sufficient strength.

While Lucas waited on the beach, Kesselring moved every unit he could spare into a defen-



BASTION: While the Maginot Line was formidable, it wasn't much good when attacked from the rear.

sive ring around the beachhead. His artillery units had a clear view of every Allied position. After a month of heavy but inconclusive fighting, Lucas was relieved and sent home. His replacement was Major General Lucian K. Truscott.

It was only in May 1944 that the Allies were finally able to break out of the Anzio beachhead. Rome was eventually captured on June 4, 1944.

What if someone like General George S. Paton had been in command of Operation Shingle? It is unlikely that he would have sat kicking his heels on the beach at Anzio. Especially if he knew the road to Rome was open. The Germans would probably have been forced back to the Austrian border far earlier than they eventually were. It could have saved thousands of Allied and Axis lives.

7. Italy's Invasion of Greece and Egypt, 1940-41

There must have been times

when Italy's Benito Mussolini imagined that he was a modern day Caesar. There is no doubt that he wanted to expand his empire. In the later part of 1940 he decided to invade Greece through Albania, as well as invading Egypt from his colony in Libya.

His army was large, but rather inept. Not surprisingly he had his head handed to him by the Greek and British forces in the Balkans and by the British Allied forces in Egypt. Hitler was forced to send in the German army to save his hapless ally.

Not only did Hitler have to pull valuable resources away from other fronts, it also delayed the start of Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of Russia. Chances are that if Italy had followed the lead of Spain's General Franco and remained neutral, German may have won the war.

6. Maginot Line, 1940

After World War I, the French



BOMBS AWAY: German bombers over London during the Blitz in 1940.

were very wary of the Germans - and with good reason. They came up with a plan based on their experience of trench warfare during World War I. They would build an impregnable fortress of concrete, steel and iron that would deter German aggression, because it would slow an invasion force long enough for French forces to mobilize and counter-attack.

Named the Maginot Line, after French Minister of War André Maginot, it was constructed on the French side of its borders with Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Luxembourg. The Maginot Line was everything that the French claimed. It was impervious to most forms of attack, including aerial bombings and tank fire, and had underground railways as a backup; it also had state-of-the-art living conditions for garrisoned troops, supplying air conditioning and eating areas for their comfort. It boasted a formidable array of weapons that included artillery,

anti-tank guns, mortars and heavy machine guns.

There was, however, one small flaw with the Maginot Line. It did not extend all the way to the English Channel. This was, believe it or not, part of the French plan. They envisioned a move into Belgium to counter a German assault. It was something that did not go unnoticed by the Germans.

When the Germans did launch their attack on France, it was not against the Maginot Line. Instead of going straight at it, they went around it, bypassing the line to the north through the Low Countries. This was something that French and British officers had anticipated when Germany invaded the Netherlands and Belgium. They carried out plans to form an aggressive front line that cut across Belgium and connected to the Maginot Line.

The French line was weak near the Ardennes forest. The French believed that this re-

gion, with its rough terrain and thick forests, would be an unlikely invasion route for the Germans. After all, there was no way that armour would be able to negotiate the forests. It seems as if the Germans didn't get the memo.

Once the Germans became aware of this weak point in the French defensive front, it was quickly exploited. A rapid advance through the forest and across the River Meuse encircled much of the Allied forces, resulting in a sizeable force being evacuated at Dunkirk leaving the forces to the south unable to mount an effective resistance to the German invasion of France.

Once the Germans were behind the Maginot Line, it was game over for the French. All of the defences faced forward. What they had failed to accomplish in four years during World War I, the Germans managed to do in six weeks from 10 May 1940 - they had conquered France.

5. The London Blitz, 1940

"What General Weygand called the battle of France is over. I expect that the battle of Britain is about to begin." These were the opening lines of a speech made by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to the House of Commons on 18 June 1940.

France had surrendered and only Britain stood between Hitler and total victory in Europe. There was one slight problem, however. He would first have to cross the English Channel

to get at Britain. To this end the Germans planned *Unternehmen Seelöw* (Operation Sea Lion), an amphibious invasion of England. Hitler hoped the British government would seek a peace agreement and he reluctantly considered invasion only as a last resort if all other options failed. As a precondition, he specified the achievement of both air and naval superiority over the English Channel and the proposed landing sites.

In July 1940 the air and sea blockade began, with the Luftwaffe mainly targeting coastal-shipping convoys, ports and shipping centres, such as Portsmouth. On 1 August, the Luftwaffe (Air Force) was directed to achieve air superiority over the RAF (Royal Air Force) with the aim of incapacitating RAF Fighter Command. The Luftwaffe soon discovered that this was no easy task.

Britain had a secret weapon – radar. A chain of radar stations meant that the British could detect German aircraft while they were still forming up over France. They could track the height and direction of German fighter and bomber formations. They could then scramble the nearest British fighters to intercept them.

After 12 days the Luftwaffe shifted their attacks to RAF airfields and infrastructure. The Germans were bombing the airfields quicker than the British could repair them. And it was working. RAF leader Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding was unsure of how much longer the



PANZER MARCH: German tanks roll into Russia at the start of Operation Barbarossa.

RAF could last.

Then, on 24 August 1940, Luftwaffe planes had bombed London. This was probably by mistake or simply because they were unloading their bombs randomly in order to escape fighters. Churchill ordered the first deliberate bombing of the German capital in retaliation.

At 00h20 on 26 August 1940, Berlin was bombed by the RAF. Head of the Luftwaffe, Hermann Göring, was furious. Only days before he declared, “If one enemy bomb falls on Berlin, you can call me Meyer.” And if Göring was furious, Hitler was even more so.

He ordered retaliation against London and Göring was more than happy to oblige. The Luftwaffe turned their attention from RAF infrastructure to London. It would become known as ‘The Blitz’.

It was a huge mistake on

Hitler’s part. It gave the RAF a breather during which they could repair their airfields and service and repair their aircraft. By 31 October 1940 the Battle of Britain was over. The Germans had failed to gain air superiority and Hitler first postponed and the later cancelled Operation Sea Lion.

4. Invasion of Russia, 1941

It was the philosopher, essayist, poet and novelist George Santayana that said, “Those who do not remember their past are condemned to repeat their mistakes. Those who do not read history are doomed to repeat it. Those who fail to learn from the mistakes of their predecessors are destined to repeat them. Those who do not know history’s mistakes are doomed to repeat them.”

When Adolf Hitler decided to invade the Soviet Union in



TORA, TORA, TORA: The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour brought America into World War II.

1941, it appears that Santayana wasn’t on Herr Hitler’s reading list. It was only slightly more than a century earlier, in 1812 to be exact, when Napoleon launched his *Campagne de Russie* and sent his *Grande Armée* across the Neman River to invade Russia. As history tells us, Napoleon was not successful.

Military doctrine also tells us that it is not a good idea to fight a war on two fronts. By failing to defeat the British before he invaded Russia, Hitler had done exactly that – started a war on two fronts. Yet Hitler was convinced that *Unternehmen Barbarossa* (Operation Barbarossa), his invasion of Russia, would succeed. “We only have to kick in the door and the whole rotten structure will come crashing down,” he was quoted as saying.

The Russian military was in a mess. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin had begun his ‘Great Purge’ in the late 1930s when much of the officer corps of the Red Army was decimated and

their replacements, appointed by Stalin for political reasons and most of them lacked military competence.

Of the five Marshals of the Soviet Union appointed in 1935, only Kliment Voroshilov and Semyon Budyonny survived Stalin’s purge. Tukhachevsky was killed in 1937. Fifteen of 16 army commanders, 50 of the 57 corps commanders, 154 of the 186 divisional commanders, and 401 of 456 colonels were killed, and many other officers were dismissed. In total, about 30,000 Red Army personnel were executed.

Stalin further underscored his control by reasserting the role of political commissars at the divisional level and below to oversee the political loyalty of the army to the regime. The commissars held a position equal to that of the commander of the unit they were overseeing.

Initially Operation Barbarossa was a success. German forces achieved major victories and occupied some of the most im-

portant economic areas of the Soviet Union, mainly in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and inflicted, as well as sustained, heavy casualties. Despite these Axis successes, the German offensive stalled in the Battle of Moscow and the subsequent Soviet winter counteroffensive pushed German troops back. The Germans were not prepared for the early Soviet winter.

The Red Army absorbed the Wehrmacht’s strongest blows and forced the unprepared Germans into a war of attrition. The Wehrmacht would never again mount a simultaneous offensive along the entire strategic Soviet–Axis front. The failure of the operation drove Hitler to demand further operations of increasingly limited scope inside the Soviet Union, such as Case Blue in 1942 and Operation Citadel in 1943 – all of which eventually failed.

3. Pearl Harbour, 1941

The coded message contained just three words, “*Niitaka yama nobore*” (Climb Mount Niitaka). The events that would follow would change the course of World War II.

It was a message sent from Admiral Yamamoto to Vice Admiral Nagumo on 2 December 1941. It ordered him to open a top secret envelope that told him that the Japanese Empire had decided to go to war with the United States, Britain and Holland.

On 26 November 1941, a Japanese task force that includ-

ed six aircraft carriers - Akagi, Kaga, Sōryū, Hiryū, Shōkaku, and Zuikaku – departed Hitokapu Bay on Kasatka Island in the Kurile Islands under strict radio silence. Their aim was to take a position northwest of Hawaii from where they could launch a surprise attack on the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii.

At 07h48 on 7 December 1941 the US Naval Base at Pearl Harbour came under attack by 353 Imperial Japanese aircraft in two waves. The aircraft included fighters, level bombers, dive bombers, and torpedo bombers, launched from six aircraft carriers.

They sent a signal back, “*Tora, tora, tora*” (Tiger, tiger, tiger), the code to indicate that the attack had achieved total surprise. Japanese losses were light: 29 aircraft and five mid-gut submarines lost, and 64 servicemen killed. One Japanese sailor, Kazuo Sakamaki, was captured.

All eight US Navy battleships were damaged, with four sunk. All but the USS Arizona were later raised, and six were returned to service and went on to fight in the war. The Japanese also sank or damaged three cruisers, three destroyers, an anti-aircraft training ship, and one minelayer. One hundred eighty-eight U.S. aircraft were destroyed; 2,403 Americans were killed and 1,178 others were wounded.

While the Japanese attack had achieved surprise and caused considerable damage, they had missed their main target – the



OPERATION DYNAMO: The Royal Navy was able to evacuate more than 300,000 British and French troops off the beaches at Dunkirk.

American aircraft carriers. The USS Lexington was on its way to Midway Island. The USS Enterprise was scheduled to be in Pearl Harbour on 6 December on her way back from Wake Island, but was delayed by bad weather. The USS Saratoga was in San Diego.

The biggest mistake the Japanese made at Pearl Harbour was that they didn't attack the important base installations. The power station, dry docks, shipyard maintenance, fuel and torpedo storage facilities, submarine pens and headquarters building, which also housed the intelligence section, were not attacked. Had they been attacked and damaged or destroyed, the Americans would have been denied Pearl Harbour as a base.

The following day US President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared war on Japan and proclaimed 7 December 1941 “a day which will live in infamy.” On 11 December 1941 Germany and Italy declared war on America.

Commander-in-chief of the Japanese Imperial Navy, Ad-

miral Isoroku Yamamoto must have had a foreboding. “I fear all I have done is awakened a sleeping giant and filled him with terrible resolve,” he said after the bombing of Pearl Harbour.

2. Dunkirk, 1940

By 26 May 1940, the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and the French 1st Army were bottled up in a corridor to the sea, about 97 km deep and 24–40 km wide. Most of the British forces were still around Lille, over 64 km from Dunkirk, with the French further south. Two massive German armies flanked them. General Fedor von Bock's Army Group B was to the east, and General Gerd von Rundstedt's Army Group A to the west.

The Germans confidently believed that the Allied troops were doomed. BEF commander General Lord Gort tended to agree with the Germans. Writing to Secretary of State for War, Anthony Eden, he said, “I must not conceal from you that a great part of the BEF and its



GAME OVER: A German survivor of the 6th Army is taken prisoner by the Russian.

equipment will inevitably be lost in the best of circumstances”.

On 26 May Eden told Gort that he might need to “fight back to the west”, and ordered him to prepare plans for the evacuation, but without telling the French or the Belgians. Gort was already one step ahead. He had foreseen the order and preliminary plans were already in hand. The first such plan, for a defence along the Lys Canal, could not be carried out because of German advances on 26 May, with the 2nd and 50th Divisions pinned down, and the 1st, 5th and 48th Divisions under heavy attack.

The 2nd Division took heavy casualties trying to keep a corridor open, being reduced to brigade strength, but they succeeded; the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 42nd Divisions escaped along the corridor that day, as did about one-third of the French First Army. As the Allies fell back, they disabled their artillery and

vehicles and destroyed their stores. On 27 May, the British fought back to the Dunkirk perimeter line.

Then, in one of the most debated decisions of the war, the Germans halted their advance on Dunkirk. Contrary to popular belief, what became known as the “Halt Order” did not originate with Adolf Hitler. *Generalobersten* (Colonel-Generals) Gerd von Rundstedt and Günther von Kluge suggested that the German forces around the Dunkirk pocket should cease their advance on the port and consolidate to avoid an Allied breakout. Hitler sanctioned the order on 24 May.

Hitler did not rescind the Halt Order until the evening of 26 May. The three days thus gained gave a vital breathing space to the Royal Navy to arrange the evacuation of the British and Allied troops. About 338,000 men were rescued in about 11 days. Of these some 215,000

were British and 123,000 were French, of whom 102,250 escaped in British ships.

The War Office made the decision to evacuate British forces on 25 May. In the nine days from 27 May–4 June, 338,226 men escaped, including 139,997 French, Polish, and Belgian troops, together with a small number of Dutch soldiers, aboard 861 vessels (of which 243 were sunk during the operation that was code named Operation Dynamo).

The docks at Dunkirk were too badly damaged to be used, but the East and West Moles (sea walls protecting the harbour entrance) were intact. Captain William Tennant—in charge of the evacuation—decided to use the beaches and the East Mole to land the ships. This highly successful idea hugely increased the number of troops that could be embarked each day and on 31 May, over 68,000 men were embarked.

The last of the British Army left on 3 June, and at 10:50, Tennant signalled Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Navy, Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsay, to say “Operation completed. Returning to Dover”. Churchill insisted on coming back for the French and the Royal Navy returned on 4 June, to rescue as many as possible of the French rearguard. Over 26,000 French soldiers were evacuated on that last day, but between 30,000 and 40,000 more were left behind and forced to surrender to the Germans.

Luftwaffe commander Her-

mann Göring asked for the chance to destroy the forces in Dunkirk. The Allied forces' destruction was thus initially assigned to the air force while the German infantry organised in Army Group B. Von Rundstedt later called this "one of the great turning points of the war."

By not finishing off the BEF at Dunkirk and allowing more than 300,000 men to escape, the Germans had made a costly mistake. If those men had not been available it is doubtful that the British would have been able to defend Egypt the following year. If the Germans had taken Egypt and the valuable oil field of the Middle East, the final outcome of the war could have been very different.

1. Stalingrad, 1942

This was the battle that ultimately cost Germany the war. The battle took place from 23 August 1942 to 2 February 1943 at a city on the banks of the Volga River in Southern Russia. The city was named Stalingrad, after Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. Marked by fierce close quarters combat and direct assaults on civilians in air raids, it is often regarded as the single largest (nearly 2.2 million personnel) and bloodiest (1.7–2 million killed, wounded or captured) battle in the history of warfare. It was a battle in which Germany lost an entire army of more than half a million men.

The German 6th Army and elements of the 4th Panzer Army were used for the offensive.



ROOM BY ROOM: The Battle of Stalingrad featured fierce house-to-house fighting and close combat.

The attack was supported by intensive Luftwaffe bombing that reduced most of the city to rubble. The fighting degenerated into house-to-house combat and both sides poured reinforcements into the city. Stalin was determined that the city named after him would not fall. Hitler was just as determined that it would.

By mid-November 1942 the Germans had pushed the Soviet defenders back at great cost into narrow zones along the west bank of the Volga River. It seemed that victory was within the grasp of the Germans.

On 19 November 1942, the Red Army launched Operation Uranus, a two-pronged attack targeting the weaker Romanian and Hungarian armies protecting the German 6th Army's flanks. The Axis forces on the flanks were overrun and the 6th Army was cut off and surrounded in the Stalingrad area.

The 6th Army could have at-

tempted a break out of Stalingrad when it was clear that defeat was inevitable, and before the noose surrounding Stalingrad tightened. Adolf Hitler would have nothing to do with the idea. He ordered General Friedrich Paulus to remain in Stalingrad and make no attempt to break out. His order were "to fight to the last man and last bullet." Instead attempts were made to supply the army by air and to break the encirclement from the outside.

By the beginning of February 1943 the Axis forces in Stalingrad had exhausted their ammunition and food. Field Marshal Paulus, recently promoted by Hitler, surrendered the remaining units of the 6th Army. The battle has lasted five months, one week and three days.

The Axis suffered 627,899 total casualties (wounded, killed, captured) among all branches of the German armed forces and its allies; 282,606 in the 6th Army



FOR YOU THE WAR IS OVER: More than 90,000 Germans were taken prisoner at Stalingrad. Only about 5,000 of them would ever see Germany again.

from 21 August to the end of the battle, 17,293 in the 4th Panzer Army from 21 August to 31 January, 109,000 Romanians of which at least 70,000 were captured or missing, 114,000 Italians and 105,000 Hungarians were killed, wounded or captured.

The Germans lost 900 air-

craft (including 274 transports and 165 bombers used as transports), 500 tanks and 6,000 artillery pieces. According to a contemporary Soviet report, 5,762 heavy machine guns, 156,987 rifles, 80,438 sub-machine guns, 10,722 trucks, 744 aircraft; 1,666

tanks, 261 other armoured vehicles, 571 half-tracks and 10,679 motorcycles were captured by the Soviets. An unknown amount of Hungarian, Italian, and Romanian materiel was lost. Out of the nearly 91,000 German prisoners captured in Stalingrad, only about 5,000 ever returned to Germany.

The USSR, according to archival figures, suffered 1,129,619 total casualties; 478,741 personnel killed or missing, and 650,878 wounded or sick. The USSR lost 4,341 tanks destroyed or damaged, 15,728 artillery pieces and 2,769 combat aircraft. 955 Soviet civilians died in Stalingrad and its suburbs from aerial bombing by Luftflotte 4 as the German 4th Panzer and 6th Armies approached the city.

Stalingrad was a turning point for the Germans, and in fact a turning point in World War II.

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.

Operation Barras

The Special Air Service embark on a rescue mission in Sierra Leone that is considered so dangerous that it is given the nickname "Operation Certain Death".

- **Date:** 10 September 2000
- **Location:** Occra Hills, Sierra Leone
- **Units involved:** Special Air Service; 1 Parachute Regiment

Operation Barras was a British Army operation that took place in Sierra Leone on 10 September 2000, during the late stages of the nation's civil war.

The operation aimed to release five British soldiers of the Royal Irish Regiment and their Sierra Leone Army (SLA) liaison officer, who were being held by a militia group known as the "West Side Boys".

The soldiers were part of a patrol that was returning from a visit to Jordanian peacekeepers attached to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) at Masiaka on 25 August 2000 when they turned off the main road and down a track towards the village of Magbeni.

There the patrol of twelve men was overwhelmed by a large number of heavily armed rebels, taken prisoner, and transported to Gberi Bana on the opposite side of Rokel Creek.

Negotiators secured the release of six of the soldiers, but were unable to gain the freedom of the remaining five and their SLA liaison officer before the West Side Boys' demands became increasingly unrealistic.

Negotiators concluded that these were delaying tactics rather than an effort to resolve the crisis. By 9 September, the soldiers had been held for over a fortnight.

Fearing that the soldiers would be killed or moved to a location from which it would be more difficult to extract them, the British government authorised an assault on the West Side Boys' base, to take place at dawn the following day, 10 September.

Background

Sierra Leone is a former British colony in West Africa, close to the equator, with an area of 71,740 square kilometres.

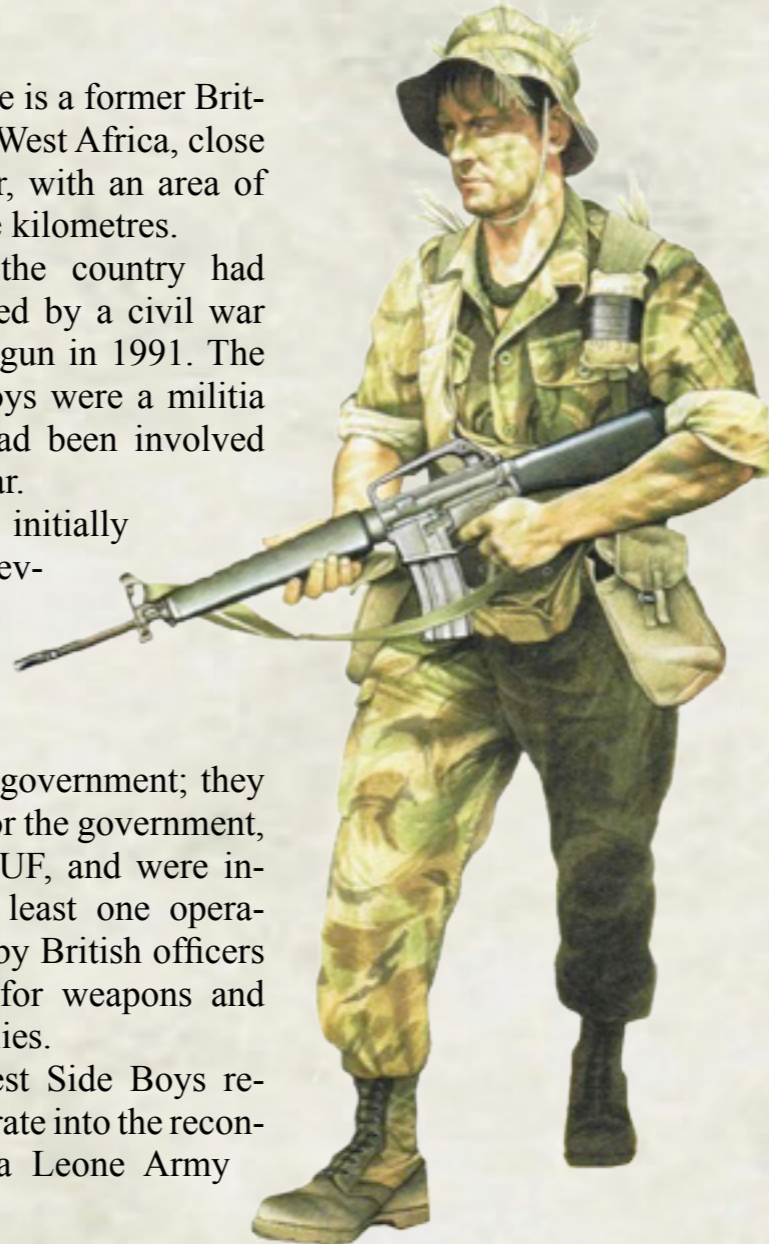
By 2000, the country had been consumed by a civil war which had begun in 1991. The West Side Boys were a militia group who had been involved in the civil war.

They were initially loyal to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the rebel army opposing the government; they later fought for the government, against the RUF, and were involved in at least one operation directed by British officers in exchange for weapons and medical supplies.

But the West Side Boys refused to integrate into the reconstituted Sierra Leone Army

and began operating as bandits from the abandoned villages of Magbeni and Gberi Bana, on opposite sides of Rokel Creek. Often high on cannabis, cocaine, and local palm wine, they were a law unto themselves

British forces were deployed to Sierra Leone in May 2000, initially for a non-combatant evacuation operation under the codename Operation Palliser, in which they were tasked with evacuating foreign nationals - particularly those from the



United Kingdom, other Commonwealth countries, and others for whom the British government had accepted consular responsibility.

As part of the mission, British forces secured Sierra Leone's main airport, Lungi. Having secured Freetown and Lungi, and evacuated the foreign nationals who wished to leave, the initial forces left and were replaced by a "Short Term Training Team" (STTT), whose mission was to train and rebuild the Sierra Leone Army.

The STTT was initially formed from a detachment from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, who were replaced in July 2000 by 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment (1 R IRISH).

Capture of the Royal Irish

On 25 August 2000, a patrol led by Major Allan Marshall consisting of 11 men from the 1 R IRISH and an official from the Sierra Leone Army acting as interpreter, Lieutenant Musa Bangura, left their base in Waterloo to visit Jordanian peacekeepers attached to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and based at Masiaka.

Over lunch, they were informed that the West Side Boys had begun to disarm, despite their initial reluctance, and Marshall decided to take the patrol to investigate en route back to their base.

The patrol turned off the main road onto a dirt track that led to the village of Magbeni, where the West Side Boys were based. As they approached the base, they were surrounded by a

large group of West Side Boys, who used an anti-aircraft gun mounted on a Bedford truck to block the patrol's route.

Marshall dismounted his vehicle, then resisted an attempt to grab his rifle and was beaten. He and the rest of the patrol were then forced into canoes at the bank of Rokel Creek and transported to Gberi Bana, a village on the other side of the river, just upstream from the point of the initial confrontation.

Negotiations begin

British forces in Sierra Leone were operating on the authority of the Sierra Leone government, but President Ahmad Kabbah allowed British forces to negotiate for the soldiers' release themselves, as his government lacked the requisite expertise.

The negotiations were led by Lieutenant Colonel Simon Fordham, commanding officer of 1 R IRISH, who was assisted by a small team which included hostage negotiators from the Metropolitan Police.

The West Side Boys would not allow negotiators any closer to the village of Magbeni than the end of the track from the main road, so Fordham met there with the self-styled "Brigadier" Foday Kallay, the gang's leader, to negotiate for the soldiers' release.

On 29 August, Fordham demanded proof that the captive soldiers were still alive, and Kallay brought with him to that day's meeting the two officers from the group - Marshall, the company commander, and Captain Ed Flaherty, the regimental signals officer.

During the meeting, Flaherty

shook hands with Fordham and covertly passed him a sketch map of Gberi Bana which detailed the layout of the village and the building in which the soldiers were being held.

Two days later, on 31 August, five of the eleven hostages were released in exchange for a satellite telephone and medical supplies.

The OC of the captured soldiers had originally decided to release the youngest first, but this was changed to the married men last minute. However, out of the married men the West Side Boys wanted two of them to remain due to their signals experience.

The released soldiers included the Sergeant Major, two corporals and two rangers. The West Side Boys told the British negotiators that the remaining captured soldiers which included the OC, a Captain, a Sergeant, a Lance Corporal and two Rangers that they would not be released until the gang's remaining demands were met.

The released soldiers were flown for debriefing to RFA Sir Percivale, of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, off the coast.

After the release of the soldiers, the West Side Boys' spokesman, the self-styled "Colonel Cambodia", used the satellite telephone to contact the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) for a lengthy interview in which they outlined a series of demands, including a re-negotiation of the Lomé Peace Accord and the release of prisoners held by the Sierra Leone authorities.

The BBC had prior warning from the Foreign Office that

the interview would take place. "Colonel Cambodia" quickly depleted the batteries in the telephone, but his call to the BBC enabled specialists from the Royal Corps of Signals to determine the exact position of the telephone.

Military planning

The West Side Boys were unstable, possibly due to use of cannabis and cocaine, and their behaviour during the crisis was erratic.

After their release, the five soldiers described an incident in which Kallay, dissatisfied with their explanation, conducted a mock execution in which he threatened to shoot the soldiers unless they told him why they had entered the West Side Boys' territory.

Media reported that the gang's drug habits also posed a problem for the British negotiators as their cannabis use allegedly caused them to forget previous discussions and the cocaine made them distrustful.

It was becoming clear that negotiations may not be the solution to resolving the problem and that military action may be needed.

Around the time that the five soldiers were released, two negotiators from the SAS joined Fordham's negotiating team.

One of them joined Fordham in several meetings with the West Side Boys, posing as a Royal Irish major in order to provide reconnaissance and gather intelligence in case an assault was required.

Shortly after the patrol's capture Surgeon Lieutenant Jon Carty RN, the medical officer



RAG TAG REBELS: Normally high on cannabis, cocaine and local palm wine, the Wild Boys were a law unto themselves.

on board HMS Argyll - which was operating off the coast - was brought ashore to assess the soldiers, should they be freed, or to provide immediate care in the event of an assault resulting in casualties.

Argyll also served as a temporary base for two Army Air Corps Lynx attack helicopters from No. 657 Squadron which had been flown to Sierra Leone to support any direct action.

As planning for a potential military operation to release the captive soldiers progressed, it became clear that, given the number of West Side Boys and their separation between two locations (Gberi Bana as well as the village of Magbeni), the operation could not be conducted by special forces alone.

Thus, the headquarters of 1st Battalion The Parachute Regiment (1 PARA) was ordered to assemble an enhanced company group, which would support special forces if such an operation was launched.

The battalion's commanding officer selected A Company,

led by Major Matthew Lowe, which had been on exercise in Jamaica at the time of the initial British deployment to Sierra Leone.

On 31 August, the company group was ordered to move to South Cerney in Gloucestershire, under the cover story that they were conducting a "readiness to move" exercise. It was only at this point, and after all mobile telephones had been confiscated to ensure operational security, that the entire company was briefed on the operation that was being planned.

With the operation becoming more likely to be launched, Lowe and his planning group flew to Dakar, Senegal, on 3 September to continue planning and to study intelligence gathered from SAS patrols operating near the West Side Boys' camp.

With the progression of the plans, the enhanced A Company was tasked with planning for an assault on the village of Magbeni, to the south of Rokel Creek, while the SAS would



aim to release the captive Royal Irish soldiers by assaulting Gberi Bana, on the north bank.

The Magbeni assault had several purposes: to neutralise weapons in the village which could disrupt the SAS operation, to distract the West Side Boys in Magbeni and prevent them from crossing Rokel Creek to interfere with the operation in Gberi Bana, to defeat the West Side Boys and destroy their military capabilities, and to recover the Royal Irish patrol's vehicles.

Several methods of insertion were considered, both for the paras and the special forces personnel, including an overland approach using four-wheel drive vehicles, and a water-borne insertion using the same method by which the SAS observation teams had arrived at their position.

The planning group decided that the overland approach would not allow troops to enter

the village undetected, largely due to the West Side Boys' roadblocks on the road into the village, and that insertion from Rokel Creek was not feasible for large numbers of troops due to the sandbanks and powerful currents in the river.

Thus, it was decided that the insertions would be made from three Royal Air Force Special Forces Chinook helicopters from No. 7 Squadron, which had been in Sierra Leone since the beginning of Operation Paliser.

Deployment to Sierra Leone

The enhanced A Company group - approximately 130 troops in total - arrived in the country in several groups and joined the SAS, who had already established a base in Hastings, a village 48 kilometres south of Freetown.

At Hastings, the paras focused on live firing exercises and rehearsed various scenarios in a scale replica of Magbeni which had been constructed at the camp.

As well as learning the layout of the village and refining battle technique, the rehearsals allowed the soldiers to acclimatise to the tropical heat, and led commanders to the decision that the paras would go into battle with minimal equipment to reduce the risk of heat exhaustion - excluding weapons and ammunition, they would carry only water and field dressings.

Some officers feared that the weight of body armour would increase the risk of heat exhaustion, but commanders hoped that the cooler temperatures of the early morning (when the

operation was planned to be launched) would mitigate the effects of the weight, and decided to order its use.

A day after the arrival of the paras, Director Special Forces (DSF), Brigadier John Holmes, arrived in Freetown with a headquarters staff which included the commanding officer of 22 SAS and the officer commanding D Squadron, as well as three personnel from the Royal Air Force's Tactical Communications Wing.

Holmes based himself at Seaview House, the British military headquarters in Freetown, near the British High Commission. From there, his staff established contact with the SAS observation teams on either side of Rokel Creek and with COBRA, the British government's emergency committee in London.

The DSF, who usually attends COBRA meetings during crises which may require the use of special forces, was represented by his chief of staff and by Lieutenant Colonel Tim Collins, operations officer at Headquarters Special Forces.

Decision to launch

On 9 September, "Colonel Cambodia" stated that the remaining six members of the Royal Irish patrol, who had now been held for over a fortnight, would be released only after a new government was formed in Sierra Leone.

The negotiators concluded that the West Side Boys' increasingly unrealistic demands were stalling tactics rather than a serious attempt to conclude the crisis. At around the same

time, the SAS teams near the West Side Boys' base reported that they had seen no sign of the captive soldiers during the four days they had been in position.

There were also concerns that the West Side Boys might move further inland, and either kill the soldiers or move them to a location from which it would be more difficult for British forces to extract them. The combination of these factors led COBRA to order an assault.

The operation was to commence at first light the next day, 10 September. The intervening time was spent securing the political and legal basis for the raid. Final approval was gained from Sierra Leonean President Ahmad Kabbah, and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, while the Army Legal Corps secured approval from the Sierra Leonean Police.

Fordham, who had been leading the negotiations, telephoned the West Side Boys and was able to establish that the captive soldiers were alive, and the final orders were issued in the evening of 9 September.

The two villages were to be assaulted simultaneously - Gberi Bana, where the Royal Irish were held, by the SAS and Magbeni by an SAS team and the paras.

In addition to the remaining Royal Irish soldiers, the SAS were also tasked with extracting Lieutenant Musa Bangura - the patrol's SLA liaison, whose extraction was given the same priority as that of the Royal Irish - and a group of Sierra Leonean civilians who were being held by the West Side Boys.



AIR POWER: A Royal Air Force (RAF) Chinook helicopter, the same type that was used during Operation Barras.

The Assault

The task force left Hastings - approximately 15 minutes' flying time from the West Side Boys' camp - at approximately 06:15.

Downstream from the villages - approximately 15 minutes' flying time, just out of the West Side Boys' visual and hearing range, the helicopters went into a holding pattern to allow the SAS observation teams time to get into position to prevent the West Side Boys from attacking any of the captives before the extraction teams were on the ground.

Once the observation teams were in position, the helicopters proceeded up the line of Rokel Creek, the Chinooks flying low enough that the downdraft tore off the corrugated iron roofs of several huts in the villages, including the roof of the building in which the Royal Irish were being held.

As the helicopters approached, the SAS observation team at Gberi Bana engaged West Side Boys in the vicinity

of the captives to prevent any gang members from attempting to kill them before the area was secured.

Upon their arrival, the Chinooks opened fire using the M134 Miniguns mounted on the front doors whilst the two Lynx attack helicopters strafed the villages to make the landing zones as safe as possible, and destroy the heavy weapons that had been identified by the SAS observation teams.

Gberi Bana

After the first sweep by the attack helicopters, two Chinooks carried the SAS to Gberi Bana. The troopers fast-roped into the village and immediately came under fire from the West Side Boys. Early on in the confrontation, the British operation sustained its first casualty - a round entered Trooper Bradley Tinnion's flank, leaving him seriously injured.

He was dragged back to the helicopter and flown to the medical team aboard the RFA Sir Percivale, dying despite in-

tensive resuscitation attempts on board. The SAS proceeded to clear the village, engaging those West Side Boys who offered resistance and capturing those who surrendered, including Foday Kallay.

The SAS located the captive British soldiers from the latter's shouts of "British Army, British Army!", though Bangura had been held separately and proved more difficult to locate. He was found in a squalid open pit, which had been used by the West Side Boys as a lavatory, and had been starved and beaten during his captivity, and thus had to be carried to the helicopter.

Less than 20 minutes after the arrival of the SAS, the remaining members of the Royal Irish patrol, including Bangura, had been evacuated from the area.

As the SAS operation concluded, the Chinooks ferried prisoners and bodies from Gberi Bana to the Jordanian battalion of UNAMSIL. From there, the bodies would be identified and buried, and those prisoners identified as West Side Boys would be handed over to the Sierra Leonean Police.

Operation Barras also freed 22 Sierra Leonean civilians who had been held captive by the West Side Boys - the men were used as servants and put through crude military training by the West Side Boys, possibly with the intention of forcing them to fight in the future, while the women were used as sex slaves.

Planners had been concerned that West Side Boys might try to conceal themselves among the civilians and so the civil-

ians were also restrained and taken to the Jordanian peacekeepers' base to be identified. A 23rd civilian was caught in the crossfire and killed during the assault.

Magbeni

The third Chinook carried half of the enhanced A Company group from 1 PARA, and an SAS team to Magbeni. The helicopter hovered low above the landing zone that had been identified by the second SAS observation team and the troopers jumped from the rear ramp. The observation team had warned that the ground was wet but had been unable to determine the depth of the water, so the troopers were surprised to find themselves jumping into a chest-deep swamp.

The majority of the first group immediately waded through the swamp to get to the nearby tree line and from there to the village, but a small party tasked with securing the landing zone had to wait in the swamp for the Chinook to pick up the remaining members of the company group and return to insert them at the landing zone.

The returning Chinook, carrying the remainder of the A Company group including second-in-command (2IC) Captain Danny Matthews, came under fire from a heavy machine gun in Magbeni.

It then returned fire from its door mounted M134 Miniguns before being promptly joined by one of the 657 Squadron Lynx helicopters which strafed the HMG until it ceased firing.

The soldiers in Matthews' helicopter exited and joined the

first half of the company group on the ground. As the company group moved forward, an explosion - possibly a mortar fired by the British fire support group - injured seven men, including company commander Major Matthew Lowe, one of the platoon commanders, a signaller, and two of Lowe's headquarters staff.

Another signaller radioed in a casualty report, and one of the Chinooks en route to Gberi Bana to extract the Royal Irish (who had just been freed by the SAS) landed on the track through the village. The casualties were loaded onto the helicopter, which then picked up the Royal Irish and flew to RFA Sir Percivale where all 13 men were assessed by medics.

The operation continued under the leadership of Matthews, the company 2IC, who had taken command almost immediately after the company commander was wounded. Under his command, each of the platoons assaulted a different cluster of buildings to which they had been assigned during training on the replica village at Hastings.

The West Side Boys' ammunition store was found and secured and, once the rest of the buildings had been cleared, the paras took up defensive positions to block any potential counter-attack and patrols went into the immediate jungle in search of any West Side Boys hiding in the bushes.

The village was completely secure by 08:00 and the paras secured the approaches with Claymore mines and mortars positioned to prevent a counter-



Bullpup Rifles in silhouette

The bullpup rifle, where the magazine sits behind the trigger, have become popular with many countries. This month we're looking at 14 bullpup rifles but, to make it just a bit more difficult, we're looking at them in silhouette. Answers on page 86.

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

attack, while a detachment destroyed the remaining vehicles and heavy weapons including the Bedford lorry which had blocked the Royal Irish patrol.

The paras also recovered the Royal Irish patrol's Land Rovers, which were slung under the Chinooks and removed. The last British soldiers left the area at approximately 14:00.

Conclusion of the assault

The remaining members of the captured patrol were flown to RFA Sir Percivale. Fordham visited the men shortly after the operation and stated "they looked remarkably well considering the ordeal they had been through" and described them as being "physically and mentally exhausted".

After medical checks, the sol-

diers, who had been held for 17 days, were allowed to telephone their families and then rejoined their battalion in Freetown. The paras were flown to RFA Argus where they spent the night before being flown back to the United Kingdom the next day. D Squadron, 22 SAS also left Sierra Leone the day after the operation, along with Director Special Forces and his headquarters staff.

Aftermath

The operation was the first time in its history that the SAS had been deployed to rescue other members of the British Army. One British soldier, Bradley Tinnion of the SAS, died after being wounded during the operation, having been evacuated to HMS Argyll. An-

other twelve soldiers were injured, one seriously.

Confirmed to have died in the operation were 25 West Side Boys, although the true figure is probably higher, possibly as many as 80.

The gang's resistance was stronger than expected and there was speculation that more bodies lay undiscovered in the jungle.

Several other West Side Boys were captured, while others fled into the jungle. Many of those who fled later surrendered to Jordanian peacekeepers.

Julius Spencer, Sierra Leone's Minister for Information, declared that the West Side boys were "finished as a military threat".

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.

World War II German Field Marshals (Part Three)

During World War II no country had more field marshals than Nazi Germany. In Part Three 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:

- Günther von Kluge (Army)
- Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb (Army)
- Wilhelm List (Army)
- Erhard Milch (Air Force)
- Walter von Reichenau (Army)
- Gerd von Rundstedt (Army)
- Hugo Sperrle (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 *Wehrmacht* (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 marshals of World War II.

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



Erwin von Witzleben

Born: 4 December 1881

Promoted: 19 July 1940

Job Wilhelm Georg Erdmann Erwin von Witzleben was a German field marshal in the Wehrmacht during the Second World War.

A leading conspirator in the 20 July plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler, he was designated to become Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht in a post-Nazi regime had the plot succeeded.

As early as 1934, Witzleben

indicated opposition against the Nazi regime when he and Manstein, Leeb, and Rundstedt demanded an inquiry into General Kurt von Schleicher and General Ferdinand von Bredow's deaths in the Night of the Long Knives.

As a result of that and his criticism of Hitler's persecution of Fritsch in the Blomberg-Fritsch Affair, Witzleben was temporarily forced into early retirement. His "retirement" did not last, however, as Hitler soon needed him in the preparations for the Second World War.

In September 1939, Witzleben, then a *Generaloberst* (Colonel General), took command of the 1st Army, stationed at the Western Front. When Germany attacked France on 10 May 1940, the First Army was part of Army Group C. On 14 June it broke through the Maginot line, and within three days had forced several French divisions to surrender.

For this, Witzleben was decorated with the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross; and on 19 July, he was promoted to *Generalfeldmarschall* (General Field Marshal) during the 1940 Field Marshal Ceremony.

In 1941 he was even appointed Commander-in-Chief OB West, succeeding *Generalfeldmarschall* Gerd von Rundstedt, but only a year later, he took leave from that position for health reasons. Some sources,

however, claim that he was again forcibly retired at this time after he had criticised the regime for its invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 in Operation Barbarossa.

On 7 August 1944, Witzleben was in the first group of accused conspirators to be brought before the *Volksgerichtshof* (People's Court). Ravaged by the conditions of his Gestapo arrest, he surprisingly approached the bench giving the Nazi salute, for which he was rebuked by the presiding judge Roland Freisler.

Witzleben was sentenced to death on the same day. By Hitler's direct orders, he was hanged with a meat hook and a thin hemp rope.

Died: 8 August 1944 (aged 62)

Cause of death: Execution.



Eduard von Böhm-Ermolli

Born: 12 February 1856

Promoted: 31 October 1940

Eduard Freiherr von Böhm-Ermolli was an Austrian general during World War I who rose to the rank of field marshal in the Austro-Hungarian Army.

He was the head of the Second Army and fought mainly on

the front of Galicia during the entire conflict. On 30 October 1940, Böhm-Ermolli was made a German *Generalfeldmarschall*.

When the Sudetenland, the predominantly German settled regions along the fringes of Czechoslovakia, was annexed to Nazi Germany in 1938, he became a German subject.

On 31 October 1940 Böhm-Ermolli received an honorary promotion to *Generalfeldmarschall* of the German Army. In addition, he was appointed honorary colonel-in-chief of Infantry Regiment 28 in his hometown of Troppau (Opava).

Died: 9 December 1941 (aged 85)

Cause of death: Natural causes.



Erwin Rommel

Born: 15 November 1891

Promoted: 22 June 1942

Johannes Erwin Eugen Rommel was a German field marshal during World War II.

He served in the Wehrmacht of Nazi Germany, as well as serving in the Reichswehr of the Weimar Republic, and the army of Imperial Germany. Rommel was injured multiple times in both world wars.

Rommel was a highly decorated officer in World War I and was awarded the *Pour le Mérite* for his actions on the Italian Front.

In World War II, he commanded the 7th Panzer Division during the 1940 invasion of France. His leadership of German and Italian forces in the North African campaign established his reputation as one of the ablest tank commanders of the war, and earned him the nickname *der Wüstenfuchs*, "the Desert Fox".

Rommel was promoted to *Generalmajor* on 23 August 1939 and assigned as commander of the *Führerbegleitbattalion*, tasked with guarding Hitler and his field headquarters during the invasion of Poland, which began on 1 September 1939.

Following the invasion of Poland, Rommel began lobbying for command of one of Germany's panzer divisions, of which there were then only ten. Rommel's successes in World War I were based on surprise and manoeuvre, two elements for which the new panzer units were ideally suited.

Rommel received a promotion to a general's rank from Hitler ahead of more senior officers. Rommel obtained the command he aspired to, despite having been earlier turned down by the army's personnel office, which had offered him command of a mountain division instead.

Going against military protocol, this promotion added to Rommel's growing reputation as one of Hitler's favoured commanders, although his later out-

standing leadership in France quelled complaints about his self-promotion and political scheming.

Upon taking command of the 7th Panzer Division on 10 February 1940, Rommel quickly set his unit to practising the manoeuvres they would need in the upcoming campaign.

During the invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium and France Rommel proved what a capable panzer commander he was. It saw him being awarded the Knight's Cross.

As the war progressed his reputation among both the German Army and the German people grew. He was respected by both friend and foe.

On 6 February 1941, Rommel was appointed commander of the new Afrika Korps (Deutsches Afrika Korps; DAK), consisting of the 5th Light Division (later renamed 21st Panzer Division) and of the 15th Panzer Division. [106] He was promoted to *Generalleutnant* three days later and flew to Tripoli on 12 February.

On 23 July 1943, Rommel was moved to Greece as commander of Army Group E to counter a possible British invasion.

On 4 November 1943, Rommel became General Inspector of the Western Defences. He was given a staff that befitted an army group commander, and the powers to travel, examine and make suggestions on how to improve the defences.

The role that Rommel played in the military's resistance against Hitler or the 20 July plot is difficult to ascertain, as most of the leaders who were directly involved did not survive and limited documentation on the con-

spirators' plans and preparations exists.

On 17 July 1944, Rommel was incapacitated by an Allied air attack, which many authors describe as a fateful event that drastically altered the outcome of the bomb plot.

Hitler knew that having Rommel branded and executed as a traitor would severely damage morale on the home front. He thus decided to offer Rommel the chance to take his own life.

Knowing that his family would suffer if he chose any other option, Rommel committed suicide on 14 October 1944.

The official notice of Rommel's death as reported to the public stated that he had died of either a heart attack or a cerebral embolism. To strengthen the story, Hitler ordered an official day of mourning in commemoration of his death. As promised, Rommel was given a state funeral but it was held in Ulm instead of Berlin as had been requested by Rommel.

Died: 14 October 1944 (aged 52)
Cause of death: Suicide.



Georg von Küchler

Born: 30 May 1881

Promoted: 30 June 1942

Georg Carl Wilhelm Friedrich

von Küchler was a German field marshal of the Wehrmacht during the Second World War, who was subsequently convicted of war crimes.

He commanded the 18th Army and Army Group North during the Soviet-German war of 1941–1945. At the end of World War II, Küchler was arrested by American occupation authorities. He was tried in the High Command Trial, as part of the Subsequent Nuremberg Trials.

On 27 October 1948 Küchler was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Soviet Union. His sentence was reviewed by the "Peck Panel" and reduced to 12 years in 1951. He was released in February 1953 and lived with his wife in the Garmisch region.

Died: 25 May 1968 (aged 86)

Cause of death: Natural causes.



Erich von Manstein

Born: 24 November 1887

Promoted: 1 July 1942

Fritz Erich Georg Eduard von Manstein was a German Field Marshal of the Wehrmacht during the Second World War.

During World War I, Man-

stein served on both the German Western and Eastern Fronts. He finished the war with the rank of captain.

After the war he remained in the army and was promoted to *Generalmajor* in October 1936. On 4 February 1938, Manstein was transferred to the command of the 18th Infantry Division in Liegnitz, Silesia, with the rank of *Generalleutnant*.

During the invasion of Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium and France, von Manstein demonstrated his abilities as a panzer commander.

He also proved his worth on the Eastern Front when Germany invaded Russia.

After the war he was convicted of war crimes and sentenced to 18 years imprisonment. The sentence was reduced to 12 years in February 1950.

Died: 9 June 1973 (aged 85)

Cause of death: Natural causes.



Friedrich Paulus

Born: 23 September 1890

Promoted: 31 January 1943

Friedrich Wilhelm Ernst Paulus was a German field marshal during World War II who is best known for commanding the 6th Army during the Battle of Stalingrad (August 1942 to Febru-

ary 1943).

The battle ended in disaster for the Wehrmacht when Soviet forces encircled the Germans within the city, leading to the ultimate death or capture of most of 265,000 6th Army personnel, their Axis allies and collaborators.

Knowing that the situation was impossible, Paulus requested permission from Hitler to surrender. Hitler said that they were to fight to the last man and the last bullet.

On 30 January, Paulus informed Hitler that his men were only hours from collapse. Hitler promoted Paulus to field marshal. In deciding to promote him, Hitler noted that there was no known record of a Prussian or German field marshal ever having surrendered. The implication was clear: Paulus was to commit suicide. Hitler implied that if Paulus allowed himself to be taken alive, he would shame Germany's military history.

Hitler's ploy didn't work and Paulus and his staff surrendered on the morning of 31 January 1943.

In captivity he became a vocal critic of the Nazi regime. After the war he later acted as a witness for the prosecution at the Nuremberg Trials. He was then allowed to move to East Berlin.

From 1953 to 1956, Paulus lived in Dresden, East Germany, where he worked as the civilian chief of the East German Military History Research Institute.

Died: 1 February 1957 (aged 66)

Cause of death: Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.



Karl Dönitz

Born: 16 September 1891

Promoted: 31 January 1943

Karl Dönitz was a German admiral who briefly succeeded Adolf Hitler as head of state in May 1945, holding the position until the dissolution of the Flensburg Government following Germany's unconditional surrender to the Allies days later.

As Supreme Commander of the Navy beginning in 1943, he played a major role in the naval history of World War II.

By the start of the Second World War, Dönitz was supreme commander of the *Kriegsmarine's* U-boat arm (*Befehlshaber der Unterseeboote* (BdU)). In January 1943, Dönitz achieved the rank of *Großadmiral* (grand admiral) and replaced Grand Admiral Erich Raeder as Commander-in-Chief of the Navy. After the war he was indicted as a major war criminal at the Nuremberg Trials on three counts. Dönitz was imprisoned for 10 years in Spandau Prison. Died: 24 December 1980 (aged 89)

Cause of death: Heart attack.

A funny thing happened to me

A medal, a promotion, a church parade, another promotion, and a bonus - just a few funny, but true stories from readers that served in the SADF.

Many of our readers spent time in the old SADF (South African Defence Force). Many did National Service and would then go on to serve in the Citizen Force (CF). Some were full-time soldiers - members of the Permanent Force (PF).

Most of those that served in the SADF had mixed feelings about their time spent in uniform. Some enjoyed it, others disliked it, and many were indifferent.

Yet most, if not all, would have to agree that there was at least one occasion or incident that was amusing if not downright funny.

We asked readers that served in the SADF to send us stories that fitted the above profile.

Now this is not as simple as it sounds. Military Despatches is read monthly by a lot of people - and I mean a lot of people. Yet trying to get any sort of a response from readers is like trying to pull teeth from a stone.

The vast majority would never even bother to send an e-mail saying that they enjoy the magazine or say thanks for all the work you put into it.

So I was pleasantly surprised when a few readers did take the time to e-mail me stories. We selected some of them for this article.

As promised, we have not mentioned the surnames of anyone that sent us stories, only the first names.

Our first story comes from Johan. He was 17 and had just finished his matric. He takes up the story.

When I was in standard eight I decided that I wanted to join the army. I actually wanted to leave school at the end of that year and join the Permanent Force,

My parents said that they supported my decision, but that I first had to finish matric.

Early in December, after I had obtained my matric, I was finally able to join the army.

We lived in Durban and there was an SADF recruiting office in what was then Smith Street. I went in and spoke to a sergeant. I had to fill in a bunch of forms, some of which my father had to sign, and I was sent off to Natal Command to do a medical exam.

Two weeks later I had heard nothing. So I went back to the recruiting office to find out what was going on. It appeared that they could not find my medical. More over the sergeant that I had originally dealt with had been transferred. It was an omen of things to come.

On 8 January I was given a train ticket, meal and bedding vouchers and instructions to report to Defence Headquarters (DHQ) in Pretoria.

There were three other guys on the train with me. They were also going to join the Permanent Force. Two were going to the army and one to the air force. I actually bumped into him a few years later at Ondangwa where

he was a chopper pilot.

When I got to Pretoria there was a problem because the recruiting office in Durban had not sent a certified copy of my matric certificate with my paper work.

My father had to make a copy of my certificate and then take it through to Natal Command. They took their sweet time in getting it sent to Pretoria. It was only two weeks later that it arrived.

During that time I was given accommodation in some barracks in Pretoria. In the morning I would get up, have breakfast at the mess, go through to DHQ, only to be told to come back the next morning.

I would then wander around Pretoria for the day, go to supper, get up the next morning and do the same procedure again. On one of the days I caught a train through to Johannesburg and came back later that evening.

Finally, after two weeks I was informed that all my paper work was in order. I was taken into an office where some commandant swore me in and I was finally attested as a member of the permanent force in the Infantry Corps.

Now came the next problem. I was going to be stationed at 5 South African Infantry Battalion (5 SAI). This would be my home unit. It was in Ladysmith, Natal, and was the closest infantry battalion to my home.

The problem was that it was already February and they said



PRO PATRIA: Imagine being awarded a medal - before you had even done basic training.

that I couldn't do my basic training with the January intake because I had already missed too much. So I would only do my basics in July.

Instead of just sending me to 5 SAI, for some reason they sent me to 1 SAI in Bloemfontein. I would remain there until July when I would then go to 5 SAI to do basics.

I arrived at 1 SAI, still dressed in civvies. I was issued with all my uniforms and kit. I suspect that they had no idea of what to do with me. So I was stuck into Delta Company.

At this stage I knew nothing. I had no idea of the rank structure. I didn't know how to salute or who to salute. Marching and drill was a mystery to me.

Luckily for me the guys in my platoon took pity on me and showed me the ropes.

Two weeks after I arrived Del-

ta Company was sent to the border.

We were based at a place called Okalongo in Owamboland. It was about 1,5 km from the Angolan border. This was in 1978 and it was regarded as a very active area.

During the time we were there we were involved in seven contacts and I was personally involved in three of them.

About a week after we arrived back in Bloemfontein we had a parade. We were all dressed in our step-out uniforms and the Officer Commanding Free State Command, I think he was a colonel, was the guest of honour.

As we stood in our ranks on the parade ground he came around, with our own OC, and awarded each of us with the Pro Patria medal.

A week later I said goodbye to 1 SAI and went to 5 SAI - to do my basic training.

I was put into a squad of guys who were all permanent force. Most of them had only attested a week before.

On our first day of basics we had to wear our step-out uniforms. All of the jackets of the guys in my squad were bare, save for the infantry badges on the lapels.

I stood there with a name tag on the right breast of my jacket and the Pro Patria ribbon on the left breast. When our corporal, a national serviceman, saw the ribbon his eyes went wide. He stormed off and returned with our company sergeant major and our company commander.

I thought the company sergeant major was going to have a fit. He tore into me.

"Did your brother go to the

border and now you think you can just wear his medal," he shouted at me.

I told him that first of all I didn't have a brother, and that secondly it was my medal that had been awarded to me.

I was hauled up on orders in front of the OC of the unit. He also demanded to know why I was wearing a Pro Patria ribbon.

He told me to stop telling lies. They would never send someone to the operational area who had not even done basic training. I insisted that I was telling the truth.

I later heard that there were quite a few phone calls and telex messages between Ladysmith and Bloemfontein.

Eventually it was ascertained that yes, I had been on the border, and yes, I had been awarded the Pro Patria medal.

I was called on orders again and the OC told me that everything was in order and that I could wear the ribbon or medal.

I wonder if anyone else went to the border before they had done their basics?

Our next story is told by Steve. He was a member of the permanent force for 12 years.

I joined the army straight after finishing school. I was a member of the South African Corps of Signals (SACS).

I did my basic training at the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg in what was then the Transvaal. Straight after basics I went on a Junior Leader's course.

After that I started a Basic Signal's course. If I remember correctly it was called an R9 course.

About two weeks into the course I was told that I was going on orders in front of the OC of the Army Gymnasium that afternoon. I nearly had a heart attack.

Normally when you went on orders it was because you were in some sort of trouble.

I spent the next few hours racking my brain, trying to think what I had done that was bad enough to get me on orders.

That afternoon I was in front of the colonel's office. There were two other people also on orders - staff sergeant and a corporal. The staff sergeant went in first. I could hear the raised voice of the colonel and when the staff sergeant was marched out of the office he did not look happy. It was the same story with the corporal.

Eventually it was my turn. I was marched into the office and came to a halt before the colonel's desk. I must admit that my knees were shaking.

"Congratulations my boy," he said with almost a smile on his face. "You've been promoted to lance corporal. Well done."

I was both surprised and relieved. I couldn't believe that I had been promoted.

The sergeant major was just about to march me out of the office when the colonel stopped him.

"Why is your name spelt wrong," he asked.

I was wearing browns and my name tag was sewn above the right pocket. I assured him that it was the correct spelling of my name.

"Is your force number 7496xxxxPE," he asked, looking down at a telex message that

was on his desk.

I told him that it wasn't my force number and then gave him my force number.

"Okay, then we seem to have the wrong person," he said before I was marched out of his office.

It transpired that there was another permanent force member at the Army Gymnasium that had a surname that was pronounced exactly the same as mine. His surname, however, was spelt completely different to mine. Mine was an English spelling while his was an Afrikaans spelling. It was him and not me that had been promoted.

So I had been a lance corporal for about three minutes before being demoted back to the rank of signalman. That must have been some sort of record.

There was a happy ending to the story. Three months later I was promoted to lance corporal and this time they had the right person.

John was 18 when he did his national service. He recalls an incident when he attended church towards the end of basic training.

There were quite a few of us that belonged to Pentecostal churches. In the army these were known as 'Free Churches'. Because we didn't have any pastors that could come and conduct a service at the camp we would all be transported to one of the churches in town on a Sunday morning. It was quite a big deal because it was the only time we got out of the camp.

This one Sunday morning our sergeant major decided that he would attend as well. Just to

make sure we were all well behaved.

When we arrived at the church some of us were given the task of handing out hymn books to the people as they arrived. The sergeant major was standing with us.

One of the troops walked in and he still had his beret on his head. This was a huge no-no because you did not wear headgear when you were in church.

"Take your #%@*ing hat off," bellowed the sergeant major at the top of his voice, slapping the beret off the poor troop's head. "Can't you see you in the #%@*ing house of the lord!"

The whole place went dead quiet, people had this look of shock and horror on their faces. Our sergeant major had just dropped two huge F-bombs in church.

The sergeant major didn't seem to have any problem with what had happened. He just stood there with a smug look on his face.

Mike spent eight years in the permanent force. He tells a story that sounds as if it could have been taken from the pages of Joseph Heller's satirical war novel *Catch-22*.

I was a sergeant at the time. The SADF came up with something known as 'Formative Branch'.

If you were a PF non-commissioned officer or warrant officer and had a matric, you could apply to do the Formative Branch course.

If you successfully completed the course you would then become an officer. A sergeant would be promoted to full lieu-

tenant, a staff sergeant would become a captain, and a sergeant major (warrant officer) would become a major.

I spent a few months doing the course at the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg. I passed the course and then became a lieutenant.

More than two years later I was still a lieutenant. I know that quite a few sergeants that did the course with me had since been promoted to captain.

I went to see our unit adjutant and asked him to try and find out what was going on.

While I waited in his office he phoned the offices of the Chief of Staff Personnel in Pretoria.

He chatted for a few moments and then said, "No, he's standing in front of me at the moment."

He then asked me if I still received my salary every month and I assured him that I did.

When he finished the call he shook his head and said to me, "According to their records you left the SADF more than a year ago."

He told me that he would let me know what was going on. About three hours later I was informed that the adjutant wanted to see me.

"Congratulations," he told me when I walked into his office. "You were promoted to captain eight months ago."

The good news is that I was now a captain. There was, however, even better news. There was quite a difference in pay between a lieutenant and a captain. I would be getting eight months of back pay.

I later heard a story of what had gone wrong. I don't know if it was a fact, but I heard the

same story from a few different sources.

It appeared that the SADF was updating from paper records to computer records. A team of national servicemen at DHQ had been tasked with capturing all of the data from personnel files onto computer.

They had to capture a certain number of files each week. If they didn't achieve their weekly target by a Friday afternoon then their weekend pass would be cancelled.

Of course they came up with a plan. There were two lifts (elevators) in DHQ. So if by Friday afternoon they still had files that had not been captured they would take them to the lifts, and when no-one was looking, drop the files into the gap between the floor and the lift's door.

Eventually one of the lifts wasn't reaching all the way to the ground floor. It was stopping about six inches from the floor.

The lifts were maintained by a civilian company and they were called in to sort the problem out. They soon discovered that the lift shaft was filled with thousands of files. It was so full that the lift couldn't get all the way to the ground floor.

It appears that my personnel file had been one of the many to go down the lift shaft. All of the files had to be recovered and recaptured into computer.

I still don't know if the story was true, but it does have a certain ring about it.

Our final story comes from Steve. He served in the permanent force for nine years and reached the rank of captain.

After being in the army for

nine years I realised that I had a choice to make. Either I was going to remain in the SADF until I retired, or it was time to leave and pursue a career in civvie street.

I decided that I was going to give civilian life a shot. Back in those days you couldn't just resign from the SADF. You had to buy yourself out. It cost me the grand sum of R10 to buy myself out.

I had secured a job in the security training industry and I started my new job a week after I left the army.

At the end of the month I was surprised to notice that the SADF had paid money into my bank account. I checked my bank statement and saw that they had paid me my normal salary, even though I was no longer in employment with me.

I phoned the adjutant of my former unit and told him what had happened. He said he would look into it and get back to me. I never heard from him again.

I didn't touch the money because I knew they would realise their mistake and I would have to pay it back. The next month I was once again paid by the SADF.

I opened a separate account and put the two months salary into that account, waiting for them to realise their mistake. For the next three months they continued to pay me. Then it stopped.

Three years later and the money was still sitting in the account. So I decided to spend it. That was 41 years ago, so I doubt whether they will ever ask me to repay the money.

Bravo Zulu ladies

Educating young, female Sea Cadets on careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). By **MUSEGO MOSUPEY**.

Globally, women with qualifications in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are under-represented, and South Africa is no different. (Denise Mhlanga).

In South Africa, less than 13% of women choose to study in STEM disciplines, with men accounting for up to 28% according to the Global Gender Report, 2021.

Various organisations have taken upon the task of educating young girls about STEM careers in an attempt to increase the numbers, and amongst these is the South African Women in Engineering (SA WomEng)

Non-Profit organisation. SA WomEng is a multi-award winning social enterprise, developing high-skilled girls and women for the engineering and technology industries.

Their core philosophy is the promotion of STEM, focusing on engineering and technology from primary school to industry. Part of their projects include the #1MillionGirlsInSTEM campaign, which is a global campaign initiated in March 2017, to reach 1 Million girls (aged 13 – 18) through STEM education and awareness initiatives. This

programme is in collaboration with UNESCO. The #1MillionGirlsInSTEM campaign is a key component of WomEng's efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ms Masego Mosupye, a Chemical Engineer, ex-Naval Officer and now ARMSCOR employee, is a SA WomEng #1MillionGirlsInSTEM ambassador and is using established new networks as well as relationships to continuously grow the campaign through initiatives in her community.

She partnered up with Mrs Historina Hlanze, an Electrical Engineer, also ex-Naval Officer and now



AMBASSADOR: Ms Masego Mosupye, a Chemical Engineer, ex-Naval Officer and now ARMSCOR employee, is a SA WomEng #1MillionGirlsInSTEM ambassador.

at TS Woltemade. The girls were in Grades 6 to 12, between the ages of 12 – 18.

The South African Sea Cadets are a Non-Profit organisation dedicated to training and preparing school-going boys and girls for a career in the Maritime Industry.

Ms Mosupye & Mrs Hlanze endeavour to continue with these educational presentations until a larger audience is reached and the knowledge is transferred such that the young girls receiving this education on STEM careers, actually use it to join the STEM fields and end up becoming ambassadors for STEM careers in the future.

Bravo Zulu ladies!

Sea Cadet officers to the rescue

Sea Cadet officers assisted in putting out a yacht fire at Knysna Waterfront. By **CDR (SCC) ANTHONY-GLENN VON ZEIL**.

An electrical fire broke out on catamaran "Caritas" in the dock of the Knysna Waterfront. The yacht had recently been built by Vision Yachts and hadn't yet undergone sea trials.

An SOS was received by Ocean Odyssey, where Midshipman (Mid) Eastern Hennies and Staff Instructor (SI) Nageal Keswarts from TS KNYSNA work, requesting assistance for the yacht which was on fire.

Knowing that fire spreads exponentially and that other boats may be at risk Mid Hennies and SI Keswarts responded immediately.

On arrival at the scene, they noticed that the cabin of the catamaran was on fire and needed to be extinguished.

Mid Hennies and SI Keswarts sprang into action taking a hose pipe, fire extinguishers and started fighting the fire to contain it to the yacht's cabin. Using their Sea Cadet training this ensured that the fire did not spread further.

On the arrival of the Knysna fire brigade Mid Hennies and SI Keswarts further assisted the fire brigade to prevent more damage.

Their knowledge of yachts and boats assisted the fire brigade to understand where the risks were onboard including the location of the batteries, fuel and fuel lines. This resulted in risks areas being neutralised and the fire not spreading.

The Knysna fire brigade and the two Sea Cadet officers

managed to get the fire under control and saved the catamaran and also prevented more damage to other boats in the Knysna waterfront.

James Turner of Vision Yachts was appreciative of the help from all parties and indicated that fortunately damage was limited to the saloon and a few lockets onboard. The estimated R1.5 million damage would take several months to repair.

Bravo Zulu to Mid Hennies and SI Keswarts for their speedy action and utilising their Sea Cadet fire fighting and knowledge of boats to assist the Knysna fire brigade in putting out this fire.



Well it was a 'Just War'

Throughout history millions of people have died as a result of war. It is not only combatants that have died in these wars, but also non-combatants including women and children. All too often these wars are justified by claiming the theory of "bellum iustum". In other words, it was a 'just war'. Yet what exactly is a 'just war', and does it really matter if people die in a 'just war' or an 'unjust war'?

Do you remember Michael Sanderson, probably the greatest Springbok rugby player of all times. He captained South Africa in more than 50 test matches and was never on the losing side.

Or how about Heinz Schneider, the man that invented a cheaper alternative to petrol.

Of course you must remember Dr Ezra Bloomberg. After all he was the man that came up with a cure for cancer.

What's that you say? You've never heard of any of them. Well there's probably a good reason for that.

Michael Anderson was a member of the 1st South African Brigade. He was 17 years old when he was killed on 15 July 1916 during the Battle of Delville Wood.

Heinz Schneider was just 15 when 772 heavy bombers of the Royal Air Force dropped tons of high-explosive bombs and incendiary devices on the city of Dresden. Schneider was one of the 25,000 thousand people that died during the three day bombing raid in February 1945.

And what about Ezra Bloomberg? Well he never did get to become a doctor. He was just three years old when he died in the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Now obviously none of the

above people existed. I made them up for the purpose of this article. But that's not to say that the events mentioned never happened.

The Battle of Delville Wood (15 July – 3 September 1916) was a series of engagements in the 1916 Battle of the Somme in the First World War.

More than 11,000 South Africans lost their lives during World War I. Who is to say that one of them wouldn't have gone on to become a great South African sportsman if they had survived the "war to end all wars."

The bombing of Dresden was a joint British and American aerial bombing attack on the city, the capital of the German state of Saxony, during World War II. In four raids between 13 and 15 February 1945, 772 heavy bombers of the Royal Air Force (RAF) and 527 of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) dropped more than 3,900 tons of high-explosive bombs and incendiary devices on the city.

The bombing and the resulting firestorm destroyed more than 6.5 km² of the city centre. Up to 25,000 people were killed.

And of course no-one needs to be reminded of the Holocaust - the genocide of European Jews during World War II.

Between 1941 and 1945, Nazi

Germany and its collaborators systematically murdered some six million Jews across German-occupied Europe, around two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population.

The murders were carried out primarily through mass shootings and poison gas in extermination camps, chiefly Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor, and Chelmno in occupied Poland.

Perhaps one of the victims was someone that would have come up with a cure for cancer. We never will know.

One thing we do know is that there have been wars as far back as recorded history.

Wars, and even more wars

Man has never needed that much of an excuse to start a war. Throughout history wars have been started for many reasons.

Religion has often been a common theme. Country A has invaded Country B because they did not believe in God, or maybe because they believed in a different God.

In 1325 the Catholics of Italy went to war - with each other. The Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire claimed that he was the leader of the Catholic Church. The Pope, however, claimed that it was actually he who led the Church.



FIRST: Saint Augustine was the first clear advocate of just-war theory.

This was enough to start a civil war that would claim more than 4,000 lives.

Greed is all too often a common factor of war. Country B is rich in some resource that Country A wants. It may be oil, gold, or some other valuable resource. Country A will soon find an excuse to invade Country B.

One also needs to remember that wars can generate large amounts of money. The arms industry stands to make a fortune when there is a war.

Yet often wars are started for really stupid reasons. Such as when Honduras and El Salvador went to war in 1969 over a game of soccer. Both countries were trying to qualify for the 1970 World Cup to be held in Mexico.

The Hondurans lost and didn't take defeat well. The large Salvadorian communities in Honduras came under attack.

This gave El Salvador a rea-

son to invade Honduras. The war lasted four days before El Salvador withdrew their troops. This was not, however, before more than 4,000 people were killed.

A 'Just War'

No matter what reason wars are declared, is there ever a time when someone can say with all honesty, "We had no choice. We had to go to war."

The just war theory (Latin: *bellum iustum*) is a doctrine, also referred to as a tradition, of military ethics that aims to ensure that a war is morally justifiable through a series of criteria, all of which must be met for a war to be considered just.

It has been studied by military leaders, theologians, ethicists and policymakers. The criteria are split into two groups: *jus ad bellum* ("right to go to war") and *jus in bello* ("right conduct in war").

The first group of criteria

concerns the morality of going to war, and the second group of criteria concerns the moral conduct within war.

There have been calls for the inclusion of a third category of just war theory (*jus post bellum*) dealing with the morality of post-war settlement and reconstruction.

The just war theory postulates the belief that war, while it is terrible but less so with the right conduct, is not always the worst option. Important responsibilities, undesirable outcomes, or preventable atrocities may justify war.

Opponents of the just war theory may either be inclined to a stricter pacifist standard (proposing that there has never been nor can there ever be a justifiable basis for war) or they may be inclined toward a more permissive nationalist standard (proposing that a war need only to serve a nation's interests to be justifiable).

In many cases, philosophers state that individuals do not need to be plagued by a guilty conscience if they are required to fight. A few philosophers enoble the virtues of the soldier while they also declare their apprehensions for war itself. A few, such as Rousseau, argue for insurrection against oppressive rule.

The historical aspect, or the "just war tradition", deals with the historical body of rules or agreements that have applied in various wars across the ages.

The just war tradition also considers the writings of various philosophers and lawyers through history, and examines both their philosophical vi-

sions of war's ethical limits and whether their thoughts have contributed to the body of conventions that have evolved to guide war and warfare.

In the twenty-first century there has been significant debate between traditional just war theorists, who largely support the existing law of war and develop arguments to support it, and revisionists who reject many traditional assumptions, although not necessarily advocating a change in the law.

History

A 2017 study found that the just war tradition can be traced as far back as to Ancient Egypt. Egyptian ethics of war usually centred on three main ideas, these including the cosmological role of Egypt, the Pharaoh as a divine office and executor of the will of the gods, and the superiority of the Egyptian state and population over all other states and peoples.

Egyptian political theology held that the Pharaoh had the exclusive legitimacy in justly initiating a war, usually claimed to carry out the will of the gods.

Christian theory of the Just War begins around the time of Augustine of Hippo. The Just War theory, with some amendments, is still used by Christians today as a guide to whether or not a war can be justified. War may be necessary and right, even though it may not be good. In the case of a country that has been invaded by an occupying force, war may be the only way to restore justice.

Saint Augustine held that individuals should not resort immediately to violence, but God

has given the sword to government for a good reason (based upon Romans 13:4).

In *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* book 22 sections 69–76, Augustine argues that Christians, as part of a government, need not be ashamed of protecting peace and punishing wickedness when they are forced to do so by a government. Augustine asserted that was a personal and philosophical stance: “What is here required is not a bodily action, but an inward disposition. The sacred seat of virtue is the heart.”

Nonetheless, he asserted, peacefulness in the face of a grave wrong that could be stopped by only violence would be a sin. Defence of one's self or others could be a necessity, especially when it is authorized by a legitimate authority.

World War I

At the beginning of the First World War, a group of theologians in Germany published a manifesto that sought to justify the actions of the German government.

At the British government's request, Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury, took the lead in collaborating with a large number of other religious leaders, including some with whom he had differed in the past, to write a rebuttal of the Germans' contentions.

Both German and British theologians based themselves on the just war theory, each group seeking to prove that it applied to the war waged by its own side.

Of course, in a war everyone thinks that their reasons and

cause is just - no matter what the circumstances.

Criteria

The just war theory has two sets of criteria, the first establishing *jus ad bellum* (the right to go to war), and the second establishing *jus in bello* (right conduct within war).

Jus ad bellum

Competent authority

Only duly constituted public authorities may wage war. “A just war must be initiated by a political authority within a political system that allows distinctions of justice.

Dictatorships (e.g. Hitler's Regime) or deceptive military actions (e.g. the 1968 US bombing of Cambodia) are typically considered as violations of this criterion. The importance of this condition is key.

Plainly, we cannot have a genuine process of judging a just war within a system that represses the process of genuine justice. A just war must be initiated by a political authority within a political system that allows distinctions of justice”.

Probability of success

According to this principle, there must be good grounds for concluding that aims of the just war are achievable.

This principle emphasizes that mass violence must not be undertaken if it is unlikely to secure the just cause.

This criterion is to avoid invasion for invasion's sake and links to the proportionality criteria. One cannot invade if there is no chance of actually winning.



JUS IN BELLO: This deals with the treatment of Prisoners of War. They should no longer be deemed as a threat and should not be tortured or summary executed.

However, wars are fought with imperfect knowledge, so one must simply be able to make a logical case that one can win; there is no way to know this in advance.

These criteria move the conversation from moral and theoretical grounds to practical grounds.

Essentially, this is meant to gather coalition building and win approval of other state actors.

Last resort

The principle of last resort stipulates that all non-violent options must first be exhausted before the use of force can be justified. Diplomatic options, sanctions, and other non-military methods must be attempted or validly ruled out before the engagement of hostilities.

Further, in regard to the amount of harm—proportionally—the principle of last resort would support using small intervention forces first and then

escalating rather than starting a war with massive force such as carpet bombing or nuclear warfare.

Just cause

The reason for going to war needs to be just and cannot, therefore, be solely for recapturing things taken or punishing people who have done wrong; innocent life must be in imminent danger and intervention must be to protect life.

A contemporary view of just cause was expressed in 1993 when the US Catholic Conference said: “Force may be used only to correct a grave, public evil, i.e., aggression or massive violation of the basic human rights of whole populations.”

Jus in bello

Once war has begun, just war theory (*jus in bello*) also directs how combatants are to act or should act:

Distinction

Just war conduct should be governed by the principle of distinction. The acts of war should be directed towards enemy combatants, and not towards non-combatants caught in circumstances they did not create.

The prohibited acts include bombing civilian residential areas that include no legitimate military targets, committing acts of terrorism or reprisal against civilians or prisoners of war (POWs), and attacking neutral targets.

Moreover, combatants are not permitted to attack enemy combatants who have surrendered, or who have been captured, or who are injured and not presenting an immediate lethal threat, or who are parachuting from disabled aircraft and are not airborne forces, or who are shipwrecked.

Proportionality

Just war conduct should be governed by the principle of proportionality. Combatants must make sure that the harm caused to civilians or civilian property is not excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated by an attack on a legitimate military objective.

This principle is meant to discern the correct balance between the restriction imposed by a corrective measure and the severity of the nature of the prohibited act.

Military necessity

Just war conduct should be governed by the principle of military necessity. An attack or action must be intended to help

in the defeat of the enemy; it must be an attack on a legitimate military objective, and the harm caused to civilians or civilian property must be proportional and not excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. This principle is meant to limit excessive and unnecessary death and destruction.

Fair treatment of prisoners of war

Enemy combatants who surrendered or who are captured no longer pose a threat. It is therefore wrong to torture them or otherwise mistreat them.

No means malum in se

Combatants may not use weapons or other methods of warfare that are considered evil, such as mass rape, forcing enemy combatants to fight against their own side or using weapons whose effects cannot be controlled (e.g., nuclear/biological weapons).

Ending a war: Jus post bellum

In recent years, some theorists, such as Gary Bass, Louis Iasiello and Brian Orend, have proposed a third category within the just war theory. *Jus post bellum* concerns justice after a war, including peace treaties, reconstruction, environmental remediation, war crimes trials, and war reparations.

Jus post bellum has been added to deal with the fact that some hostile actions may take place outside a traditional bat-



A JUST WAR: During World War I the Germans proclaimed that they were fighting a just war. Then again, so did the British.

tlefield.

Jus post bellum governs the justice of war termination and peace agreements, as well as the prosecution of war criminals, and publicly labelled terrorists.

The idea has largely been added to help decide what to do if there are prisoners that have been taken during battle. It is, through government labelling and public opinion, that people use *jus post bellum* to justify the pursuit of labelled terrorist for the safety of the government's state in a modern context.

The actual fault lies with the aggressor and so by being the aggressor, they forfeit their rights for honourable treatment by their actions. That theory is used to justify the actions taken by anyone fighting in a war to treat prisoners outside of war.

It is a sad fact that war has been with us throughout history and they look as if they are something that will continue.

As I sit writing this article there are wars, armed conflict and acts of violence taking place around the world.

Another sobering thought is that since Japan officially surrendered on 2 September 1945, bringing an end to World War 2, there has not been a 24 hour period of time when there has been world peace. There has always been a war or armed conflict going on somewhere.

It is also a sad fact that sometimes war is necessary. Times when a war may be considered *jus ad bellum*.

Yet for those that have to fight in a war, it matters little if it is a just war or not. Those that start wars seldom are the ones that end up fighting in those wars.



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

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

“Only the dead have seen the end of the war.” - George Santayana

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

Home Guard versus Home Guard

During World War II both Britain and Germany made use of a so-called Home Guard. Yet the two were as different as night is to day.

At the start of World War II Britain was faced with a crisis. By 1940 the German *Wehrmacht* had torn through Europe. By 10 May 1940 France had fallen to the Nazis.

Between 26 May and 4 June 1940 more than 338,000 British and French soldiers had been evacuated from the beaches and harbour of Dunkirk, in the north of France.

In Britain in 1940 the people were worried about a German invasion from the sea and from the air. They started to arm themselves with shotguns and any weapons they could lay their hands on.

The Germans faced a similar situation towards the end of the war. The Americans, British and French had landed in Normandy on 6 June 1944. By 25 August 1944 they had liberated Paris and had started moving towards the Rhine.

On the Eastern Front the situation was even more bleak. At the end of 1944 the Germans still held the western half of Poland, and their front was still 320 kilometres east of where it had been at the start of the war in 1939.

Plans to form a national people's militia in eastern Germany as a last resort to boost fighting strength were first proposed in 1944 by General Heinz Guderian, chief of the General Staff.

Formation of the LDV

The British government decided it would be better to organise all of the local volunteers into a proper army. In 1939 Winston Churchill had wanted a Home Guard formed - when he became Prime Minister in May 1940 he got it.

Churchill had hoped for 500,000. He got 250,000 on the first day and 1,500,000 by June. They were first known as the Local Defence Volunteers - the LDV.

They were renamed the Home Guard and were operational from 1940 to 1944. They were volunteers otherwise ineligible for military service, such as those who were too young or too old to join the regular armed services (regular military service was restricted to those aged 18 to 41) and those in reserved occupations.

Men aged 17 to 65 years could join, although the age limits were not strictly enforced. One platoon had a fourteen year old and three men in their eighties enrolled in it. Service was unpaid but gave a chance for older or inexperienced soldiers to support the war effort.

Formation of the Volkssturm

On 18 October 1944 *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler stepped up to a microphone to make a national radio address announcing the formation

of the Nazi Party-controlled *Volkssturm*, or People's Militia. The direct translation of the word is "People's Storm".

It was not set up by the German Army, the ground component of the combined German *Wehrmacht* armed forces, but by the Nazi Party on the orders of Adolf Hitler.

It was staffed by conscripting males between the ages of 16 and 60 years who were not already serving in some military unit.

The *Volkssturm* comprised one of the final components of



the total war promulgated by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, part of a Nazi endeavour to overcome their enemies' military strength through force of will.

Home Guard Training

By the end of 1940, the Home Guard was established into 1,200 battalions, 5,000 companies and 25,000 platoons.

For its primary defensive role, each section was trained and equipped to operate as a single, largely independent 'battle platoon', with an operational establishment of between 25 and 30 men at any one time although, as volunteers would also have full-time jobs, the numbers of volunteers in each section would be around twice that establishment.

In the event of an invasion, the Home Guard battle platoons in a town would be under the overall control of an Army military commander and maintain contact with that commander with a designated 'runner' (no Home Guard units were issued with wireless sets until 1942), who would usually be a motorbike owner.

Otherwise, the battle platoon was static and would defend a defined local area and report on enemy activity in that area, but it was neither equipped nor expected to join up with the mobile forces of the regular army.

Training was often left to each individual Home Guard unit. It would usually focus on various drills. Sometimes someone from the regular army would

be available to give a lecture or demonstrate the correct use of equipment.

Volkssturm Training

Typically, members of the *Volkssturm* received only very basic military training. It included a brief indoctrination and training on the use of basic weapons such as the Karabiner 98k rifle and Panzerfaust.

Because of continuous fighting and weapon shortages, weapon training was often minimal. There was also a lack of instructors, meaning that weapons training was sometimes done by World War I veterans drafted into service themselves.

Often *Volkssturm* members were only able to familiarize themselves with their weapons when in actual combat.

Home Guard Effectiveness

Due to the advanced age of many of the members of the Home Guard, they were given the nickname "Dad's Army".

The men in Dad's Army were keen. It was great that they were doing something to help, but sometimes they were a little too keen - and clumsy. Then they became Dad's Disasters.

Home Guard soldiers were worried about how to spot a German. They were warned that enemy paratroopers might be disguised as a nun, a vicar or even a woman carrying a baby. The dumbest idea for uncovering a spy was to shout "Heil Hitler!" and no German would be able to stop himself from raising his arm, clicking his heels

and replying, "Heil Hitler." Some Guards were in more danger from their own weapons than from the enemy who never arrived. They were given sticky bombs - a bit like explosive toffee apples on a stick. The idea was that they would run up to an enemy tank and slap the bomb onto the side. But many tried to throw the bombs, the sticks came loose and the bombs fell at their feet. 768 Home Guard members managed to kill themselves in this manner and nearly 6,000 were injured.

And their families were not safe either. More than one of them managed to shoot either their wife or one of their children while cleaning their rifles at home.

Early in the war Home Guard soldiers seemed to believe that



DEUTSCHER VOLKSSTURM
WEHRMACHT

anyone landing by parachute must be a German. An RAF pilot, James Nicolson, was hit by cannon fire from a German fighter. His foot was smashed and he was on fire. Yet he still managed to shoot down the enemy plane before bailing out. As he drifted down, wounded and still on fire, some Home Guard began blasting away at him with shotguns. Somehow he survived but was more injured by his Home Guard colleagues than by the enemy attack. Nicholson would go on to become the only Second World War fighter pilot to be awarded the Victoria Cross.

Home Guards saw spies everywhere. If you had a Hitler moustache you were immediately suspected of being a German spy.

School children weren't safe. Alan Chadwick enjoyed going down to the local aircraft factory to watch new planes being tested. As Alan cycled near the fence a Home Guard ordered

him to stop. When he didn't the Home Guard fired a shot into the road. It bounced up and hit Alan in the back and killed him. Why hadn't Alan stopped? Because he was deaf.

Some Home Guard soldiers saw themselves as a wartime police force. They set up road blocks to stop and question everyone who came that way. One man complained that he was stopped twenty times on an eight mile journey.

A government inspector was measuring a field one day when local villagers accused him of being a German spy. An old farm worker tried to protect the inspector and was shot and

killed by a panicking Home Guard member. The inspector tried to show his identity papers but he was also shot. During the Second World War 50 innocent Brits died at the hands of the Home Guard.

Volkssturm Effectiveness

or these militia units to be effective, they needed not only strength in numbers, but also fanaticism.

During the early stages of Volkssturm planning, it became apparent that units lacking morale would lack combat effectiveness.

To generate fanaticism,

HOME
GUARD

Volkssturm units were placed under direct command of the local Nazi party officials, the *Gauleiter* and *Kreisleiter*.

The new Volkssturm was also to become a nationwide organization, with Heinrich Himmler, as Replacement Army commander, responsible for armament and training.

Though nominally under party control, Volkssturm units were placed under Wehrmacht command when engaged in action.

With the Nazi Party in charge of organizing the Volkssturm, each *Gauleiter*, or Nazi Party District Leader, was charged with the leadership, enrol-

ment, and organization of the Volkssturm in their district.

The largest Volkssturm unit seems to have corresponded to the next smaller territorial subdivision of the Nazi Party organization - the *Kreis*.

The basic unit was a battalion of 642 men. Units were mostly composed of members of the Hitler Youth, invalids, the elderly, or men who had previously been considered unfit for military service.

On 12 February 1945, the Nazis conscripted German women and girls into the auxiliaries of the Volkssturm.

Correspondingly, girls as young as 14 years were trained in the use of small arms, pan-

zerfaust, machine guns, and hand grenades from December 1944 through May 1945.

The idea of conscripting young girls into the Volkssturm did not sit well with everyone.

"Ivan (German nickname for the Russians) was not in the habit of taking prisoners," said a member of the Volkssturm that survived the war. "If a young girl was captured she would be gang raped before being killed."

Volkssturm units were supposed to be used only in their own districts, but many were sent directly to the front lines.

Ultimately, it was their charge to confront the overwhelming power of the British, Canadian, Soviet, American, and French armies alongside Wehrmacht forces.

It was an apocalyptic goal which some of those assigned to the Volkssturm took to heart.

Unremittingly fanatical members of the Volkssturm refused



to abandon the Nazi ethos unto the dying days of Nazi Germany, and in a number of instances took brutal “police actions” against German civilians deemed defeatists or cowards.

Take the case of Karl Weiglein, a 59 year old farmer called up to serve in the Volkssturm. He complained when the local bridge was blown up.

“The people who did this are idiots and ought to be hanged,” he said.

But it was Karl that was hanged. His commander, the local school teacher, heard what he had said.

Karl was hanged from his own pear tree outside his own front door while his wife watched from the window.

The body was left hanging for three days as an example to anyone else who wanted to complain.

On some occasions, members of the Volkssturm showed tremendous courage and a determined will to resist, more so even than soldiers in the Wehrmacht. Four members of the Volkssturm were awarded the Knight’s Cross of the Iron Cross.

Not every Volkssturm unit was suicidal or apocalyptic in outlook as the war drew closer to its end. Many of them lost their enthusiasm for the fight when it became clear that the Allies had won, prompting them to lay down their weapons and surrender – they also feared being captured by Allied forces and tortured or executed as partisans.

Not eager to die what was thought to be a pointless death, many older members of the



THAT WAY FORWARD: Volkssturm trooper explaining the handling of a Panzerfaust to a female civilian.

Volkssturm looked for places to hide from the approaching Soviet Army.

In the Battle for Berlin, Volkssturm units were used by the German high command as a last-ditch attempt to defend Berlin.

The Volkssturm had a strength of about 60,000 in the Berlin area formed into 92 battalions, of which about 30 battalions of Volkssturm I (those with some weapons) were sent to forward positions, while those of Volkssturm II (those without weapons) remained in the inner city.

Allied bombing had reduced Berlin to rubble; meanwhile the final stand in Berlin dwindled to fighting against highly trained, battle-hardened Soviet troops on the brink of final victory, who viewed resistance fighters like the Volkssturm as terrorists in much the same way the Wehrmacht once had viewed potential partisans during Operation Barbarossa.

Red Army soldiers called the

Hitler Youth formations and members of the Volkssturm still fighting to the end in Berlin “totals” for being part of Germany’s total mobilization effort.

Despite their efforts, the last four months of the war were an exercise in futility for the Volkssturm, and the Nazi leadership’s insistence to continue the fight to the bitter end contributed to an additional 1,23 million (approximated) deaths, half of them German military personnel and the other half from the Volkssturm.

It’s probably safe to say that the Home Guard probably had a better deal of it. After all Britain never was invaded.

The Volkssturm were thrown into the thick of the fighting. Those facing the Russians knew that hopes of survival were not that good. Even if they did surrender, the Russians were not in the habit of taking prisoners.

Home Guard Weapons



Pattern 1914 Enfield



Sticky Bomb



Lewis Gun



Webley Mk IV

Volkssturm Weapons



Stielhandgranate



MP 3008



Gewehr 71



Panzerfaust

Edwin Swales

The South African pilot and Master Bomber who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and a posthumous Victoria Cross During World War II.

The Victoria Cross was awarded 182 times to 181 recipients for action in the Second World War.

A total of five South Africans were awarded the Victoria Cross during World War II. They were George Gristock, John Dering Nettleton, Gerard Norton, and Quentin Smythe.

The last South African to be awarded the Victoria Cross was Edwin Swales.

Edwin Essery Swales was born on 3 July 1915 at Inanda, Natal, in the Union of South Africa. He was one of four children. His parents, Harry and Olive, farmed in the Heatonville district.

Harry Swales died during the influenza epidemic of 1918-19 and Olive moved with the four children to the Berea in Durban.

Edwin attended Durban High School (DHS) where he took an active part in sports. He particularly enjoyed rugby and played for the DHS 2nd XV. The school exists to this day and is one of the oldest in the country.

He was also a member of the Boy Scout movement and he joined the 4th Durban Scout Troop.

After completing school he worked as a banker for Barclays Bank (Dominion

Colonial and Overseas - DCO) in Durban.

Before the war Swales joined the Natal Mounted Rifles (NMR) and rose to the rank of sergeant major (WO2).

During the early part of World War II the NMR saw action in North Africa. Swales personally saw action in Kenya, Abyssinia and North Africa.

He then decided that he wanted to swap boots on the ground

for something different. On 17 January 1942 he transferred to the South African Air Force.

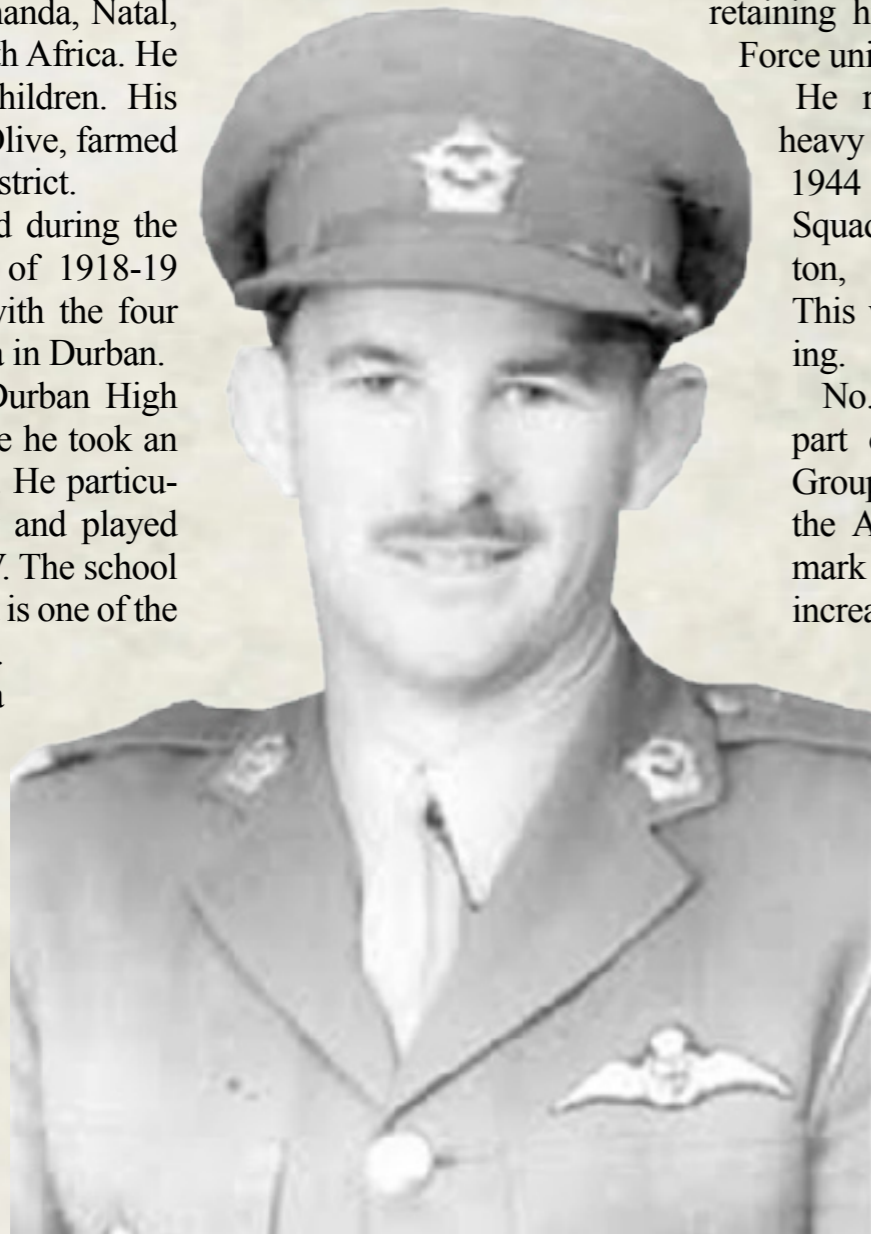
His initial flight training took place at Kimberley. While there he played rugby for the provincial team, Griquas. He was later selected as a reserve for the Natal rugby team, but was never capped.

Swales received his pilot's wings on 26 June 1943. On 22 August 1943 he was seconded to the Royal Air Force (RAF) whilst retaining his South African Air Force uniform and rank.

He received training on heavy bombers and in June 1944 he was posted to 582 Squadron at Little Staughton, in Huntingdonshire. This was an unusual posting.

No. 582 Squadron was part of No. 8 Pathfinder Group, an elite unit within the Air Force that would mark targets with flares to increase the accuracy of raids from the main bombing force.

It was normal for the Pathfinders to accept only experienced pilots who had completed a full tour on bombers. Although Swales had never spent any time as a bomber pilot in a standard



heavy bomber squadron, he went straight into the Squadron.

Swales' first operational flight with the Pathfinder Squadron was on 12 July 1944.

On 4 November 1944 he took part in a daring daylight bombing raid on the Gremberg railway yards at Cologne, Germany. Swales had recently been promoted to the rank of captain. Unlike the RAF, the South African Air Force used army ranks.

The leader of the raid was Swales' close friend Robert Palmer DFC. Palmer normally flew Mosquitos with 109 Squadron who were also based at Little Staughton.

Swales was the number two pathfinder, following Palmer as he marked the target. Palmer was an experienced pilot and had completed 110 bombing raids.

Palmer's Lancaster bomber was attacked by a German fighter and crashed. Six of the 30 aircraft that took part in the raid were lost.

For his part in the raid, Palmer was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. Swales was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

The citation for Swales DFC reads:

"This Officer was pilot and Captain of an aircraft detailed to attack Cologne in December, 1944. When approaching the target, intense anti-aircraft fire was encountered. Despite this, a good bombing attack was executed. Soon afterwards the aircraft was attacked by five enemy aircraft. In the ensuing fights, Capt. Swales manoeuvred with

great skill. As a result his gunners were able to bring effective fire to bear upon the attackers, one of which is believed to have been shot down. Throughout this spirited action Captain Swales displayed exceptional coolness and captaincy, setting a very fine example. This Officer has completed very many sorties during which he has attacked a variety of enemy targets."

By 1945 Swales was now a Master Bomber and captain of Avro Lancaster III PB538. He had completed 42 operational flights.

On 23 February, the very same day as his DFC award was gazetted, he set off on his 43rd mission.

The target was Pforzheim in Germany. According to RAF Bomber Command the target was important for the production of precision instruments that were used in the German war effort.

Swales was the pathfinder leader of the group that consisted of 367 Lancaster bombers and 13 Mosquitos.

The marking of the target and bombing was done from only 2,400 metres, so it was very accurate. Some 1.825 tons of bombs were dropped in only 22 minutes. Tragically, 17,600 civilians were killed in the raid. Ten Lancasters were lost on the raid and another two crashed in France.

During the raid, Swales' Lancaster came under attack by a Messerschmitt Me110. One of the bomber's four engines was shattered and the fuel tank was riddled with bullets.

The rear turret gun had also failed and the Lancaster was an easy target. This didn't seem to worry Swales and he resolutely continued to issue bomb aiming instructions to the main force of bombers.

The same German fighter attacked the Lancaster for a second time, knocking out a second engine. Although in serious danger, Swales stayed over enemy territory until he was happy the attack had been directed to the best of his ability.

Badly damaged and with its speed drastically reduced, Swales set off for home. With great skill and difficulty, Swales kept the heavy bomber in the air for another hour.

The conditions began to close in, but they were now over friendly territory in France. Because of this, Swales ordered the rest of his crew to bail out of the plane while the Master Bomber kept things level. It was an action that took great courage and skill but would be the demise of the brave man.

When the wreckage of the plane was discovered, Swales was dead at the controls. He had given his last moments on earth so that the rest of his crew could live. He was 29 years old.

For his actions Edwin Swales (now an acting major) was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross – the 3rd and last Pathfinder pilot to be so honoured. All had been posthumous.

The citation to his Victoria Cross reads:

"Captain Swales was 'Master Bomber' of a force of aircraft

which attacked Pforzheim on the night of February 23, 1945. As Master Bomber he had the task of locating the target area with precision and of giving aiming instructions to the main force of bombers in his wake.

Soon after he reached the target area he was engaged by an enemy aircraft and one of his engines was put out of action. His rear guns failed. His crippled aircraft was an easy prey for further attacks. Unperturbed, he carried on with his allotted task; clearly and precisely he issued aiming instructions to the main force. Meanwhile the enemy fighter closed the range and fired again. A second engine of Captain Swales' aircraft was put out of action. Almost defenceless, he stayed over the target area issuing his aiming instructions until he was satisfied that the attack had achieved its purpose.

It is now known that the attack was one of the most concentrated and successful of the war. Captain Swales did not, however, regard his mission as completed. His aircraft was damaged. Its speed had been so much reduced that it could only with difficulty be kept in the air. The blind-flying instruments were no longer working. Determined at all costs to prevent his aircraft and crew from falling into enemy hands, he set course for home. After an hour he flew into thin-layered cloud. He kept his course by skilful flying between the layers, but later heavy cloud and turbulent air conditions were met. The aircraft, by now over friendly territory, became more and more difficult to control; it was losing height steadily. Realising that the situation was desperate Captain



HEAVY BOMBER: An Avro Lancaster heavy bomber, similar to the one which Edwin Swales flew.

Swales ordered his crew to bail out. Time was very short and it required all his exertions to keep the aircraft steady while each of his crew moved in turn to the escape hatch and parachuted to safety. Hardly had the last crew-member jumped when the aircraft plunged to earth. Captain Swales was found dead at the controls. Intrepid in the attack, courageous in the face of danger, he did his duty to the last, giving his life that his comrades might live."

In the city of Durban, a branch of Barclay's Bank was named after him. The city of Durban also honoured him by naming a major arterial road 'Edwin Swales VC Drive'. In 2007 the eThekweni Municipality changed the name of the road to Solomon Mahlangu Drive.

Swales' full size war medals and some other possessions are held and displayed at the South African National Museum of Military History in Saxonwold, Johannesburg.

At his old school, Durban High School (founded in 1866), a school 'House' is named Swales House.

The original set of miniature medals belonging to Swales, and

a silver model Lancaster Bomber, are now housed in an exhibition honouring Swales at his old school.

Many years ago, the miniature medals and the model had been sold by a member of the Swales family. After changing hands a few times, the group came up for auction in London in July 2004, at which time the medals and model were sold to a UK collector.

A medal collector and DHS Old Boy tracked down the buyer and convinced him to sell his recent acquisitions to the School.

After four months of negotiations, the medals and model were delivered to their new home at DHS, where they were first displayed on Armistice Day, 11 November 2004.

Awards and recognition

- The Victoria Cross
- The Distinguished Flying Cross
- The 1939–45 Star
- The Africa Star
- The France and Germany Star
- The Defence Medal, 1939–1945
- The 1939–1945 War Medal (Victory Medal)
- The Africa Service Medal

10 facts you may not know

Here are 10 facts about both the German Blitz and the Allied bombing of Germany.

1. 55,000 British civilian casualties were sustained through German bombing before the end of 1940. This included 23,000 deaths.
2. London was bombed for 57 consecutive nights from 7 September 1940.
3. At this time, as many as 180,000 people per night sheltered within the London underground system.
4. The rubble from bombed cities was used to lay run-

ways for the RAF across the south and east of England.

5. Total civilian deaths during the Blitz were around 40,000. The Blitz effectively ended when Operation Sealion was abandoned in May 1941. By the end of the war about 60,000 British civilians had died through German bombing.
6. The first British air raid on a concentrated civilian population was over Mannheim on 16 December 1940.
7. The RAF's first 1000-bomber air raid was conducted on 30 May 1942 over Cologne.

Although only 380 died, the historic city was devastated.

8. Single Allied bombing operations over Hamburg and Dresden in July 1943 and February 1945 killed 40,000 and 25,000 civilians, respectively. Hundreds of thousands more were made refugees.
9. Berlin lost around 60,000 of its population to Allied bombing by the end of the war.
10. Overall, German civilian deaths totalled as many as 600,000



APRIL 1945: The Kölner Dom (Cologne Cathedral) stands seemingly undamaged (although having been directly hit several times and damaged severely) while the entire area surrounding it is completely devastated.

Nimitz-class Aircraft Carrier

Described as a 'City at Sea', the sheer sized of a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier is impressive enough. What's really impressive, however, is the capabilities of the vessel. And the US Navy has ten of them.

Standing 20 stories above the water and stretching 333 metres from bow to stern, the sheer size of a Nimitz-class super aircraft carrier is impressive. What's really impressive, however, is watching the activity on the flight deck.

Currently the US Navy has ten nuclear-powered Nimitz-class aircraft carries in service.

The lead ship of the class is named after World War II United States Pacific Fleet commander Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the U.S. Navy's last fleet admiral.

Then ten carriers in service are:

Nimitz subclass

- USS Nimitz.
- USS Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Theodore Roosevelt subclass

- USS Carl Vinson.
- USS Theodore Roosevelt.
- USS Abraham Lincoln.
- USS George Washington.
- USS John C. Stennis.
- USS Harry S. Truman.

Ronald Reagan subclass

- USS Ronald Reagan.
- USS George H.W. Bush.

Instead of the gas turbines or diesel-electric systems used for propulsion on many modern warships, the carriers use two A4W pressurized water reactors which drive four propeller shafts. They are categorized as nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and are numbered with consecutive hull numbers between CVN-68 and CVN-77.

As a result of the use of nuclear power, the ships are capable of operating for over 20 years without refueling and are predicted to have a service life of over 50 years

The lead ship of the class, was commissioned on 3 May 1975, and USS George H.W. Bush, the tenth and last of the class, was

commissioned on 10 January 2009. Since the 1970s, Nimitz-class carriers have participated in many conflicts and operations across the world, including Operation Eagle Claw in Iran, the Gulf War, and more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Let's begin by looking at the figures for a standard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier.

Crew

- 3,184 (including 203 officers)
- 2,800 aircrew (366 officers)

Length

- 317 m

Beam

- 40.8 m

Draught

- 11.9 m

Flight Deck

- 333 m x 77 m

Displacement

- 102,000 tons (full load)

Speed

- 30 knots

Surface-to-air-missile

- 3 x Raytheon GMLS Mk29 eight-cell launchers for Sea Sparrow

Guns

- 4 x Phalanx Mk15 CIWS (three in CVN 68 and CVN 6)

ESM

- AN/SLQ-32(V)4

Decoys

- 4 x SRBOC, SSTDS torpedo defence system



- AN/SLQ-25 Nixie torpedo decoy

Air Search

- ITT AN/SPS-48E E/F band
- Raytheon AN/SPS-49(V)5 C/D band
- Raytheon Mk23 TAS D-band

Surface Search

- Northrop Grumman AN/SPS-67V G-band

Navigation

- Raytheon AN/SPS-64(V)9 I/J-band

Combat Data System

- ACDS block 0 or block 1

Weapons Control

- 3 x Mk91 MOD 1 fire control system (for Sea Sparrow missile)

Engines

- 2 x GE PWR A4W/A1G - 194MW
- 4 x emergency diesels - 8MW

Fixed Wing Aircraft

- 12 x F/A-18E/F
- 36 x F/A-18
- 4 x E-2C Hawkeye
- 4 x AE-6B Prowler
- 6 x S-3B Viking
- 2 x ES-3A Shadow

Helicopters

- 4 x SH-60F
- 2 x HH-60H Seahawk

At its most basic level, an aircraft carrier is simply a ship outfitted with a flight deck - a runway area for launching and landing airplanes.

This concept dates back almost as far as airplanes themselves. Within 10 years of the Wright Brothers' historic 1903 flight, the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany were launching test flights from platforms attached to cruisers.

The experiments proved



FLOATING CITY: A single Nimitz-class carrier will often carry more aircraft than some countries have in their entire air force.

largely successful, and the various naval forces started adapting existing warships for this purpose. The new carriers allowed military forces to transport short-range aircraft all over the world.

One of the major obstacles of using air power in war is getting the planes to their destination. To maintain an air base in a foreign region, the United States (or any other nation) has to make special arrangements with a host country, and then has to abide by that country's rules, which may change over time.

Needless to say, this can be extremely difficult in some parts of the world and impossible if the nation is hostile.

Under international Freedom of Navigation laws, aircraft carriers and other warships are recognized as sovereign territories in almost all of the ocean. As long as a ship doesn't get too close to any nation's coast, the carrier can operate as if it is on American soil.

Composition

An aircraft carrier basically has to do four things. It needs to:

- Transport a variety of aircraft to any destination.
- Launch and recover aircraft.
- Serve as a mobile command centre for military operations, and
- House all of the people needed to accomplish this.

To get everything done, an aircraft carrier has to be a ship, an air force base, and a small city at the same time.

Among other things it needs:

- **A flight deck** - a flat surface on top of the ship where aircraft can take off and land.
- **A hangar deck** - an area below deck to stow aircraft when not in use.
- **An island** - a building on top of the flight deck where officers can direct flights and ship operations.
- Room for the crew to live and work.
- A power plant and propul-



GO! An F-14D Tomcat fighter jet prepares to launch from the deck of a Nimitz-class carrier.

sion system to move the ship from point to point, as well as generate electricity for the entire ship.

- Various other systems to provide food and fresh water, and to handle other things that any small city has to deal with. This would include sewage, trash, mail and laundry. They would also need newspapers and radio and television stations.
- Medical facilities with doctors and dentists.
- **The hull** - the main body of the ship, which floats in water.

The Flight Deck

The system that is used by Nimitz-class carriers to launch and recover aircraft is known as the CATOBAR (Catapult Assisted Take-Off Barrier Arrested Recovery) system.

Steam-driven catapults are used to launch planes from the deck. The catapult officer carefully monitors the steam pres-

sure level so it's just right for the particular plane and deck conditions.

If the pressure is too low, the plane won't get moving fast enough to take off, and the catapult will throw it into the ocean. If there's too much pressure, the sudden jerk could break the nose gear right off.

If taking off from an aircraft carrier is difficult, landing on one is even more so.

To land on a flight deck that only has about 150 metres of runway space the aircraft make use of a tailhook. The tailhook is exactly what it sounds like - an extended hook attached to the tail of the plane.

The pilot's goal is to snag the tailhook on one of four arresting wires, sturdy cables woven from high-tensile steel wire.

The arresting wires are stretched across the deck and are attached on both ends to hydraulic cylinders below deck. If the tailhook snags an arresting wire, it pulls the wire out, and

the hydraulic cylinder system absorbs the energy to bring the plane to a stop.

The arresting wire can stop a 24,500 kg plane travelling at 241 k/ph in only two seconds.

There are four parallel arresting wires, spaced about 5015 metres apart, to expand the target area for the pilot. Pilots are aiming for the third wire, as it's the safest and most effective target. They never shoot for the first wire because it's dangerously close to the edge of deck.

To pull off a carrier landing, the pilot needs to approach the deck at exactly the right angle.

Landing Signals Officers (LSOs) help guide the plane in, through radio communication as well as a collection of lights on the deck.

If the plane is off course, the LSOs can use radio commands or illuminate other lights to correct him or her or "wave him off" (send them around for another attempt).

In addition to the LSOs, pilots look to the Fresnel Lens Optical Landing System, commonly referred to as the lens, for landing guidance. The lens consists of a series of lights and Fresnel lenses mounted to a gyroscopically stabilized platform. The lenses focus the light into narrow beams that are directed into the sky at various angles.

The pilot will see different lights depending on the plane's angle of approach. If the plane is right on target, the pilot will see an amber light, dubbed the "meatball," in line with a row of green lights.

If the amber light appears above the green lights, the plane is coming in too high; if

the amber light appears below the green lights, the plane is coming in too low. If the plane is coming in way too low, the pilot will see red lights. Pilots will often be instructed over the radio, "Keep your eyes on the ball."

As soon as the plane hits the deck, the pilot will push the engines to full power, instead of slowing down, to bring the plane to a stop. This may seem counterintuitive, but if the tailhook doesn't catch any of the arresting wires, the plane needs to be moving fast enough to take off again and come around for another pass.

The landing runway is tilted at a 14-degree angle to the rest of the ship, so bolters like this can take off from the side of the ship instead of plowing into the planes on the other end of the deck.

As soon as an aircraft lands, it's pulled out of the landing strip and chained down on the side of the flight deck. Inactive aircraft are always tightly secured to keep them from sliding around as the deck rocks back and forth.

The Island

The island on an aircraft carrier is the command centre. It is from here that almost everything on the ship is run.

It stands about 46 metres tall, but it's only six metres wide at the base. This is so that it doesn't take up too much space on the flight deck.

The top of the island, however, is spread out to provide more room. It carries an array of radar and communication antennas that monitor surrounding

ships and aircraft, intercept and jam enemy radar signals, target enemy aircraft and missiles, and pick up satellite phone and television signals.

Below this is the Primary Flight Control, or Pri-Fly. In the Pri-Fly, the air officer and air officer assistant (known as the "Air Boss" and the "Mini Boss") direct all aircraft activity on the flight deck and within a eight kilometer radius.

One level below is the bridge. It is from here that the captain controls the ship from a comfortable leather chair, surrounded by computer screens.

The captain directs the helmsman, who actually steers the ship, who in turn directs the engine room to control the speed of the ship.

The captain also directs the Quartermaster of the Watch, who keeps track of navigation information, and a number of lookouts and support personnel. When the commanding officer is not on the bridge, he puts an Officer of the Deck in charge of operations.

The level below the bridge is the flag bridge, the command center for the admiral in charge of the entire carrier group.

Below that, there are various operational centers, including the flight deck control and launch operations room. In this tight, windowless space, the aircraft handling officer (also called the handler or mangler) and his or her crew keep track of all the aircraft on the flight deck and in the hangar.

The handler's primary tracking tool is the "Ouija Board," a two-level transparent plastic table with etched outlines of

the flight deck and hangar deck. Each aircraft is represented by a scale aircraft cut-out on the table. When a real plane moves from point to point, the handler moves the model plane accordingly. When the plane is out of service, because it needs repair work, the handler turns it over.

There are a number of additional control centers below deck, including the carrier air traffic control center (CATCC), which takes up several rooms on the galley deck (immediately below the flight deck). Like a land-based air traffic control center, the CATCC is filled with all sorts of radio and radar equipment, which the controllers use to keep track of aircraft in the area (in this case, mainly the aircraft outside the Air Boss's supervision).

The CATCC is next to the combat direction center (CDC), the ship's battle command center. The CDC's primary responsibility is to process incoming information on enemy threats in order to keep the commanding officer fully informed.

The Hangar

While a small number of aircraft can be kept on the flight deck, there is not nearly enough room for the 80 to 100 aircraft stationed on a typical carrier.

Aircraft not in use are secured in the hangar bay. Think of it as a carrier's 'parking garage'.

The hangar bay is located two decks below the flight deck, just below the galley deck. The bay itself is 34 metres wide, eight metres wide, and 209 metres long - more than two-thirds the length of the entire ship. It can hold more than 60 aircraft, as

well as spare jet engines, fuel tanks and other heavy equipment, in four zones divided by sliding doors (a safety precaution to stop a fire from spreading).

The hangar is three decks high, and it's flanked by various single-deck compartments on both sides. There are also four giant elevators surrounding the hangar, which move the aircraft from the hangar to the flight deck. The high-speed, alumi-

num hydraulic elevators are big enough and powerful enough to lift two 34,000 kg fighter jets.

Aft of the hangar bay, in the stern of the ship, you'll find the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Division (AIMD) shops. The men and women in these shops are constantly repairing and testing aircraft equipment to keep the flight squadron operating at maximum efficiency.

At the very end of the ship, the AIMD shops lead to an open-air

engine testing area on the ship's fantail. This is the only place on the ship where the maintenance crews can safely blast aircraft jet engines to make sure they're working properly.

Life below decks

The berthing compartments (sleeping quarters) are extremely tight. Enlisted personnel share a compartment with about 60 other people, all sleeping in single bunks, generally

Flight Deck Crew

The flight deck crews of a Carrier Air Wing wear coloured jerseys to distinguish their functions.

Yellow	Aircraft handling officers Catapult and arresting gear officers Plane directors – responsible for all movement of all aircraft on the flight/hangar deck	Blue	Plane handlers (Trainees) Chocks and chains – entry-level flight-deck workers under the yellowshirts Aircraft elevator operators Tractor drivers Messengers and phone talkers
Green	Catapult and arresting gear crews Visual Landing Aid electricians Air wing maintenance personnel Air wing quality control personnel Cargo-handling personnel Ground support equipment (GSE) troubleshooters Hook runners Photographer's mates Helicopter landing signal enlisted personnel (LSE)	Purple	Aviation fuel handlers
White	Quality Assurance (QA) Squadron plane inspectors Landing signal officer (LSO) Air transfer officers (ATO) Liquid oxygen (LOX) crews Safety observers Medical personnel (white with Red Cross emblem)	Brown	Air wing plane captains: squadron personnel who prepare aircraft for flight Air wing line leading petty officers
Red	Ordnance men Crash and salvage crews Explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) Firefighter	White/Black	Final checker (inspector) The flight deck crews of a Carrier Air Wing wear colored jerseys to distinguish their functions.



KEEPING TABS: The 'Island' on a Nimitz-class carrier. It is from this vantage point that the Air Boss and the Mini-boss keep a close eye on aircraft launching or landing on the deck.

called racks, crammed together in stacks of three.

Each person gets a small stowage bin and upright locker for clothes and personal belongings, and everybody in the compartment shares a bathroom and a small common area with a television hooked up to one of the carrier's satellite dishes.

Officers enjoy more space and finer furnishings, but their space is limited, too. Everybody onboard has to get used to tight quarters.

The ship has everything its residents need to live, even if it's not as comfortably as they would like. There are multiple galleys (kitchens) and mess halls onboard, which collectively serve as many as 18,000 meals a day.

The ship also has a sizable laundry facility, dentist and doctor's offices, various stores and a bank of telephones where

personnel can talk to their families via satellite.

Trivia

A few facts and figures:

- Number of compartments and spaces onboard - 4,000+
- Weight of each anchor - 27 metric tons
- Weight of each link in the anchor chains - 160 kg
- Weight of each propeller - 30,000 kg
- Weight of each rudder - 41 metric tons
- Storage capacity for aviation fuel - 12.5 million litres
- Number of telephones onboard - 2,500+
- Number of televisions onboard - 3,000+
- Total length of electrical cable onboard - 1,600+ km
- Air conditioning plant capacity - 2,040 metric tons, enough to cool more than 500 houses)
- Storage capacity for refrigerated and dried food: enough to feed 6,000 people for 70 days.
- The desalination plant makes 1,514,164 lt of fresh water from the sea ever day – enough for 2,000 homes
- Mail processed every year by onboard post office - 450,000 kg
- Each carrier has its own zip code (postal code)
- Number of dentists - five
- Number of medical doctors - six
- Beds in hospital ward - 53
- Number of chaplains in interdenominational chapel - three
- Number of haircuts every week - 1,500+
- Number of barbershops - one

Other navy aircraft carriers



**Royal Navy
HMS Queen Elizabeth**



**French Navy
Charles de Gaulle**



**Chinese Navy
Shandong**



**Russian Navy
Admiral Kuznetsov**

On 2 May 1982 the Argentine Navy light cruiser ARA General Belgrano was sunk by the Royal Navy submarine HMS Conqueror with the loss of 323 lives. Losses from the General Belgrano totalled just over half of Argentine military deaths in the Falklands War.

The Falklands War (Spanish: Guerra de las Malvinas) was a 10-week undeclared war between Argentina and the United Kingdom in 1982 over two British dependent territories in the South Atlantic: the Falkland Islands and its territorial dependency, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

The conflict began on 2 April, when Argentina invaded and occupied the Falkland Islands, followed by the invasion of South Georgia the next day, in an attempt to establish the sovereignty it had claimed over them.

The Argentinians were convinced that the British would not send troops nearly 13,000 kilometres to try and recapture the territory. Yet on 5 April, the British government dispatched a naval task force to engage the Argentine Navy and Air Force before making an amphibious assault on the islands.

Two of the vessels involved in the conflict were the Argentine Navy light cruiser ARA General Belgrano and the Royal Navy submarine HMS Conqueror.

History

ARA General Belgrano was launched in March 1938. At that time she was not known as the General Belgrano. In fact she wasn't even part of the Argentine Navy.

She was originally named USS Phoenix, a Brooklyn-class cruiser, and part of the United States Navy. On 7 December USS Phoenix was alongside at Pearl Harbour when the Japanese launched their attack.

She survived Pearl Harbour undamaged and went on to earn nine battle stars for World War II service. At the end of the war, she was placed in reserve at Philadelphia on 28 February 1946, decommissioned on 3 July that year and remained laid up at Philadelphia.

USS Phoenix was sold to Argentina in October 1951 and renamed *17 de Octubre* after the "People's Loyalty day", an important sym-

bol for the political party of the then-president Juan Perón. Sold with her was another of her class, the USS Boise, renamed ARA Nueve de Julio, which was withdrawn in 1977.

17 de Octubre was one of the main naval units that joined the 1955 coup in which Perón was overthrown, and was renamed General Belgrano after General Manuel Belgrano, who founded the *Escuela de Náutica* (School of Navigation) in 1799 and had fought for Argentine independence from 1811 to 1819.

General Belgrano accidentally rammed her sister ship Nueve de Julio on exercises in 1956, which resulted in damage to both.

General Belgrano was outfitted with the Sea Cat anti-aircraft missile system between 1967 and 1968.

Nicknamed 'Conks', the HMS Conqueror was a British Churchill-class nuclear-powered fleet submarine which served in the Royal Navy from 1971 to 1990. She was the third submarine of her class, following the earlier Churchill and Courageous, that were all designed to face the Soviet threat at sea.

Conqueror, commanded by Commander Chris Wreford-Brown, was deployed during the Falklands War, setting sail from Faslane Naval Base on the Gareloch in Scotland on

3 April 1982, one day after the Argentine invasion.

Conqueror arrived in the exclusion zone around the Falkland Islands 21 days later and was ordered to scan the area for Argentine shipping, particularly the aircraft carrier Veinticinco de Mayo ("25th of May").

Sinking of the General Belgrano

On 2 April 1982 Britain declared a Maritime Exclusion Zone (MEZ) of 200 nautical miles around the Falkland Islands within which any Argentine warship or naval auxiliary entering the MEZ might be attacked by British nuclear-powered submarines (SSN).

On 23 April, the British Government clarified in a message that was passed via the Swiss Embassy in Buenos Aires to the Argentine government that any Argentine ship or aircraft that was considered to pose a threat to British forces would be attacked.

On 30 April this was upgraded to the total exclusion zone, within which any sea vessel or aircraft from any country entering the zone might be fired upon without further warning.

The zone was stated to be "...without prejudice to the right of the United Kingdom to take whatever additional measures may be needed in exercise of its right of self-defence, under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter."

The concept of a total exclusion zone was a novelty in maritime law; the Law of the Sea Convention had no provision for such an instrument. Its purpose seems to have been

to increase the amount of time available to ascertain whether any vessel in the zone was hostile or not.

Regardless of the uncertainty of the zone's legal status, it was widely respected by the shipping of neutral nations.

The Argentine military junta began to reinforce the islands in late April when it was realised that the British Task Force was heading south. As part of these movements, Argentine Naval units were ordered to take positions around the islands.

Two Task Groups designated 79.1, which included the aircraft carrier ARA Veinticinco de Mayo plus two Type 42 destroyers, and 79.2, which included three Exocet missile armed Drummond-class corvettes, both sailed to the north. General Belgrano had left Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego on 26 April.

Two destroyers, ARA Piedra Buena and ARA Hipólito Bouchard (also ex-USN vessels) were detached from Task Group 79.2 and together with the tanker YPF Puerto Rosales, joined General Belgrano to form Task Group 79.3.

By 29 April, the ships were patrolling the Burdwood Bank, south of the islands. On 30 April, General Belgrano was detected by the British nuclear-powered hunter-killer submarine Conqueror. The submarine approached over the following day.

On 1 May 1982, Admiral Juan Lombardo ordered all Argentine naval units to seek out the British task force around the Falklands and launch a "massive attack" the following day.

General Belgrano, which was outside and to the south-west of the exclusion zone, was ordered south-east.

Lombardo's signal was intercepted by British Intelligence. As a result, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her War Cabinet, meeting at Chequers the following day, agreed to a request from Admiral Terence Lewin, the Chief of the Defence Staff, to alter the rules of engagement and allow an attack on General Belgrano outside the exclusion zone.

Although the group was outside the British-declared total exclusion zone of 370 km radius from the islands, the British decided that it was a threat. After consultation at Cabinet level, Thatcher agreed that Commander Chris Wreford-Brown should attack General Belgrano.

At 15h57 (Falkland Islands Time)[on 2 May, Conqueror fired three 21-inch Mk 8 mod 4 torpedoes (conventional, non-guided, torpedoes), each with an 363 kg)Torpex warhead.

While Conqueror was also equipped with the newer Mark 24 Tigerfish homing torpedo, there were doubts about its reliability and Commander Wreford-Brown decided to stick with the Mk 24's. Two of the three torpedoes hit General Belgrano.

One of the torpedoes struck 10 to 15 metres aft of the bow, outside the area protected by either the ship's side armour or the internal anti-torpedo bulge.

This blew off the ship's bow, but the internal torpedo bulkheads held and the forward

powder magazine for the 40 mm gun did not detonate. It is believed that none of the ship's company were in that part of the ship at the time of the explosion.

The second torpedo struck about three-quarters of the way along the ship, just outside the rear limit of the side armour plating. The torpedo punched through the side of the ship before exploding in the aft machine room.

The explosion tore upward through two messes and a relaxation area called "the Soda Fountain" before finally ripping a 20-metre-long hole in the main deck.

Later reports put the number of deaths in the area around the explosion at 275 men. After the explosion, the ship rapidly filled with smoke.

The explosion also damaged General Belgrano's electrical power system, preventing her from putting out a radio distress call.

Though the forward bulkheads held, water was rushing in through the hole created by the second torpedo and could not be pumped out because of the electrical power failure. In addition, although the ship should have been "at action stations", she was sailing with the water-tight doors open.

The ship began to list to port and to sink towards the bow. Twenty minutes after the attack, at 16h24, Captain Bonzo ordered the crew to abandon ship. Inflatable life rafts were deployed, and the evacuation began without panic.

The two escort ships were unaware of what was happening



ABANDON SHIP: The ARA General Belgrano begins to list to port and sink towards the bow. The photograph was taken by a member of the crew.

to General Belgrano, as they were out of touch with her in the gloom and had not seen the distress rockets or lamp signals.

Adding to the confusion, the crew of Bouchard felt an impact that was possibly the third torpedo striking at the end of its run (an examination of the ship later showed an impact mark consistent with a torpedo).

The two ships continued on their course westward. By the time the ships realised that something had happened to General Belgrano, it was already dark and the weather had worsened, scattering the life rafts.

Argentine and Chilean ships rescued 772 men in all from 3 to 5 May. In total, 323 were killed in the attack: 321 members of the crew and two civilians who were on board at the time.

Outcome and controversy

Following the loss of General Belgrano, the Argentinian fleet returned to its bases and played no major role in the rest of the conflict.

British nuclear submarines continued to operate in the sea areas between Argentina and the Falkland Islands, gathering intelligence, providing early warning of air raids and effectively imposing sea denial.

A further effect was that the Argentinian Navy's carrier-borne aircraft had to operate from land bases at the limit of their range, rather than from an aircraft carrier at sea.

The minimal role of the Navy in the rest of the campaign led to a considerable loss of credibility and influence within the Junta.

The legality of the sinking of General Belgrano has been disputed due to disagreement on the exact nature of the Maritime Exclusion Zone (MEZ) and whether General Belgrano had been returning to port at the time of the sinking.

Through a message passed via the Swiss Embassy in Buenos Aires to the Argentine government nine days before the sinking, the UK made clear that it no longer considered the 320 km



SILENT SERVICE: When HMS Conqueror sank ARA General Belgrano it became the first and only nuclear submarine to have engaged an enemy vessel with torpedoes.

exclusion zone as the limit of its military action.

On 1 May 1982, Admiral Juan Lombardo ordered all Argentine naval units to seek out the British task force around the Falklands and launch a "massive attack" the following day.

In 2003, the ship's captain Hector Bonzo confirmed that General Belgrano had actually been manoeuvring, not "sailing away" from the exclusion zone.

Captain Bonzo stated that any suggestion that HMS Conqueror's actions were a "betrayal" was utterly wrong; rather, the submarine carried out its duties according to the accepted rules of war.

In an interview two years before his death in 2009, he further stated that: "It was absolutely not a war crime. It was an act of war, lamentably legal."

In August 1994, an official Argentine Defence Ministry report written by armed forces auditor Eugenio Miari was released which described the

sinking of General Belgrano as "a legal act of war", explaining that "acts of war can be carried out in all of the enemy's territory" and "they can also take place in those areas over which no state can claim sovereignty, in international waters".

After the war, Conqueror returned to Faslane, flying a Jolly Roger adorned with torpedoes, a customary act of Royal Navy submarines after a kill.

When asked about the incident later, Commander Wrexford-Brown responded, "The Royal Navy spent thirteen years preparing me for such an occasion. It would have been regarded as extremely dreary if I had fouled it up".

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

Remembering comments by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson, who complained

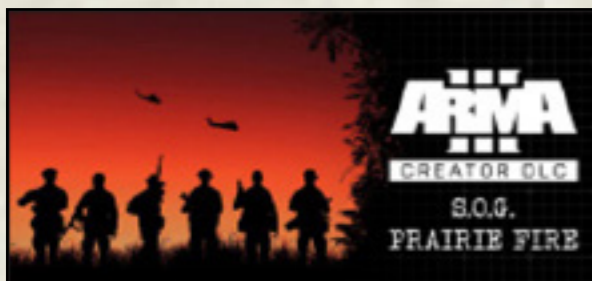
that submarines were "underhanded, unfair, and damned un-English" and that personnel should be hanged as pirates, Lieutenant Commander Max Horton began flying the flag after returning from successful patrols.

La Nación published a reader's letter from Admiral Enrique Molina Pico (head of the Argentine Navy in the 1990s) in 2005 in which Molina Pico wrote that General Belgrano was part of an operation that posed a real threat to the British task force, but was holding off for tactical reasons. Molina Pico added that "To leave the exclusion zone was not to leave the combat zone to enter a protected area". Molina Pico explicitly stated that the sinking was not a war crime, but a combat action.

Conqueror's war did not after the sinking of the General Belgrano. The crew of the submarine had to face Argentine Air Force attempts to locate her in the days after the attack, which had shocked the Argentine people and ruling dictatorship.

Conqueror did not fire again in anger throughout the war, but helped the task force by using sophisticated monitoring equipment to track Argentine aircraft departing from the mainland.

In 2003 a search team aboard Seacor Lenga, crewed by Argentine and British veterans, was sponsored by National Geographic to find the sunken cruiser but failed to locate the ship. The area where General Belgrano sank, that was not found, is classified as a War Grave under Argentine Congress Law 25.546.



While Sergeant Matt 'Ace of Spades' O'Brien may love the smell of napalm in the morning, what he doesn't fancy is trying to stay alive in the jungles of Vietnam.

In the past I have done reviews on ARMA 3 in three separate issues of the magazine. And guess what - here's another one.

ARMA 3 is by far the best mil-sim (military simulator) that I have come across. While it was released in 2013 what keeps it fresh is all the creator content that continually adds stuff to the base game. The vast majority of this content is free.

On the odd occasion people will create content for ARMA 3 that they require you to pay for. This is the case with S.O.G. Prairie Fire.

Savage Game Design, creators of the DLC (Downloadable content), developed it with the help of US veterans and Vietnamese advisors.

S.O.G. Prairie Fire immerses you deep within enemy territory as a member of covert special ops unit MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command - Special Operations Group) and delivers an Arma 3 sandbox experience you won't forget.

Featuring the authentic combat, full-spectrum battlefield, and powerful scenario editor Arma 3 is renowned for, players can now experience the full scope of the Vietnam War on their own, with friends, or with one of the thousands of Arma

community groups located around the world.

The map is called Cam Lao Nam and is a scaled down version of Vietnam and parts of Cambodia and Laos. It covers 300 km2 and enables players to design and run missions throughout all phases and locations of the war.

The three major cities are there - Saigon, Hanoi and Hue. Other highlights include the US Air Force base at Pleiku, the Bru Montagnard jungles, Hamburger Hill, and the Plain of Jars.

Travel by boat through the eerie swamps of the Mekong Delta to discover the bustling ports of Da Nang, Sihanoukville and Haiphong, mysterious Paradise Island, the secret airstrip of Dharma island, and imposing Ha Long Bay.

Then there are the extensive hidden camps, caves, and tunnels of the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

There is a multi-player co-op campaign for up to 14 players, as well as a five single player scenarios.

You can play as one of four factions - MACV Special Operations Group, PAVN (People's Army of Vietnam, also known as NVA or North Vietnamese Army), Viet Cong, or ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vi-

etnam - the South Vietnamese Army).

You can play in a wide range of military roles, with 41 detailed uniforms, 30 vests, 28 backpacks, 15 accessories and 20 headgear items - all with many variations.

There are 54 new vehicles and static weapon variants. This includes five new MACV helicopters and one PAVN helicopter, two new heavily-armed gunboats, and two new light tanks.

You also get the F-4 Phantom II with 22 weapons, in USAF, US Navy and USMC colours. They have to face off against the S-75 SAM missile and RSNA-75 radar.

There are also five new small boats (two wooden motorboats and three sampans), with many variants, some armed. There are even two bicycle types for transporting supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

You will also find 55 new weapons and variants. Go into battle as the US and South Vietnamese armies, carrying standard-issue gear or run recon as the elite teams from MACV SOG and the US Special Forces, wielding obscure and customised weapons.

The VC are normally armed with outmoded but still deadly



weapons while the PAVN are equipped with imported Chinese and Russian equipment.

What I've found really unique to Prairie Fire is the authentic and atmospheric sound effects. To bring this fascinating period of history to life, every sound has been crafted to improve the experience of close-quarters fighting in steaming jungles.

You will hear enemies whisper as they approach in the dark, or yelling as they rush to overrun you.

The immersive medical system adds wounded enemies calling out, and dark humour shared by wounded soldiers.

The extensive recreation of every weapon, explosion, bullet crack, vehicle, and footstep sounds creates an immersive and unforgettable feeling for players.

To complement the sounds of battle, many new special effects have been added to deliver a truly kinetic battlefield experience. Even outside of combat, experi-

ence the ambience of the jungle as it comes alive with realistic sounds of wildlife, weather and disturbed vegetation.

The editor means that you can use the entire map to create your own scenarios and the modding community is already hard at work creating campaigns and single player missions that you will be able to download for free.

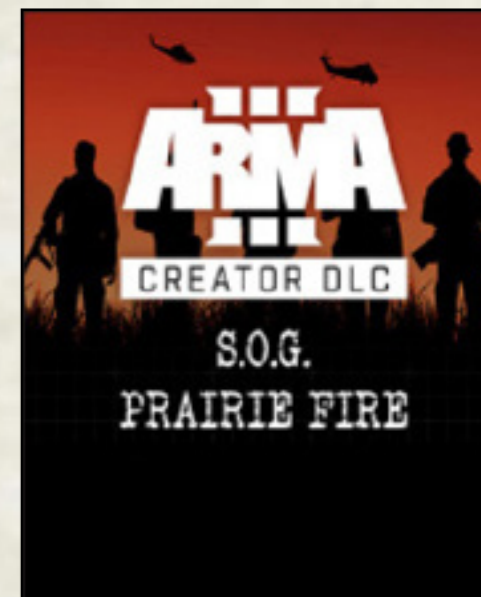
Savage Game Design have already made a multi-player scenario called Mike Force. Here you choose one of four specialist teams, and co-operate to build bases, expand capability and find and destroy the enemy in this unique, intense, combined arms, conquest mission.

I've already spent a few hours playing Prairie Fire and I must say that I am impressed. I played a scenario as part of a small SOG team deep in enemy territory and it had me on the edge of my chair. And it's not just the enemy that you have to worry about. Twice I've man-

aged to fall into a punji trap, and there are also deadly snakes.

To play SOG Prairie Fire you will need to own the ARMA 3 base game.

For those that have an interest in the Vietnam War, SOG Prairie Fire is a must have.



Publisher - Bohemia Interactive

Genre - Mil-Sim

Score 8.5/10

Price - R152 (on Steam)



Movie Review

Restrepo

Released: 2010

Running time: 93 minutes

Directed by: Tim Hetherington & Sebastian Junger

Released in 2010 and directed by American journalist Sebastian Junger and British photojournalist Tim Hetherington, Restrepo is a documentary film.

The film begins with background that reads: "In May 2007, the men of Second Platoon, Battle Company began a 15-month deployment in the Korengal Valley of eastern Afghanistan. It was considered one of the most dangerous postings in the U.S. Military."

The film explores the year that Junger and Hetherington spent in Afghanistan on assignment for Vanity Fair, embedded with the Second Platoon, B Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team of the U.S. Army in the Korangal Valley.

The 2nd Platoon is depicted defending the outpost (OP) named after a platoon medic who was killed earlier in the campaign, PFC Juan Sebastián Restrepo, a Colombian-born naturalized U.S. citizen.

The film chronicles the lives of the men from their deployment to the time of their return home, and begins with video footage of PFC Restrepo on a train one week prior. The goal of the deployment was to clear the Korengal Valley of insurgency and gain the trust of the local populace. The Korengal

flows north to the Pech, which then flows east to the Kunar River valley on the porous border with Pakistan. As an example of the ever-present dangers, the first scenes cover a fire-fight after a military Hummer is disabled on a narrow mountain road by an IED.

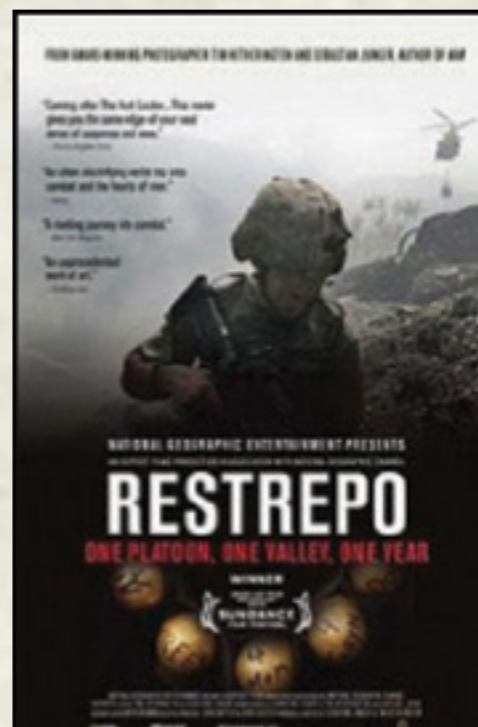
The soldiers are ferried in by Chinook and begin their deployment at Combat Outpost (OP) Korengal, or "KOP", and early in the campaign PFC Juan S. Restrepo is killed, as well as another team member, PFC Vimoto. The film portrays negotiations with the local people, construction of an advanced outpost called "OP Restrepo", as well as the challenges and intermittent fire-fights they face.

In the latter part of the film, the dangerous mission Operation Rock Avalanche is shown along with some of its tragic consequences. One event was the loss of Army Sgt. Larry Rougle. It was there, in 2007, when Army Sgt. Rougle, who served two tours in Iraq and three in Afghanistan, was ambushed by a large number of Taliban.

It was learned that Rougle, at point, took the brunt of the attack, allowing his soldiers to secure a position and fight. Army Sgt. Larry Rougle, who is a recipient of the Purple Heart, is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Restrepo is a film not just about the events of combat, but also about "brotherhood," according to Junger. The film shows the dedication to their duty as a soldier and their commitment to one another as brothers. The film is narrated by several men who fought with PFC Juan S. Restrepo. The men discuss loss such as dead civilians and soldiers, as well as the emotional distress that the soldiers are left with in its aftermath.

The film ends with a coda that reads: "In April 2010, the United States Army withdrew from the Korengal Valley. Nearly 50 American soldiers died fighting there."



Click on the poster to watch a trailer of the film.

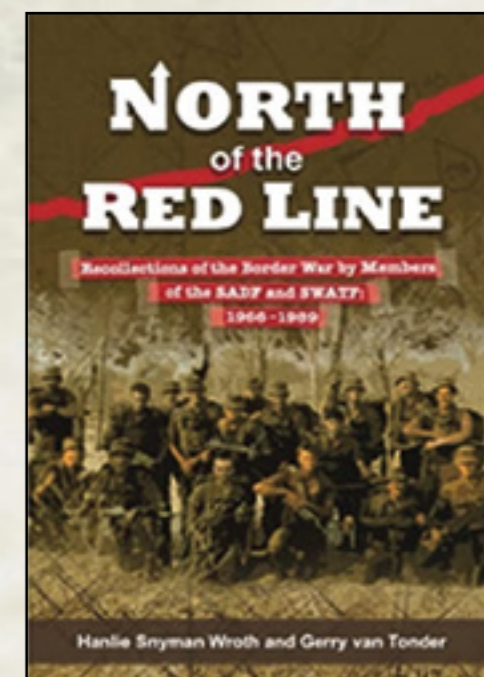
North of the Red Line

Over the years, much has been written about individuals and the forces and their operations in what became commonly known as South Africa's Border War, or *Grensoorlog*, but never before has the human spirit of this 23-year-old conflict been so graphically and unashamedly captured and chronicled as in this book.

Equally unique, was the exclusive use of social media to invite and encourage individuals to tell their personal stories, without apology or recrimination, and so provide an indelible oral history of the war.

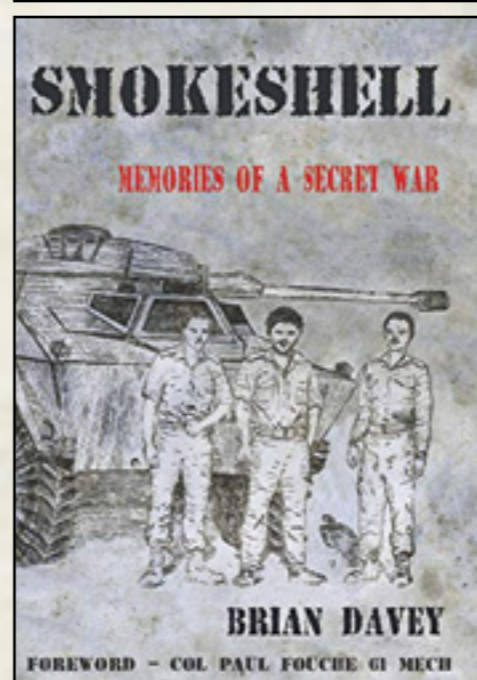
Over a period of three years, 21,000 of them spoke: national service troops, permanent force officers, aviators, aircrew,

medics, submariners and padres. Erstwhile antagonists also stepped up to the plate, placing their own personal first-hand experiences amongst those of their enemies of yesterday: Russians, Cubans, Angolans and SWAPO. The story is further enriched by the inclusion of a rich plethora of hitherto unseen 'unofficial' photographs of stolen memories, in a war situation where the taking of any such photographs was strictly prohibited. Veterans unabashedly wear their hearts on their sleeves, speaking of the psychological impact of untold tragedy and grief; of bravery and unmitigated fear; of shenanigans and mischievous escapades to relieve the pressures of war; of miracles and fate; and of cama-



raderie.

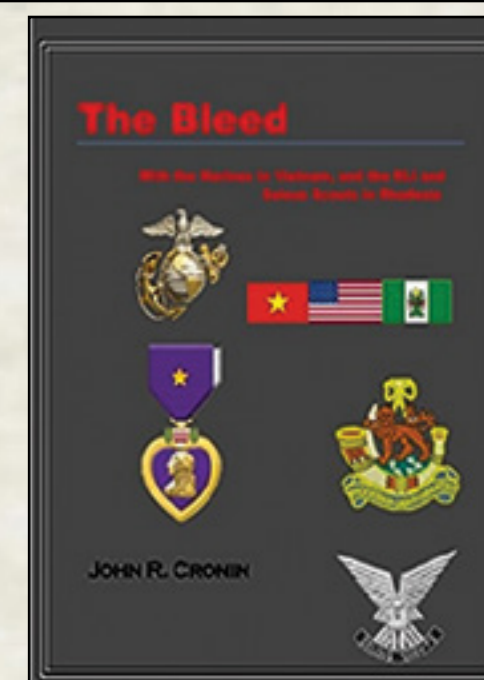
Softcover, 540 pages
Cost: R400



Smokeshell
R375



Anglo Boer War
R460



The Bleed
R395

All books are available from [Bush War Books](#)

This month in military history

Some of the significant military events that happened in September. Highlighted in blue are the names of those members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that lost their lives during the month of September.

1 September

- **1862** - Following his brilliant victory at the Second Battle of Bull Run two days earlier, Confederate General Robert E. Lee strikes retreating Union forces at Chantilly, Virginia, and drives them away in the middle of an intense thunderstorm. Casualties and losses: US 1,300 - CSA 800.
- **1870** - The Battle of Sedan was fought between the French and the Prussian forces in Sedan, France resulting in German victory. The French Emperor, Napoleon III was captured in the battle resulting in the end of the Second French Empire.
- **1878** - British Major General John Frederick Charles Fuller was born on this day. He was an advocate of tank warfare and became one of the founders of modern armoured warfare. He was also a strong Nazi sympathiser.
- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War Two Australians of the Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen, Lieutenant Wylly and Private Bisdee, display exceptional bravery during an ambush by Boers in assisting a wounded officer and allowing five other wounded to escape. They were later awarded the Victoria Cross for extraordinary bravery.
- **1900** - Britain annexes the ZAR (Transvaal Republic).
- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War Commandant Piet Fourie, joined by Nieuwoudt and Kritzing, take Ladybrand, OFS, in a street by street fight, but fail to capture the British garrison, who retreats to a position at the foot of Platberg.
- **1939** - Germany invades Poland, starting World War II.
- **1950** - Korean War: 13 North Korean divisions open assault on UN lines.
- **1963** - The new Air Force Memorial on Bays Hill, south of Pretoria, is inaugurated by State President C.R. Swart and attended by about 8 000 people, including dignitaries of other countries. The monument is a memorial to almost 3,000 members of the SAAF who died in action through the years in war and peace.
- **1967** - Ilse Koch, Nazi war criminal (commonly known as "The Bitch of Buchenwald") hangs herself in prison at 60.
- **1969** - Colonel Muammar Gaddafi seizes power in Libya after a coup d'état, deposing King Idris and exiling him to Egypt.
- **1979** - Lieutenant Chris Jansen from 1 Satellite Radar Station at Mariepskop was killed in a private motor vehicle accident at Pilgrims Rest. He was 22.
- **1981** - A bloodless coup under General André Kolingba ousts President David Dacko of the Central African Republic.
- **1981** - Albert Speer, German architect and Nazi leader (Reich Minister for Armaments and War Production), dies of a stroke at 76
- **1982** - The United States Air Force Space Command is founded.
- **1983** - Warrant Officer Class II Johannes Petrus Lodewickus van Bosch from the South African Engineer Corps, attached to Sector 20 Headquarters was killed in a military vehicle accident between Rundu and Bagani when his military vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with another military vehicle. He was 39.
- **1983** - Seaman A.R. Roux from the South African Marines was critically wounded after being accidentally shot by another Leading Seaman while his platoon was on patrol in the Caprivi. He was casevaced by helicopter to Katima Mulilo but unfortunately succumbed to his

- wounds while still aboard the helicopter and was certified dead on arrival. He was 18.
 - **1983** - Korean Air Lines Flight 007 was shot down by a Russian fighter jet while on route from New York to Seoul, killing all 269 persons on board. The Boeing 747 reportedly strayed 160 kilometres off course over secret Soviet Russian military installations on the Kamchatka Peninsula and Sakhalin Island. It crashed in the Sea of Japan.
 - **1986** - Rifleman Simon Robert Hood from 32 Battalion was killed when he accidentally fell off the back of a moving Buffel Troop Carrier near Rundu. He was 24.
 - **1988** - Lance Corporal Petrus Jacobus Herbst from Walvis Bay Command was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident between Otjiwarongo & Okahandja. He was 20.
 - **1995** - Chief warlord Charles Taylor and other key militia leaders are installed in a new ruling council in Liberia.
 - **2003** - A new UN force with a wider mandate takes over from the French-led force in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.
- ## 2 September
- **31 B.C.** - Roman legions under Augustus Caesar defeated Mark Anthony's naval force at Actium.
 - **1862** - Civil War: President Abraham Lincoln reluctantly restores Union General George B. McClellan to full command after General John Pope's disaster at the Second Battle of Bull Run, Virginia, on August 29 and 30.
 - **1864** - During the American Civil War, Atlanta was captured by Sherman's Army. "Atlanta is ours, and fairly won," General William T. Sherman telegraphed President Lincoln.
 - **1870** - Napoleon III surrendered to the Prussians during the Battle of Sedan, resulting in the fall of the Second French Empire.
 - **1878** - Werner Eduard Fritz von Blomberg was born on this day. He was a German *Generalfeldmarschall*, Minister of War, and Commander-in-Chief of the German Armed Forces until January 1938.
 - **1898** - In the Anglo-Egyptian War Lord [Sir Herbert] Kitchener's force of 25,000 decisively defeats the Dervishes at the Battle of Omdurman, Sudan, taking Khartoum. 10,000 Sudanese fall in battle.
 - **1898** - The machine gun is used for the first time in battle.
 - **1939** - Nazi Germany captured the Free City of Danzig, Poland.. A concentration camp was set up at Stutthof, where several prominent Danzing Jews were deported.
 - **1944** - Future President George Herbert Walker Bush is serving as a torpedo bomber pilot in the Pacific theater of World War II when his squadron is attacked by Japanese anti-aircraft guns. Bush was forced to bail out of the plane over the ocean. After floating on a raft for four hours, a submarine crew fished a safe but exhausted Bush out of the water.
 - **1945** - Japan officially signs the act of unconditional surrender to the Allied nations on board the American battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay.
 - **1958** - United States Air Force C-130A-II is shot down by fighters over Yerevan, Armenia when it strays into Soviet airspace while conducting a SIGINT mission. All the crew were lost.
 - **1962** - Soviet Russia agreed to send arms to Cuba, lead-



Albert Speer

- ing to the October Missile Crisis after the shipments were discovered by the U.S.
- **1964** - Alvin York, American World War I soldier who led a famed attack on a German machine gun nest (Medal of Honour), dies at 76.
- **1977** - Rifleman Matthys Christiaan Henn from 4 SAI was critically injured in a military vehicle accident between Middelburg and Greefswald on 31 August 1977 and succumbed to his injuries in 1 Military Hospital on 02 September 1977. He was 18.
- **1978** - Rifleman Arau Chilimba from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment attached to D Squadron Rhodesian Special Air Service, was killed instantly in Mocambique when he accidentally walked into the helicopter tail rotor after being inserted into the designated drop zone inside enemy territory. He was 24.
- **1982** - Two members from 5 Maintenance Unit were grievously burned in an accidental petrol explosion at Ondangwa on 30 August 1982. Both members were evacuated to the 1 Military Hospital Burn Unit where they succumbed to their injuries on 02 September 1982. The casualties were: Private Gordon Gray Crossland (18). Private Hendrik Lambertus Groenewald (20).
- **1984** - Able Seaman Crispin John Canner from SAS Unity died from a gunshot

- wound after being accidentally shot by a fellow sailor while carrying out guard duty at the Slangkop Radio Station. He was 24.
- **1989** - Lance Corporal Hendrik Jacobus Bekker from the Eastern Transvaal Command Provost Unit, South African Corps of Military Police, was accidentally killed after being struck by a moving train while on leave in Nelspruit. He was 18.
- **1999** - Major Kenneth Arthur Newman from 22 Squadron was killed when his Alouette III Helicopter, Serial No. 616 suffered engine failure and crashed in dense bush at Sea View, Port Elizabeth. He was 50.
- **2002** - The Sudanese government suspends peace talks with the country's main rebel group, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, or SPLA, after rebels seize the strategic town of Torit.
- **1969** - The Nigerian Central Government forces began Operation OAU in order to seize the remaining Biafran cities. Though the Biafran forces were not very strong they managed to keep control over Umuahia and later recaptured Owerri and Aba cities.
- **1972** - U.S fighter-bombers attacked, Phuc Yen, one of the largest air bases in North Vietnam, and shot down a MiG aircraft. In all, 47 MiG aircraft were shot down since the North Vietnamese attack began.

3 September

- **1777** - The Flag of the United States is flown in battle for the first time. The British Army and their Hessian allies defeated an American militia at the Battle of Cooch's Bridge.
- **1783** - The American Revolution ends with the signing of the Treaty of Paris by the United States and the Kingdom of Great Britain. America is officially free from Britain.
- **1800** - Two rebels of the Graaff-Reinet Rebellion five years previously, Martinus Prinsloo and Adriaan van Jaarsveld, are sentenced to death and sixteen rebels receive life-long penalties. They had rebelled against the Company and had proclaimed the territory a free republic.
- **1916** - The Allies turn back the Germans in WW I's Battle of Verdun.
- **1939** - Great Britain and France declared war on Nazi Germany after its invasion of Poland two days earlier.
- **1939** - The United Kingdom and France begin a naval blockade of Germany that lasts until the end of the war. This also marks the beginning of the Battle of the Atlantic.
- **1941** - First use of Zyklon-B gas in Auschwitz (on Russian prisoners of war).
- **1942** - In possibly the first Jewish ghetto uprising, residents of the Łachwa Ghetto in occupied Poland,

- informed of the upcoming "liquidation" of the ghetto, unsuccessfully fought against their Nazi captors.
- **1943** - Italy signed an armistice with the Allies during World War II in Europe as the British Eighth Army, commanded by General Bernard Montgomery, invaded the Italian mainland from Sicily.
- **1950** - A US Military Assistance Advisory Group arrived in Saigon to look into the French request for American military aid and assistance in the training of the South Vietnamese troops.
- **1974** - Joint routine exercises are held between the British Royal Navy and the South African Navy, under the Simonstown Agreement, and again from 14 October 1974.
- **1978** - Four Crew Members and 44 Passengers from Air Rhodesia Viscount "Hunyani" Flight RH825 were killed when the aircraft was shot down by ZIPRA insurgents using a Soviet SAM-7 Grail shoulder-launched Surface-to-Air Missile approximately five minutes after take-off from Kariba Airport. Almost immediately a distress signal was received to the effect that the aircraft engines had failed. The aircraft crashed near the northern border with Zambia in the Urungwe Tribal Trust Land, 40km South-East of Kariba Dam. Eighteen

- people survived the initial crash but 10 survivors were executed by the ZIPRA Terrorists who returned to the accident scene to loot the aircraft contents. The remaining eight passengers managed to escape. The four crew members were posthumously awarded the Rhodesian Meritorious Conduct Medal (MCM) for brave and gallant conduct.
- **1980** - General Constand Viljoen is appointed as Chief of the South African Defence Force (SADF) and Lieutenant-General Jan Geldenhuys as Chief of the Army, with effect from 7 October 1980.
- **1981** - Rifleman Cornelius Jacobus Vermaak from Special Forces Headquarters died in the Edenvale Hospital from injuries sustained in a Military Vehicle Accident in Edenvale. He was 19.
- **1985** - Two members from 6 SAI were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Grahamstown. The casualties were: Rifleman Orlando De Portugal Goncalves (19). Rifleman Shaun Patrick Atkins (21).
- **1986** - South Africa's government re-imposes order prohibiting journalists from reporting actions of security forces.
- **1987** - One member from 42 Squadron and one member from 4 Field Regiment

- were Killed in Action when a 42 Squadron Atlas AM3-C Bosbok, Serial No 934 was shot down by a Soviet SA-8 Gecko Surface-to-Air Missile South of Lomba river in Southern Angola during Ops Modular. The casualties were: Lieutenant Richard William Glynn (21). Commandant Johann Christiaan Du Randt (32).
- **2001** - Sierra Leone's president Ahmed Tejan Kabbah shakes hands with his rebel counterpart General Issa Sesay, and declares the West African nation's war over.

4 September

- **1862** - Union General Lee invades North with 50,000 Confederate troops.
- **1886** - The last major U.S.-Indian war came to an end as Geronimo was captured. He died of natural causes in 1909 at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.
- **1900** - Danie Theron, an Afrikaner patriot believing in the just and divine right of the Boer to stand against British interference, died during the Second Anglo-Boer War in an inferno of



Constand Viljoen

- lyddite and shrapnel.
- **1916** - British forces take Dar-es-Salaam in Tanganyika.
 - **1918** - United States troops land at Archangel, in northern Russia and stay 10 months. The landing was part of an Allied intervention in the civil war raging in that country after revolution in 1917 led to the abdication of Czar Nicholas II in favour of a provisional government; the seizure of power by Vladimir Lenin and his radical socialist Bolshevik Party; and, finally, Russia's withdrawal from participation alongside the Allies in World War I.
 - **1939** - The House of Assembly defeats Prime Minister Hertzog's motion of neutrality and adopts Smuts' amendment in favour of joining the war. Hertzog resigns premiership the next day and he and his followers side with Dr Malan's National Party. Smuts becomes premier and retains the name United Party for his followers.
 - **1940** - The American destroyer Greer becomes the first U.S. vessel fired on in the war when a German submarine aims a few torpedoes at it, sparking heightened tensions between Germany and the United States. It was a case of mistaken identity. Roosevelt unofficially declared war on anyone who further attacked American vessels in the North Atlantic: "If German or Italian

- vessels of war enter these waters, they do so at their own peril."
- **1944** - Two days after the start of the Allied mission to liberate Belgium, the British forces liberated Antwerp from the Germans. In February 1945, Belgium was entirely freed from German occupation, after five months of joint operation by the USA, Canada, Britain and Poland.
 - **1945** - The Wake Island Japanese garrison's 2,200 Japanese soldiers finally lay down their arms and surrender to a detachment of U.S. Marines days after their government had already formally capitulated. Wake Island was one of the islands bombed as part of a wider bombing raid that coincided with the attack on Pearl Harbor and they had held since 23 December of 1941.
 - **1967** - The U.S. 1st Marine Division launches Operation SWIFT, a search and destroy operation in Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces in I Corps Tactical Zone (the region south of the Demilitarized Zone). A fierce four-day battle ensued in the Que Son Valley, 25 miles south of Da Nang. During the course of the battle, 114 men of the U.S. 5th Marine Regiment were killed while the North Vietnamese forces suffered 376 casualties.
 - **1969** - Radio Hanoi announces the death of Ho Chi Minh, proclaiming that the

- National Liberation Front will halt military operations in the South for three days, September 8-11, in mourning for Ho. He had been the spiritual leader of the communists in Vietnam since the earliest days of the struggle against the French and, later, the United States and its ally in Saigon.
- **1975** - Representatives of Egypt and Israel sign interim peace agreement in Geneva.
 - **1980** - Rifleman A.F. Chipa from 32 Battalion accidentally drowned near Buffalo. He was 27.
 - **1980** - Private Frederick Jacobus Janse van Vuuren from the Air Force School of Technical Training was killed in a Private Motor Vehicle Accident, at Nelspoort. He was 21.
 - **1981** - Four members from 1 Special Service Battalion were killed when their Eland armoured car overturned during a training exercise at Ottosdal. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Derek Charl De Villiers (20). Trooper Mark Rodney Harty (20). Trooper Willem Frederick Raubenheimer (19). Trooper Johannes Martin Schoeman (18).
 - **1982** - Private Johannes Albertus O'Neill from 5 Maintenance Unit was grievously burned at Ondangwa on 30 August 1982 when he lit a cigarette while standing near petrol drums and the petrol fumes ignited causing an explosion. He succumbed

- to his injuries in 1 Military Hospital on 04 September 1982. He was 18.
- **1984** - Private Auguste Jansen from the Natal Command Workshop, Technical Service Corps was admitted to Addington Hospital on 01 September 1984 suffering from severe head injuries after being assaulted by persons unknown. He succumbed to his injuries on 04 September 1984. He was 19.
 - **1990** - Rifleman Anton Malan from Infantry School was accidentally killed when a 40mm multiple grenade launcher barrel exploded during a firing training exercise at Oudtshoorn. He was 22.
- 5 September**
- **1781** - In the Battle of the Chesapeake the British Navy is repelled by the French Navy, leading to the British surrender at Yorktown.
 - **1876** - German field marshal and World War II war criminal Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb was born on this day. Units under Leeb's command committed atrocities against the civilian population and closely cooperated with the SS Einsatzgruppen, the mobile killing squads primarily tasked with the murder of the Jewish population as part of the Holocaust. He was found guilty and sentenced to three years.
 - **1877** - Crazy Horse, the last great Sioux war chief, dies on this day at the age of 37.

- **1901** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War Lieutenant Hannam and members of the Bushveld Carbineers, fighting on British side, fire on wagons with women and children who offer no resistance, killing two children and wounding a girl.
- **1914** - The Battle of the Marne. Thirty miles north-east of Paris, the French 6th Army under General Michel-Joseph Maunoury begins attacking the right flank of German forces advancing on the French capital. By the next day, the counterattack was total. More than two million soldiers fought in the Battle of the Marne, and 100,000 of them were killed or wounded.
- **1939** - President Franklin Roosevelt declares US neutrality at start of WW II in Europe.
- **1965** - Air Mechanic Henry Cecil Oosthuizen from the Air Force Gymnasium was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Krugersdorp. He was 19.
- **1969** - In Vietnam Lt. William Calley is charged with six specifications of premeditated murder in the death of 109 Vietnamese civilians at My Lai in March 1968.
- **1970** - Operation Jefferson Glen was launched on September 5th 1970 in the Hue Province to protect the critical installations. The United

- States 101st Airborne Division and the South Vietnamese 1st Infantry Division combined forces in what was to become the last major operation in which the U.S ground forces participated. It was also meant to strengthen the combat capability of the South Vietnamese army so they could enable them to fight the Viet Cong in the North. This parachute regiment left South Vietnam from March 1972.
- **1972** - Eleven members of the Israeli Olympic Team were killed during an attack on the Olympic Village in Munich by members of the Black September faction of the Palestinian Liberation Army. Israeli jets then bombed Palestinian positions in Lebanon and Syria in retaliation on September 8, 1972.
 - **1978** - Rifleman Michael Horn Du Plessis from 2 SAI was grievously burned and suffered smoke inhalation



Ho Chi Minh

while assisting to extinguish a veld fire in Windhoek. He succumbed to his injuries later in the day. He was 19.

- **1980** - Lance Corporal Ernesto Sophia from 32 Battalion was accidentally killed by friendly fire in Southern Angola during Operation Vastrap. He was 31.
- **1982** - Private Robert Peter van Spronsen from 5 Maintenance Unit was grievously burned at Ondangwa on 30 August 1982 when a cigarette was lit while standing near petrol drums and the petrol fumes ignited, causing an explosion. He succumbed to his injuries in 1 Military Hospital on 05 September 1982. He was 19.
- **1982** - Douglas Bader, the World War II RAF fighter pilot, dies on this day at the age of 72. Bader lost both his legs in an accident before the war, but he recovered, retook flight training, passed his check flights and then requested reactivation as a pilot.
- **1983** - Sergeant Ernestus Jacobus van Staden from 8 SAI was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident near Bloemfontein. He succumbed to his injuries in the Universitas Hospital in Bloemfontein shortly after admission. He was 24.
- **1983** - The trial of Commodore Dieter Gerhardt on charges of spying for the Soviet Union began in the Cape Town High Court. Gerhardt was arrested in

1982, sentenced in 1983 to life imprisonment for passing military secrets.

- **1986** - Sapper Gary Edward Schentke from 1 Construction Regiment was accidentally killed when a road grader drove over him during construction work at the new 102 Battalion Base at Homba in the Kaokoveld. He was 19.
 - **1993** - Seven Nigerian UN peacekeepers are killed in an ambush by Somalis in Mogadishu.
- 6 September**
- **1228** - The Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II landed in Acre, Palestine to mark the beginning of the Sixth Crusade. Frederick II was a successor to the Roman rulers of the antiquity and was crowned emperor by Pope Honorius II in 1220.
 - **1776** - during the American Revolutionary War, Ezra Lee, an American colonial soldier, commanding the 'Turtle' submarine attempted to time bomb to the hull of British Admiral Richard Howe's flagship 'Eagle' in New York Harbor. It was the first use of a submarine in warfare.
 - **1861** - Forces under Union General Ulysses S. Grant bloodlessly capture Paducah, Kentucky, which gives the Union control of the mouth of the Tennessee River.
 - **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer war the British,

under General French, occupy Carolina. On the same day forces under General Buller occupy Lydenburg.

- **1932** - The Battle of Boqueron started between the Bolivian and the Paraguayan armies. The battle was a major encounter in the Chaco War. The Bolivians had taken over the Boqueron outpost in 1932. The battle raged on for more than three weeks and finally resulted in the Bolivians surrendering.
- **1939** - South Africa declares war on Germany.
- **1944** - Soviet forces captured the city of Tartu manned by 69,000 German troops on their way to re-establishing their rule in Estonia.
- **1949** - Allied military authorities relinquish control of former Nazi Germany assets back to German control.
- **1965** - The US Marines and South Vietnamese forces launched Operation Piranha, as part of a major event during the course of the Vietnam War on the Batangan Peninsula. The operation included a raid on the Vietnam Army 1st regiment, by the Allied forces which resulted in several Vietnamese casualties.
- **1975** - Rifleman Leon Johannes de Wit Scheepers from 2 SAI was part of a group of patrols that were clearing all the islands down-river from Calueque Dam. During this process, he accidentally fell into the Cunene River and drowned

before he could be rescued. He was 18.

- **1976** - Soviet air force pilot Lt. Viktor Belenko lands a MiG-25 jet fighter at Hakodate in Japan and requests political asylum in the United States.
- **1977** - Corporal Thomas John Lewis Jones from 1 Kavango Battalion SWATF was killed when the Bedford truck in which he was travelling on the Rundu / Bagani Road, left the road and collided with a tree some 60 km west of Ondangwa. He was 21.
- **1977** - Commandant Johannes Petrus Human from Sector 70 Headquarters SWATF was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 49.
- **1978** - 2nd Lieutenant Andre Leon Opperman from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action in Southern Angola. He was 19.
- **1979** - During an external operation in Mocambique, code-named Ops Uric, a SAAF Puma helicopter carrying 3 SAAF Crew Members and 14 South African Nationals, all members serving in the Rhodesian Armed Forces, was shot down near Mapai in Mocambique. The SAAF casualties were: Captain Paul Denzil Velleman (25). Lieutenant Nigel David Osborne (22). Sergeant Dirk Wilhelmus Marthinus Retief (29).
- **1980** - Rifleman Alfred Gordon Smith from the Kimber-

ley Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident at Sishen. He was 58.

- **1985** - Private Pierre Botha from 61 Base Workshops died in an accidental shooting incident at the Base. He was 20.
- **1986** - Lance Corporal Frederick Johannes Klaasen from Air Force Base Waterkloof was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Paul Kruger Street, Pretoria. He was 20.
- **1987** - Lance Corporal Melvin Ashley Beneke from 1 Parachute Battalion Pathfinders was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces at the Lomba River in Southern Angola during Ops Modular. He was 19.
- **1988** - Sergeant N. Kibanguka from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 35.
- **1993** - Seven Nigerian United Nations peacekeepers are killed in an ambush by Somalis in Mogadishu.
- **1996** - Army troops drive Hutu rebels from their hillside positions outside Burundi's capital after three days of fighting.

7 September

- **1939** - The German Consulate in Cape Town packs up after South Africa's official declaration of war on Germany the previous day.

Douglas Bader



- **1940** - The German Luftwaffe began its Blitz bombing campaign against London during World War II.
- **1942** - Australian and American forces inflict a significant defeat upon the Japanese at the Battle of Milne Bay.
- **1977** - Rifleman J.M. Maquinda from 32 Battalion died from a gunshot wound, accidentally self-inflicted while on operations in Southern Angola. He was 30.
- **1978** - Major Lukas Gerhardus Grundling from 1 Parachute Battalion accidentally drowned at Wepener during a parachute jump with full kit. He was 29.
- **1986** - Private Shaun Anthony Sprowson from 16 Maintenance Unit was killed when his SAMAC Horse and Trailer overturned on the Rundu to Bagani Road. He was 20.
- **1987** - An intricate prisoner exchange takes place in Maputo, involving 133 Angolan soldiers, anti-apartheid activists, Klaas de Jonge, a

Dutch anthropologist, Pierre Andre Albertini, a French university lecturer and Major Wynand du Toit, a South African officer captured in Angola two years before that.

- **1988** - Constable [Hermanus Cornelius Johannes Du Plessis from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division \(Koevoet\) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.](#)
- **1992** - Rifleman [Johannes Lodewyk Bouwer Lourens from 4 SAI was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at White River. He was 18.](#)
- **1994** - The U.S. Army closed its headquarters in Berlin, ending the American military presence in the once-divided city after nearly half a century.

8 September

- **1886** - Siegfried Sassoon was born on this day. Decorated for bravery on the Western Front, he became one of the leading poets of the First World War.
- **1900** - General Buller, with 12,000 men and forty-eight guns, attack General Botha's position at Paardeplaats, near Lydenburg and Botha, with his force of 2,000 men, evacuates his position.
- **1914** - General Louis Botha announces the South African government's decision to carry the war into German

South West Africa.

- **1941** - The German Army began its blockade of Leningrad, lasting until January 1944, resulting in the deaths of almost one million Russian civilians.
- **1943** - The United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) carried out a bombing raid against the Italian town of Frascati. The raids targeted the German General Headquarters for the Mediterranean zone (O.B.S.) and the Italian headquarters near the town.
- **1943** - General Dwight Eisenhower publicly declared the surrender of Italy to Allies in the year 1943. The Italian government agreed to suspend all conflicts with the Allies.
- **1944** - London was attacked with a V2 ('Vergeltungswaffen', or 'retaliatory weapon') rocket for the first time on this day in 1944. The attack created a crater of 10 m, took three lives and injured 22 people.
- **1945** - United States troops arrive to partition the southern part of Korea in response to Soviet troops occupying the northern part of the peninsula a month earlier.
- **1951** - Jürgen Stroop, SS General during World War II and commander of Nazi forces during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, executed by hanging for crimes against humanity at age 56.
- **1967** - It is officially disclosed that South African

police are in Rhodesia actively helping in the fight against Nationalist guerrillas. This follows an attempt by several hundred guerrillas to invade South and South West Africa, from Zambia, at the urging of the Liberation Committee of the OAU in Kampala in July 1967.

- **1975** - USAF Tech Sergeant Leonard Matlovich, a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, appears in his Air Force uniform on the cover of Time magazine with the headline "I Am a Homosexual". He is later given a general discharge.
- **1977** - Candidate Officer [Leon Loubser Jones from 4 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard flew into rising ground while he was carrying out a low level flight near Pretoria. He was 20.](#)

9 September

- **1943** - The invasion of Salerno began during World War II in Europe as Allied forces under General Mark Clark made amphibious landings along the western coast of Italy near Naples. Initial gains by the Allies met strong resistance from German forces.
- **1948** - Following the withdrawal of Soviet forces from North Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was proclaimed with Pyongyang as its capital.
- **1971** - [2nd Lieutenant Peter Schalk van der Merwe from](#)

[4 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 19.](#)

- **1976** - Rifleman [Christiaan Hendrik Pauley from the 1st Battalion Botha Regiment died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained in a shooting incident. He was 17.](#)
- **1976** - Longtime leader of Communist China, Chairman Mao Zedong, died. As a Chinese revolutionary soldier and statesman, he had proclaimed the People's Republic of China in 1949 in Beijing.
- **1984** - Major [Erasmus Johannes Louw from 8 SAI was killed instantly when a fellow Officer accidentally shot him in the back of the head with a 1 000ft rocket parachute flare during a training exercise at Riemvasmaak outside Upington. He was 29.](#)
- **1990** - Rifleman [Derio Arndse from the 2nd Battalion South African Cape Corps was critically injured in a military vehicle accident on 07 September 1990 and succumbed to his injuries in hospital on 09 September 1990. He was 26.](#)

10 September

- **1802** - Frans Bresler, landdroos of Graaff-Reinet, confers with Lieutenant-Governor Francis Dundas in Algoa Bay on the withdrawal of British troops from the eastern frontier of SA.
- **1813** - At the Battle of Lake

Erie U.S. Naval Captain Oliver Hazard Perry defeats a British flotilla.

- **1900** - Representatives of the ZAR and the Free State governments meet in Nelspruit and decide to allow President Kruger to go to Europe (initially for a period of six months), to prevent the possibility of his falling into British hands and to plead the Republican cause in Europe.
- **1901** - The youngest Boer commandant, 19 year old Commandant Piet van der Merwe and twenty-three burghers are killed in action at Driefontein, Cape Colony, when attacked by about 700 troops under Colonel Crabbe. Only three burghers escape.
- **1914** - The SA parliament decides with 91 votes against twelve to enter into WW1.
- **1919** - Following the defeat of Germany in World War I, the victorious Allies signed the Treaty of Saint-Germain ceding parts of pre-war German-Austria to Italy and Czechoslovakia. Austria was also forbidden to unite with Germany.
- **1943** - Hitler's troops occupied Rome and took over the protection of Vatican City.
- **1967** - Speaking at a special news conference the Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith, welcomes the partic-

ipation of the South African Police in Rhodesian anti-terrorist operations.

- **1974** - The South African Minister of Defence states that South Africa will provide bases and communication facilities to the maritime forces of Western nations interested in the defence of the Cape route.
- **1979** - Rifleman [Albertus Gottlieb from 101 Battalion SWATF was killed in a military vehicle accident in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.](#)
- **1985** - Major [Johan Petrus Uys from the Bothaville Commando was killed in a military vehicle accident at the intersection of the Bothaville and Wesselsbron Road. He was 51.](#)
- **1987** - Special Sergeant [Simeon Shikulo 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 28.](#)



Ian Smith

- **2004** - Mercenary leader Simon Mann is sentenced to seven years in jail by a Zimbabwean court on weapons charges. This was for planning a coup d'état in Equatorial Guinea.

11 September

- **1813** - British troops arrive in Mount Vernon and prepare to march to and invade Washington D.C.
- **1814** - The climax of the Battle of Plattsburgh, a major United States victory in the war which ended Britain's final invasion of the northern states.
- **1840** - British bombard Beirut to force Mehmet Ali, pasha of Egypt, to submit.
- **1900** - Martial law is declared in the Transvaal.
- **1919** - U.S. Marines invade Honduras.
- **1941** - Franklin D. Roosevelt orders any Axis ship found in American waters be shot on sight.
- **1944** - The first Allied troops of the U.S. Army cross the western border of Germany.
- **1956** - Billy Bishop VC, CB, DSO & Bar, MC, DFC, ED, Canadian World War I flying ace, dies aged 62.
- **1965** - The 1st Cavalry Division of the United States Army arrives in Vietnam.
- **1974** - Warrant Officer Class II Olaf Volmer Jensen from 2 SAI Died of Wounds at the hospital at Walvis Bay after sustaining multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental hand grenade explosion. He

was 44.

- **1977** - Rifleman Rodriques Pedro from 32 Battalion was accidentally killed in an anti-personnel landmine explosion while assisting to lay a minefield during an operation in Southern Angola. He was 32.
- **1977** - Corporal Albertus Petrus van Zyl from the Tygerberg Commando was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a landmine near Oshigambo. He was 31.
- **1983** - 2nd Lieutenant Deon De Villiers from 3 Medical Battalion Group was killed in a military vehicle accident in Bloemfontein. He was 26.
- **2001** - Thousands are killed after terrorists crashed hijacked airliners into the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. The effect was felt world wide, also in SA, where i.e. flights to the USA were suspended, security measures at airports tightened, and the economy affected adversely.

12 September

- **1861** - The First Battle of Lexington was fought during the American Civil War between the Union Army and the pro-Confederate Missouri State Guard. The battle was fought from September 12 to September 20, 1861 and is also known as the Siege of Lexington. The

pro-Confederate Missouri State Guard emerged victorious in the battle.

- **1918** - American Expeditionary Forces under the command of General Pershing launched the U. S's major offensive in Europe as an independent army. The attack occurred at the Saint-Mihiel salient in France. This was a strategic location that was occupied by the Germans who blocked rail traffic between Paris and eastern sections of the front. The American offensive forced the German army decided to abandon the salient.
- **1931** - Andries J. Bester (81), Boer commandant during Second Anglo-Boer War, dies in Paul Roux, OFS.
- **1940** - Italian forces begin an offensive into Egypt from Libya.
- **1942** - RMS Laconia, a British troopship, was carrying civilians, Polish soldiers and Italian POWs to Britain via West African coast when a German U-boat U-156 torpedoed the ship. Operating partly under the dictates of the old prize rules, the U-boat commander immediately commenced rescue operations, broadcasting their humanitarian intent to all Allied forces in the area, and was joined by all U-boats in the vicinity. American bombers deliberately bombed U-156 and the rescue mission proved disastrous to both the survivors and the Germans. This event

forced the German navy to forbid such acts of kindness to get an upper edge in the war.

- **1943** - Former Italian Dictator Benito Mussolini was rescued by German paratroopers on orders from Adolf Hitler. Mussolini was being held prisoner by Italian authorities following the collapse of his Fascist regime.
- **1944** - U.S. Army troops enter Germany for the first time.
- **1960** - The Central African Republics, Ghana and Guinea threaten to withdraw their troops from a security force unless the United Nations gives up its control of Leopoldville radio and the Congo's airports.
- **1966** - Minister of Defence P.W. Botha announces in Cape Town that the posts of Secretary for Defence and Commandant-General of the Defence Force are to be combined under one head.
- **1968** - Warrant Officer Class I Pieter Francois Pienaar for the South African Corps of Signals was killed when his military vehicle overturned 11 miles from Colesburg on the Naauwpoort Road.. He was 37.
- **1969** - Rifleman Cornelius Gregorius Labuschagne from 4 SAI was accidentally killed after he suffocated as a result of gas at the Klerksdorp Provincial Hospital. He was 18.
- **1971** - Rifleman Trevor

Cowie from 6 SAI was killed in a private vehicle accident while returning to the unit after a weekend pass. The accident occurred at Howsens Poort, South of Grahamstown. He was 18.

- **1974** - Military officers depose Emperor Haile Selassie from the Ethiopian throne he had occupied for more than fifty years.
- **1978** - Candidate Officer Lancelot Emberger from Central Flying School, Dunnottar was killed when his AT-6 Harvard failed to recover from a spin and crashed near Delmas. He was 22.
- **1979** - Rifleman Johannes Conga HC from "C" Company, 31 Battalion (201 Battalion) was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Zambia. During this action, he deliberately drew enemy fire upon himself in order to save the life of his Officer, Lieutenant Coetzee. Rifleman Conga was posthumously awarded the Honoris Crux Decoration for his unselfish act of self-sacrifice. He was 25.
- **1980** - Corporal Jose Francisco from 32 Battalion was critically wounded by cannon fire from an Alouette Gunship during a contact with a numerically superior enemy force in Southern Angola. He was evacuated to Grootfontein Hospital

where he unfortunately succumbed to his wounds later in the day. He was 29.

- **1980** - Lieutenant Vincent Peter Lautenslager from 8 Squadron was Reported Missing on 12 September 1980 when his Atlas MB326K Impala Mk II flew into the ground near Xangongo while providing close air support to Army Ground Forces in Southern Angola. The subsequent Board of Enquiry found no evidence of hostile enemy action. He has no known grave. He was 23.
- **1980** - The Turkish army under the leadership of General Evren carried out a coup. Before the coup, the country was in a chaos and was without an elected president. The coup was generally welcomed by the public because it brought order to the nation.
- **1982** - Sergeant William Paul Courtney from 4 Reconnaissance Regiment died as a result of injuries sustained in a private motorcycle accident in Central Durban. He was 24.



Benito Mussolini

- **1982** - Corporal Christiaan Benjamin Ehlers from the Air Force Gymnasium was killed in a private motorcycle accident. He was 22.
- **1983** - Rifleman Michael Anthony Costello from 7 SAI was accidentally killed during a fire and movement exercise. He was 20.
- **1983** - Rifleman Johannes August van der Westhuizen from the South African Cape Corps was killed after being struck by a bullet from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while at Bagani. He was 19.
- **1984** - Rifleman Pieter Taljaard from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned. He was 19.
- **1985** - Major Johannes Andries van der Vyver from 32 Battalion was decapitated by aircraft propeller and died instantly. He was 31.
- **1985** - Private Ricky Grant Whitaker from 5 Maintenance Unit died after being accidentally blasted in the face with a fire extinguisher at Ondangwa. He was 18.
- **1987** - Rifleman Fanie de Bruin from the South African Cape Corps was killed when his Buffel vehicle overturned during a contact and subsequent hot pursuit operation against SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 21.
- **1987** - Lance Corporal Stephen Lesley Roman from the South African Cape

Corps was killed in a motor vehicle accident in Mamelodi, North of Pretoria. He was 21.

- **1990** - Lieutenant Edward Diggle from 42 Squadron was killed when his Aer-macchi AM-3C Bosbok crashed at Potchefstroom. He was 20.

- **1990** - A treaty was signed by East and West Germany and the Allies of World War II allowing for the restoration of sovereignty to a re-unified Germany.

13 September

- **1759** - James Wolfe, British Army officer who defeated the French in Canada and captured Quebec, dies in battle at the age of 32.
- **1847** - During the American–Mexican War, U.S. forces under General Winfield Scott capture Mexico City effectively ending the war.
- **1851** - American Army physician Walter Reed (1851-1902) was born in Gloucester County, Virginia. Best known for his Yellow Fever research, he served as an army surgeon for more than 20 years. The U.S. Army's general hospital in Washington, D.C., is named in his honour.
- **1860** - Army General John J. Pershing (1860-1948) was born in Laclede, Missouri. He commanded the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) during World War I and oversaw the Meuse-Ar-

gonne operation that helped bring about the Armistice of November 11, 1918.

- **1862** - Union soldiers find a copy of Robert E. Lee's battle plans in a field outside Frederick, Maryland. It is the prelude to the Battle of Antietam.
- **1882** - During the Egyptian Rebellion, British forces under Wolseley rout the Egyptians at Tel-el-Kebir and proceed to occupy Egypt and the Sudan.
- **1889** - Lieutenant-Colonel R.G. Kekewich arrives in Kimberley to assess the military situation and to advise the new General Officer Commanding British Troops in South Africa, Lieutenant-General F.W.E.F. Forestier-Walker, on the defence of the town.
- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War Lord Roberts issues a proclamation calling on the Republican forces still in the field to surrender.
- **1914** - General Jan C.G. Kemp resigns as officer in the SA army because of the war policy of the Botha government and joins the Rebellion force.
- **1940** - Italy invades Egypt.
- **1946** - Amon Göth, Austrian SS commandant of the Płaszów concentration camp, is executed by hanging at the age of 37.
- **1951** - During the Korean War the 32 day Battle of Heart Break Ridge begins.
- **1964** - Egypt and Saudi Ara-

bia announce agreement of peaceful settlement of two-year-old Yemeni civil war.

- **1970** - Six members from 5 SAI and one member from 3 SAI were killed while being transported in a Gladiator Troop Carrier back to Ladysmith Army Camp. The casualties were: Rifleman Hilton Dudley Coker (19). Rifleman John Grinyer (20). Rifleman Peter Alfons Ernst Leonhardt (19). Rifleman Kevin Eric Mack (18). Rifleman Richard Neville Marriott (17). Rifleman Gregory George Olyott (18). Rifleman Mark Felice Valero (18).
- **1976** - Rifleman Christiaan Frederik Ehlers from 11 Commando Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents approximately 9km from Eenhana. He was 19.
- **1977** - Lance Corporal Paul Onre Dossena from the Natal Mounted Rifles was Killed in Action when his Bosvark vehicle detonated a boosted a Yugoslavian TMA-3 Cheese Mine while travelling to Nkongo. He was 19.
- **1985** - Chief Petty Officer Colin George Clement from Naval Base Simonstown collapsed after apparently suffering a heart attack while he was at the Catering School. He died later in 2 Military Hospital. He was 42.
- **1985** - Rifleman M.H.

Mutirua from 102 Battalion SWATF accidentally drowned during a river crossing while his patrol was carrying out a follow-up Operation against SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 22.

- **1987** - Six members of 32 Battalion were Killed in Action in a single incident during Ops Modular in Southern Angola. The Casualties were: Captain Alfred Desmond McCallum (28). 2nd Lieutenant José Raimundo Alves (20). Lance Corporal Matthys Michael De Klerk (20). Trooper Marthinus Johannes Kuyler (20). Lance Corporal Joao Rodrigues Mananza (33). Lance Corporal Waite Tchipango (31).
- **1988** - Gunner Andre Meiring from 4 Artillery Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident at the Army Battle School at Lohatla. He was 19.
- **1990** - Private Warren Ralph Beech from 1 Military Town Management Fire Department was accidentally killed when he fell from a fire tower at Voortrekkerhoogte during fire practice drills when his harness safety shackle failed. He was 19.
- **1991** - Rifleman Amos van Wyk from the South African Cape Corps died in Grey's Hospital after being critically injured when the Samil 20

vehicle he was driving overturned near Richmond. He was 17.

14 September

- **1795** - British troops march from Simonstown and General J.H. Craig enters Cape Town. Sluysken formally surrenders on 16 September.
- **1812** - Napoleon and his troops first entered Moscow as the retreating Russians set the city on fire. Napoleon found it was impossible to stay through the winter in the ruined city. He then began a retreat from Moscow which became one of the great disasters of military history. Fewer than 20,000 of the original 500,000 men with him survived the Russian campaign.
- **1852** - Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington and British Prime Minister (1828-30) dies at 83.
- **1886** - Erich Hoepner, World War II German general and early proponent of mecha-



John J. Pershing

nisation and armoured warfare, was born on this day.

- **1901** - Andrey Andreyevich Vlasov, World War II Russian Red Army general, was born on this day.
- **1914** - The first ships with South African soldiers on board leave for the ports of German South West Africa to invade the territory.
- **1942** - A plan designed to fight Italian forces, Operation 'Agreement' is executed in Libya.
- **1980** - Rifleman Robert Edward Buchholtz from 4 SAI was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in East London while on a weekend pass. He was 20.
- **1985** - Sergeant Peter Henry Anthony from 8 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Etale Base. He was 25.
- **1985** - T/Leading Marine Simon Games Auld from 1 Marine Brigade was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Port Elizabeth. He was 19.
- **1988** - Sapper Andre' Stephan Lategan from 5 Military Works Unit was accidentally killed on the Dwaalboom Road near Thabazimbi while loading a road grader. He went under the trailer to insert the retaining pin but the pin snapped causing both the trailer and grader to fall on him, killing him instantly. He was 21.
- **1992** - Seaman Goodman Mthunzi Maphumulo from Naval Station SAS Jalsena

accidentally drowned during a military training exercise at the Midmar Dam while he was undergoing Basic Military Training. He was 22.

- **1993** - Lance Corporal Pieter Joachim Smith died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while at Broederstroom. He was 22.
- **2002** - The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a Christian fundamentalist rebel group trying to overthrow the Ugandan government since 1987, stages a series of attacks in which four people are killed and forty-one abducted.
- **2003** - President Kumba Yalla of Guinea-Bissau is toppled in a military coup.
- **2004** - The South African Air Force's newest addition, the Gripen fighter jet, takes its first flight around Cape Town, causing an ear-piercing sonic boom.

15 September

- **1776** - British forces under General William Howe captured New York during the American Revolution.
- **1882** - British forces occupy Cairo.
- **1901** - Fifteen members of the notorious special British unit called the Bushveld Carbineers send a petition to Colonel Hall of the Royal Artillery, requesting a full and impartial inquiry into the alleged atrocities perpetrated by members of their unit.
- **1914** - Boer leader General

Koos de la Rey, en route to Potchefstroom with general Beyers, is shot dead when his chauffeur-driven car fails to stop at a roadblock near Langlaagte, Johannesburg. (The roadblock had been erected to forestall William Foster of the Foster Gang, who shot dead a policeman during the day.)

- **1916** - Tanks were first used in combat, during the Allied offensive at the Battle of the Somme, in World War I.
- **1940** - The height of the Battle of Britain occurred as massive German air raids took place against London, Southampton, Bristol, Cardiff, Liverpool and Manchester. The British claimed 185 German planes were shot down.
- **1942** - U.S. Navy aircraft carrier USS Wasp is torpedoed at Guadalcanal.
- **1950** - UN forces land at Inchon in South Korea during the Korean War.
- **1962** - The Soviet ship Poltava heads toward Cuba, one of the events that sets into motion the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- **1967** - Egyptian commander in Six-Day War with Israel, Field Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer, commits suicide.
- **1978** - France returns the deposit paid by South Africa for two corvettes and two submarines.
- **1982** - Warrant Officer Class II Pieter Ryno Johannes Swart from the Maritime Operations Centre died after

suffering a fatal heart attack during a fitness walk. He was 52.

- **1984** - Rifleman Otto Bismarck Harms was accidentally killed at the Germiston railway station when he was struck by a moving train. He was 19.
- **1985** - Corporal Bruce Andrew Fidler HC (Posthumous) was an Ops Medic from 7 Medical Battalion Group operating with Special Forces that were providing operational support to Paratroopers and other SADF and UNITA Forces in Southern Angola during Operation Magneto. He was Reported Missing on 14 September 1985 when two vehicles were ambushed by approximately 40 enemy troops. Most of the UNITA soldiers were killed and the two Artillery Officers and Medical Orderly (Bruce) who were in the second vehicle were wounded. The two Officers successfully evaded but Bruce was captured. He was brutally tortured and interrogated by the enemy before being executed but he never once revealed the Order of Battle for an upcoming operation in support of UNITA, or the SADF Artillery positions or the location of the SAMS Surgical Team thereby enabling them to successfully evade capture and reach South African lines. His remains were repatriated back to South Africa in June 1992

and cremated on 15 September 1992. He was posthumously awarded the Honoris Crux for bravery and selfless devotion above and beyond the call of duty in the face of brutal torture. He was 21.

- **1988** - Lance Corporal Brian Collin Deyes from Air Force Headquarters was killed instantly when his private motor vehicle was involved in an accident in Potgieter Street and overturned. He was 20.
- **1997** - An Egyptian military court convicts seventy-two Islamic militants of subversion and sentences four of them to death.

16 September

- **1776** - The Battle of Harlem Heights is fought during the American Revolutionary War.
- **1891** - German admiral and politician Karl Dönitz was born on this day.
- **1910** - SS Colonel Erich Kempka, who served as Adolf Hitler's primary chauffeur from 1934 to April 1945, was born on this day.
- **1914** - The Siege of Przemyśl (present-day Poland) begins during World War I.
- **1940** - Italian troops conquer Sidi Barrani.
- **1943** - The German Tenth Army reports that it can no longer contain the Allied

bridgehead around Salerno.

- **1945** - The surrender of the Japanese troops in Hong Kong is accepted by Royal Navy Admiral Sir Cecil Harcourt.
- **1955** - The military coup to unseat President Juan Perón of Argentina is launched at midnight.
- **1955** - A Soviet Navy Zulu-class submarine becomes the first to launch a ballistic missile.
- **1970** - King Hussein of Jordan declares military rule following the hijacking of four civilian airliners by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). This results in the formation of the Black September Palestinian paramilitary unit.
- **1975** - The first prototype of the Mikoyan MiG-31 interceptor makes its maiden flight.
- **1978** - Rifleman Gregory James Engledoe from the South African Cape Corps was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He



Juan Peron

was 18.

- **1982** - Rifleman Gabriel Johannes Schwartz from Infantry School was killed in a military vehicle accident at Otjiwarongo. He was 21.
- **1982** - Beginning of a two day massacre in Palestinian refugee camps in West Beirut as Christian militiamen (the Phalangists) entered Sabra and Shatila and began shooting hundreds of Palestinians, including elderly men, women and children.
- **1983** - Three members from 102 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action during a contact with a large group of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line. The casualties were: Rifleman K Kavari (19). Rifleman J Tinda. (18). Rifleman K Kavari (18).
- **1985** - Lance Corporal Glen Stuart Ruthven from 3 Medical Battalion Group was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Maitland. He was 28.
- **1985** - Gunner Alec Ridgard from 10 Artillery Brigade was critically injured in a private motorcycle accident on 14 June 1985 at Westonaria. He was admitted to the H.F. Verwoerd Hospital in Pretoria where he succumbed to his injuries on 16 September 1985. He was 19.
- **1987** - Rifleman Pieter Andreas Visagie from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was

23.

- **1988** - Rifleman Sean Cochrane Ellis from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident between Ogongo and Okalongo. He was 21.
- **1991** - Two members from the SADF Dog Training Centre died from the effects of smoke inhalation at Bourkes Luck while assisting to extinguish a raging veld fire. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Adrian Marcel Juskiewicz (18). Lance Corporal Michael Swanepoel (19).
- **1999** - Lieutenant Sibusiso Madubela of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) went on a murder rampage at 1 South African Infantry Battalion. He opened fire with an R4 Automatic Assault Rifle, killing seven serving SANDF members including one female civilian worker in the employ of the SANDF and wounding another twelve were wounded, one critically. His murder spree came to an abrupt end when he was intercepted and shot dead.
- **2007** - Mercenaries working for Blackwater Worldwide shoot and kill 17 Iraqis in Nisour Square, Baghdad.
- **2014** - The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant launches its Kobani offensive against Syrian-Kurdish forces.

17 September

- **1862** - The bloodiest day in U.S. military history oc-

curred as General Robert E. Lee and the Confederate armies were stopped at Antietam in Maryland by General George B. McClellan and numerically superior Union forces. By nightfall 26,000 men were dead, wounded, or missing.

- **1894** - Battle of the Yalu River, the largest naval engagement of the First Sino-Japanese War.
- **1901** - Commandant-General Louis Botha and General Cheere Emmett join forces to invade Natal.
- **1901** - A Boer column defeats a British force at the Battle of Blood River Poort.
- **1901** - Boers capture a squadron of the 17th Lancers at the Battle of Elands River.
- **1916** - Manfred von Richthofen ("The Red Baron"), a flying ace of the German *Luftstreitkräfte*, wins his first aerial combat near Cambrai, France.
- **1939** - Soviet Russians invaded Eastern Poland, meeting little resistance and taking over 200,000 Poles prisoner. This was done in accordance with the Nazi-Soviet Pact in which the Nazis and Soviets had predetermined how they would divide up Poland.
- **1939** - German submarine U-29 sinks the British aircraft carrier HMS Courageous.
- **1940** - Following Nazi Germany's defeat in the Battle of Britain, Hitler postpones Operation Sea Lion indefi-

nately.

- **1941** - Soviet forces enter Tehran marking the end of the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran.
- **1944** - Allied Airborne troops parachute into the Netherlands as the "Market" half of Operation Market Garden.
- **1944** - German forces are attacked by the Allies in the Battle of San Marino.
- **1962** - Warrant Officer Class 1 Johannes Jacobus Squier Heunis from 91 Ammunition Depot collapsed and died after suffering a fatal heart attack while in Pretoria. He was 45.
- **1963** - Adolph Gysbert (Sailor) Malan, SA fighter pilot during WWII and later national president of the Torch Commando, dies in Kimberley.
- **1965** - The Battle of Chawinda is fought between Pakistan and India.
- **1980** - Rifleman Adriaan Christoffel Ackerman from 7 SAI was accidentally shot dead by a fellow member while stationed at Nkongo Base. He was 20.
- **1981** - Rifleman Gerhardus Johan Myburgh from 1 SAI died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while at Omuthiya. He was 19.
- **1981** - Trooper Diederick Arnoldus Steyn from 2 Special Service Battalion was critically injured in a military vehicle accident on 7 September 1981 and succumbed to his injuries on 1

Military Hospital on 17 September 1981. He was 19.

- **1982** - Corporal Luther Johannes Botha from the Northern Transvaal Provost Unit was killed in private motor cycle accident in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. He was 23.
- **1984** - Corporal C Paulo from 32 Battalion was accidentally smothered and suffocated during a training exercise. He was 28.
- **1987** - Sergeant Rudolf Morris from the South African Cape Corps died from a stab wound received during an altercation with a fellow soldier while at the Touwsriver Training Area. He was 29.
- **1991** - Rifleman Louis Johann Swart from the Dog Training Centre died from the effects of smoke inhalation while assisting to extinguish a veld fire at Bourkes Luck. He was 19.

18 September

- **1759** - During the Seven Years' War, the British capture Quebec City.
- **1898** - War is barely averted when a British expedition to establish a route through Africa reaches an obscure Sudanese fort and finds the French already there.
- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War Brigadier-General Stephenson occu-

pies Nelspruit without opposition and Lord Roberts transfers his headquarters there.

- **1914** - A body of Active Citizen Force (A.C.F.) troops of the Union of SA, nearly 1 800 strong, lands at Lüderitz Bay (Angra Pequena) in South West Africa and advance some distance into the desert.
- **1931** - The Mukden Incident gives Japan a pretext to invade and occupy Manchuria.
- **1939** - Lord Haw-Haw (William Joyce) begins transmitting pro-Nazi/anti-Allied propaganda.
- **1940** - The British liner SS City of Benares is sunk by German submarine U-48; those killed include 77 child refugees.
- **1943** - The Jews of Minsk are massacred at Sobibór.
- **1943** - Adolf Hitler orders the deportation of Danish Jews.

Sailor Malan



- **1944** - The British submarine HMS Tradewind torpedoes the Japanese ship Jun'yō Maru, 5,600 killed.
- **1945** - General Douglas MacArthur moves his command headquarters to Tokyo.
- **1947** - The U.S. Air Force was established as a separate military service.
- **1948** - Operation Polo is terminated after the Indian Army accepts the surrender of the army of Osman Ali Khan, Asaf Jah VII, Nizam of Hyderabad.
- **1961** - Dag Hammarskjöld, United Nations (UN) Secretary General, dies when his plane crashes under mysterious circumstances near Ndola in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia).
- **1964** - North Vietnamese Army begins infiltration of South Vietnam.
- **1969** - Rifleman Collin Arthur Williams from 4 SAI died from lung complications after participating in an unauthorised gas exercise held at the training grounds in Doornkop. He was 18.
- **1970** - Private Abraham Jacobus Goosen from 1 Air Depot was accidentally killed in a crane accident at Voortrekkerhoogte. He was 17.
- **1971** - Egypt and Israel exchange rocket fire across Suez Canal.
- **1973** - Rifleman Terence Arthur Langley from 3 SAI died from a gunshot wound, accidentally self-inflicted while he was stationed at
- **1979** - Corporal Andries Petrus Hanneman from Northern Transvaal Command was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Potgietersrus. He was 19.
- **1981** - Rifleman Petrus Jacobus van Staden from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor cycle accident on the Bloemfontein to Winburg Road. He was 18.
- **1981** - Corporal Johannes Jacobus van Staden from the Transvaal Scottish died in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 23.
- **1986** - Airman Hendrik Frensch van Zyl from the Air Force Base Hoedspruit Fire Section was found murdered by persons unknown at Linbro Park, Johannesburg near the Alexandra Township with a knife wound to the neck. He was 20.
- **1988** - 2nd Lieutenant Petrus Gerhardus Lourens Koen from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was critically injured on 16 September 1988 when his Ratel overturned while traveling between Ogongo and Okalongo in Northern Owamboland. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he succumbed to his injuries on 18 September 1988. He was 19.
- **1997** - Muslim extremists fire on a bus outside a museum in Cairo, killing ten people, mostly German tourists.
- **1998** - End of pro-democracy uprisings in Myanmar

Rundu. He was 18.

- after a bloody military coup by the State Law and Order Restoration Council. Thousands, mostly monks and civilians (primarily students), are killed by the Tatmadaw.
- **1991** - Yugoslavia begins a naval blockade of seven Adriatic port cities.
- **1997** - Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is adopted.
- **2015** - Two security personnel, 17 worshippers in a mosque, and 13 militants are killed following a Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan attack on a Pakistan Air Force base on the outskirts of Peshawar.
- **2016** - Seventeen Indian Army security personnel killed in the Indian Administered Kashmir by anti-government militants.

19 September

- **1676** - Jamestown is burned to the ground by the forces of Nathaniel Bacon during Bacon's Rebellion.
- **1863** - The first day of the Battle of Chickamauga, in northwestern Georgia, the bloodiest two-day battle of the conflict, and the only significant Confederate victory in the war's Western Theater.
- **1870** - Having invaded the Papal States a week earlier, the Italian Army lays siege to Rome, entering the city the next day, after which the Pope described himself as a Prisoner in the Vatican.
- **1916** - During the East African Campaign of World War I, colonial armed forces of

- the Belgian Congo (Force Publique) under the command of General Charles Tombeur captured the town of Tabora after heavy fighting.
- **1918** - Two infantry battalions of Cape Corps capture Square Hill in Palestine.
- **1939** - The Battle of Kępa Oksywska concludes, with Polish losses reaching roughly 14% of all the forces engaged.
- **1944** - Armistice between Finland and Soviet Union is signed, marking the end of the Continuation War.
- **1957** - First American underground nuclear bomb test (part of Operation Plumbob).
- **1978** - Rifleman John James Hearn Cloete from the Rand Light Infantry was accidentally killed in a mortar bomb explosion at the Swartland Training Area near Rundu. He was 23.
- **1983** - Special Constable U. Ndiaombe 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 31.
- **1984** - Rifleman David Schalk van der Merwe from 1 SAI died from a gunshot wound sustained as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while at the De Brug Training Area. He was 18.
- **1994** - U.S. troops invaded

- Haiti, with the stated goal of restoring democracy.
- **2003** - UN Security Council agrees to send 15,000 peace-keeping troops to Liberia.
- **2006** - The Thai military stages a coup in Bangkok. The Constitution is revoked and martial law is declared.

20 September

- **1834** - The troopship Charlotte is wrecked in Algoa Bay and ninety-seven people drown.
- **1857** - The Indian Rebellion of 1857 ends with the recapture of Delhi by troops loyal to the East India Company.
- **1915** - A new battalion consisting of Cape Coloured men, called the Cape Corps, is established with the view of being dispatched to East Africa in 1916.
- **1941** - The Holocaust in Lithuania: Four hundred three Jews (128 men, 176 women and 99 children) were murdered by *Einsatzkommando* 3 and the local police in Nemenčinė.
- **1942** - The Holocaust in Ukraine: In the course of two days a German *einsatzgruppen* murders at least 3,000 Jews in Letychiv.
- **1965** - Following the Battle of Burki, the Indian Army captures Dograi in course of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965.
- **1967** - Israeli tank shelling sinks three Egyptian troop-

- carrying boats in the Suez Canal. Israel claims the ships violated the Egyptian-Israeli agreement banning small craft navigation in the waterway.
- **1979** - Emperor Bokassa I is overthrown in a bloodless coup in the Central African Republic.
- **1979** - Rifleman S. Shangweni from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1981** - Two members from 4 SAI were Killed in Action in Southern Angola when their Buffel troop carrier with 11 troops on board, detonated a landmine. The casualties were: Rifleman Roderick James Leonard MacIntosh (18). Rifleman Edward Daniel van Rooyen (19).
- **1987** - Rifleman (Gunner) William George Beukman from 4 SAI was killed in action. He was 19.



Douglas MacArthur

- **1993** - Erich 'Bubi' Hartmann, World War II Luftwaffe fighter pilot, dies on this day at the age of 71. Hartmann was the leading fighter ace of World War II with 352 credited kills.
- **2011** - The United States military ends its "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, allowing gay men and women to serve openly for the first time.

21 September

- **1780** - During the American Revolutionary War, Benedict Arnold gives the British the plans to West Point.
- **1896** - British force under Horatio Kitchener takes Dongola in the Sudan.
- **1899** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War, Hong Kong offers military assistance to Great Britain.
- **1942** - The Holocaust in Ukraine: On the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, Nazis send over 1,000 Jews of Pidhatsi to Belzec extermination camp.
- **1942** - The Holocaust in Poland: At the end of Yom Kippur, Germans order Jews to permanently evacuate Konstantynów and move to the ghetto in Biala Podlaska, established to assemble Jews from seven nearby towns, including Janów Podlaski, Rossosz and Terespol.
- **1942** - The Boeing B-29 Superfortress makes its maiden flight.
- **1953** - Lieutenant No Kum-sok, a North Korean pilot, defects to South Korea and

is associated with Operation Moolah.

- **1960** - United Nations deploys 4 000 troops to Katanga to prevent the massacre of Baluba tribesmen by provincial troops and police in Congo.
- **1964** - The North American XB-70 Valkyrie, the world's first Mach 3 bomber, makes its maiden flight from Palm-dale, California.
- **1966** - Able Seaman Phillipus Johannes Havenga from SAS Simonsberg was killed in a diving training accident in False Bay. He was 20.
- **1971** - Candidate Officer Hendrik Oswald Meyer Odendaal from Flying Training School Langebaanweg was killed when his Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I crashed in the Kouebokke Mountains near Citrusdal while carrying out a solo night Navigation exercise. He was 20.
- **1978** - Rifleman Johanne Cornelius Du Plessis from 11 Commando Regiment was critically wounded in a shooting incident at Etale Base. He later succumbed to his wounds in 1 Military Hospital. He was 21.
- **1978** - Sergeant Hendrik Gerhardus van der Merwe from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment attached to "D" Squadron Rhodesian Special Air Service was Killed in Action when he was hit in the throat by enemy rifle fire while participating in an attack on a ZANLA Base

in the Chimoio area of Mocimboa do Limpopo during Operation Snoop. He was 23.

- **1982** - Rifleman Dumba Catumbele from 201 Battalion SWATF was killed in an accidental explosion in an ammunition bunker at Omega. He was 23.
- **1988** - Rifleman Douw Cornet from 7 SAI attached to 202 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Mashari. He was 19.
- **1989** - Rifleman Rivers Ammon Sibuyi from the Kruger National Park Commando was killed after being attacked by a lion while on foot patrol in the Northern section of the Kruger National Park. He was 31.
- **1990** - Charles Taylor, leader of a Liberian rebel faction, announces a unilateral cease-fire set to take effect the next day.
- **2004** - Major Catherine Labuschagne (25) makes history when she becomes the first woman fighter pilot in the world to fly a Gripen fighter jet during the opening of the African Aerospace and Defence Air Show at the Waterkloof Air Force base.
- **2013** - Al-Shabaab Islamic militants attack the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, killing at least 67 people.

22 September

- **1776** - During the American Revolution, Nathan Hale was executed without a trial

after he was caught spying on British troops on Long Island, his last words, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

- **1828** - Shaka, Zulu chief and founder of the Zulu empire, is murdered by his two half-brothers Dingane and Mhlangana. Dingane assumes the throne.
- **1882** - Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, who served as Chief of the Armed Forces High Command (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht or OKW) in Nazi Germany during World War II, was born on this day.
- **1900** - As result of a military notice on this date, the first two refugee camps are established at Pretoria and Bloemfontein, initially with the aim to protect the families of burghers who had surrendered voluntarily. As the families of combatant burghers were also driven into these and other camps, they ceased to be 'refugee' camps and became 'concentration' camps.
- **1900** - The British, under Colonel Settle, enter Schweizer-Reneke, in western Transvaal.
- **1914** - German submarine SM U-9 torpedoes and sinks the British cruisers HMS Aboukir, Hogue and Cressy on the Broad Fourteens off the Dutch coast with the loss of over 1,400 men.
- **1939** - Joint victory parade of Wehrmacht and Red Army in Brest-Litovsk at

the end of the Invasion of Poland.

- **1965** - The Indo-Pakistani War of 1965 (also known as the Second Kashmir War) between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, ends after the UN calls for a ceasefire.
- **1979** - Rifleman William Ledgeton Saunders from 3 SAI was shot dead by another soldier while on guard duty in a bunker at Eenhana. He was 18.
- **1980** - Iraq invades Iran.
- **1985** - Rifleman Hymie Diamond from 5 SAI was killed in a private motor vehicle accident, at Vryheid. He was 19.
- **1989** - Two members from 85 Combat Flying School were killed when their Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I crashed near Sabie during a routine training flight. The casualties were: Lieutenant Werner Bredenkamp (20). Lieutenant Deon Joubert (20).
- **1991** - 2nd Lieutenant Nathaniel Roesch from the Dog Training Centre died from the effects of smoke inhalation while assisting to extinguish a veld fire at Bourkes Luck. He was 19.
- **1998** - Eight members of the SANDF, six from 1 Parachute Battalion and two from 7 Medical Battalion Group, were killed in action by Lesotho Army Forces during Ops Bolesas.

23 September

- **1869** - General Christiaan Frederik Beyers, Boer general, is born in Stellenbosch.
- **1890** - Field Marshal Friedrich von Paulus (1890-1957) was born on this day. Von Paulus led the German 6th Army at Stalingrad.
- **1942** - The Matanikau action on Guadalcanal begins when U.S. Marines attack Japanese units along the Matanikau River.
- **1950** - During the Battle of Hill 282 in Koera, the first US friendly-fire incident on British military personnel since World War II occurs.
- **1979** - The world press speculates that a bright flash detected by an American satellite between SA and the Antarctic was caused by a South African nuclear bomb explosion.
- **1983** - Lieutenant Frans Willem Conradie from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K (Koevoet) was killed in a motor vehicle accident. He was 30.
- **1986** - A force of about



Catherine Labuschagne

fifty armed dissidents infiltrate the Togolese capital of Lome in an attempt to topple President Gnassingbe Eyadema's government. They are defeated by the military.

- **1990** - Lieutenant Sean James McGuinness from 42 Squadron was grievously burned when his Aermacchi AM-3C Bosbok crashed at Potchefstroom on 12 September 1990. He succumbed to his injuries in 1 Military Hospital on 23 September 1990. He was 23.

24 September

- **1645** - Battle of Rowton Heath, Parliamentary victory over a Royalist army commanded in person by King Charles.
- **1780** - Benedict Arnold flees to British Army lines when the arrest of British Major John André exposes Arnold's plot to surrender West Point.
- **1877** - Battle of Shiroyama, decisive victory of the Imperial Japanese Army over the Satsuma Rebellion.
- **1884** - German weapons designer and engineer Hugo Schmeisser was born on this day. One of the most popular German weapons during World War II was the MP-40 submachine gun. It was often erroneously called "Schmeisser" by the Allies, although Hugo Schmeisser was not involved in the design or production of the weapon.

- **1960** - USS Enterprise, the world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, is launched.
- **1964** - South African ordnance workshops have produced the first Belgian F.N. rifle, which is now ready to go into production.
- **1978** - Hasso von Manteuffel, the German general who commanded the 5th Panzer Army during World War II, died on this day at the age of 81.
- **1979** - Civilian rule is established in Ghana after the first military coup under Jerry Rawlings on 4 June, 1979.
- **1982** - Rifleman Don Andries Spence from Bravo Company, 1 Parachute Battalion was killed after being struck by a bullet from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle after a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1987** - Armed forces seize control of Transkei, ousting Prime Minister George Matanzima.
- **1997** - Following the slaying of hundreds of civilians in a series of incidents believed linked to upcoming elections and the long though sporadically fought civil war, the military wing of Algeria's principle Islamic opposition group calls for a truce and orders its guerrillas to 'stop combat operations'.

25 September

- **1900** - The British under Generals R. Pole-Carew and I.S.M. Hamilton occupy the deserted Komatipoort on the ZAR eastern border with Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). Burnt out railway cars form a train almost twelve kilometres long on the Selati line.
- **1901** - The attack on Fort Itala, occupied by the British, takes place with the British force retreating after fierce fighting and with heavy losses on both sides.
- **1901** - Captain R.D.C. Miers of the South African Constabulary is shot and killed under a flag of truce by Field-cornet Salmon van As, who is tried and executed nine months later.
- **1915** - World War I: The Second Battle of Champagne begins.
- **1944** - Surviving elements of the British 1st Airborne Division withdraw from Arnhem in the Netherlands, thus ending the Battle of Arnhem and Operation Market Garden.
- **1955** - The Royal Jordanian Air Force is founded.
- **1964** - The Mozambican War of Independence against Portugal begins.
- **1964** - Corporal Johannes David Kriel, an Air Photographer attached to 22 Flight (Later 22 Squadron) was Reported Missing when the helicopter he was flying in suffered engine failure and

crashed into Table Bay. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 25.

- **1981** - Rifleman Frederick Hikab from the South African Cape Corps, attached to Sector 30 Headquarters SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in the Etosha Game Reserve. He was 22.
- **1985** - Rifleman Anton Botha from Infantry School was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident between Mossel Bay and Oudtshoorn on 23 Sep 1985. He was transferred to the Tygerberg Hospital where he unfortunately succumbed to his injuries on 25 September 1985. He was 24.
- **1987** - Private Adriaan Jacobus Naude from 1 Maintenance Unit was accidentally electrocuted while offloading military supplies at the Modder River Station, South of Kimberley. He was 18.
- **1987** - Lance Corporal Herman Adolf Oosthuizen from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment attached to Fort Doppies was killed in a military vehicle accident while engaged in anti-insurgency operations in South Eastern Angola. He was 26.
- **1991** - Klaus Barbie, German SS captain, known as the "Butcher of Lyon", dies on this day.
- **1993** - Three US soldiers are killed in Somalia when their helicopter is shot down.

26 September

- **1895** - Jürgen Stroop, the SS commander that led the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943, was born on this day.
- **1899** - The ZAR government formally requests military assistance from the Orange Free State in accordance with the 1897 Political Defence Agreement.
- **1901** - Fort Prospect, about fifteen kilometres east of Itala, is defended by about 80 men under Captain Rowley of the Dorsetshire Regiment when attacked by a burgher force under Cheere Emmett. A party of Zulu policemen under Sergeant Gumbi, outside the British lines at the time of the first attack, fights their way through to share in the defence, and the attack is repelled with their help.
- **1917** - World War I: The Battle of Polygon Wood begins.
- **1918** - The last major battle of World War I, the Battle of the Argonne, began as a combined force of French and Americans attacked the Germans along a 64 kilometre front.
- **1941** - During World War II, the Western Desert Force was upgraded with the addition of two complete corps: the XIII and XXX. General Sir Alan Cunningham was given overall command of

the newly created Eighth Army. Troops included South African, Australian, New Zealand, Indian, Free French, and Polish soldiers.

- **1941** - The Military Police Corps is created as a permanent branch of the United States Army.
- **1950** - Personnel of the SA Air Force's No 2 (Flying Cheetah) Squadron leave Durban to assist the United Nations in the Korean War.
- **1950** - United Nations troops recapture Seoul from North Korean forces.
- **1959** - Lieutenant General Sir Leslie James Morshead, who led the Australian and British troops at the Siege of Tobruk (1941) and at the Second Battle of El Alamein, dies on this day at the age of 70.
- **1978** - Private Jacob Daniel Otto van As from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed in a military vehicle accident at Grootfontein. He was 18.
- **1981** - Captain Noel John



Klaus Barbie

- Malcolm from 104 Volunteer Air Squadron was killed when his Piper PA-28 crashed while carrying out an officially authorised SAAF tasking. He was 60.
- **1982** - Private William Henry Ludick from the Army Catering Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Kuruman. He was 20.
- **1983** - Soviet nuclear false alarm incident: Military officer Stanislav Petrov identifies a report of an incoming nuclear missile as a computer error and not an American first strike.
- **1985** - Special Warrant Officer Jacob Stephanus from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 39.
- **1987** - Rifleman Rudolf Johannes Badenhorst from Regiment de la Rey was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 20.
- **1988** - Gunner Ignatius Wilhelmus Ferreira from 4 Artillery Regiment was killed 9km from Kathu on the Kuruman road when he was hit by a civilian vehicle while assisting to dig out a field gun that was stuck in the sand. The vehicle failed to stop at the accident scene. He was 21.
- queror and his army set sail from the mouth of the River Somme, beginning the Norman conquest of England.
- **1777** - Lancaster, Pennsylvania becomes the capital of the United States, for one day after the Second Continental Congress evacuates Philadelphia to avoid invading British forces.
- **1862** - General Louis Botha, soldier, statesman and first prime minister of the Union of South Africa, is born near Greytown, Natal.
- **1899** - The ZAR calls up the South African Republican Burgher Force.
- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War the policy of concentration camps is officially sanctioned by Lord Roberts.
- **1940** - The Tripartite Pact is signed in Berlin by Germany, Japan and Italy.
- **1942** - Last day of the September Matanikau action on Guadalcanal as United States Marine Corps troops barely escape after being surrounded by Japanese forces near the Matanikau River.
- **1944** - The Kassel Mission results in the largest loss by a USAAF group on any mission in World War II.
- **1981** - Rifleman America Jose from 32 Battalion was shot dead by a fellow soldier during an argument at Buffalo. He was 26.
- **1982** - Private Renier Nicolaas Johannes Grobler from 3 Satellite Radar Station at Mafeking was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Ottoshoop while doing a compulsory 30 day camp. He was 22.
- **1982** - Staff Sergeant Willem Petrus Burger from South African Army Headquarters died at 1 Military Hospital after suffering a fatal heart attack. He was 62.
- **1984** - Two members from 2 Special Service Battalion were accidentally killed when their SAMIL 20 overturned at Groot Marico after the front tyre burst, causing the driver to lose control of the vehicle. The casualties were: Trooper Jams Andries Solomon Theodorus Randall (20). Trooper Frans Hendrik Jansen van Vuuren (19).
- **1985** - Rifleman Coenraad Johannes Jacobus Bel from 4 SAI was killed in a private motor vehicle accident while on weekend pass. He was 22.
- **1987** - A British newspaper reports heavy fighting between Angolan government forces and Unita, in which SA is allegedly taking part.
- **1990** - Corporal Freek Johannes Palmer from the Cape Regiment Died of Wounds after being shot by an unknown gunman using a home-made weapon while he was on foot patrol in Kwamashu. He succumbed to his wounds in Addington Hospital later in the day. He was 26.
- **1992** - A Nigerian military-transport plane crashes shortly after taking off from Lagos September 27, killing all 163

27 September

- **1066** - William the Con-

- people on board.
- **1993** - The UN Security Council bans sales of arms and fuel to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) because the rebel movement failed to stop fighting the government and renegotiates a 1991 peace settlement to end the country's civil war.
- **1993** - General James 'Jimmy' Doolittle, commander of the Doolittle Raid, a bold long-range retaliatory air raid on the Japanese main islands, on April 18, 1942, four months after the attack on Pearl Harbour, dies at the age of 96.
- **1996** - In Afghanistan, the Taliban capture the capital city Kabul after driving out President Burhanuddin Rabbani and executing former leader Mohammad Najibullah.
- **1961** - A military coup in Damascus effectively ends the United Arab Republic, the union between Egypt and Syria.
- **1984** - Corporal Petrus Johannes Du Plessis from 1 Special Service Battalion died after being grievously burned in an accidental petrol stove explosion at Oshakati while the armoured vehicles were in a laager. He was 22.
- **1988** - Rifleman Rionell Prins from 53 Battalion was accidentally killed after being struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle during operations in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1991** - Strategic Air Command (SAC) stands down from alert all ICBMs scheduled for deactivation under START I, as well as its strategic bomber force.
- **1995** - Bob Denard and a group of mercenaries take the islands of the Comoros in a coup.
- **2012** - Somali and African Union forces launch a coordinated assault on the Somali port city of Kismayo to take back the city from al-Shabaab militants.
- **1900** - The position of Commander-In-Chief at the War Office in London is offered to Lord Roberts.
- **1900** - Major His Highness Prince Christian Victor Albert Ludwig Ernst Anton, heir of Norway, grandson of Queen Victoria and ADC to Lord Roberts, dies of enteric fever in Pretoria.
- **1911** - Italy declares war on the Ottoman Empire.
- **1918** - Bulgaria signs the Armistice of Salonica. The Hindenburg Line is broken by an Allied attack. Germany's Supreme Army Command tells the Kaiser and the Chancellor to open negotiations for an armistice.
- **1935** - Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, warns the League of Nations that he is going to mobilise his forces because of threats of invasion by Italy.
- **1936** - Spanish insurgents continue their march to the capital of Spain Madrid and large numbers of clergy have

28 September

- 1781 - American forces backed by a French fleet begin the siege of Yorktown, Virginia, during the American Revolutionary War.
- **1918** - The Fifth Battle of Ypres begins.
- **1939** - Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union agree on a division of Poland after their invasion during World War II.
- **1939** - Warsaw surrenders to Nazi Germany during World War II.
- **1944** - Soviet Army troops liberate Klooga concentration camp in Klooga, Esto-

29 September

- **1865** - The Battle of Naauwpoort, near Clarens in the eastern OFS, takes place

Jimmy Doolittle



now joined the rebels in protests against the leftist controlled government. Many of the priests were butchered by Government forces. This civil war is being fought by two extreme parties who are trying to gain control of the country.

- **1938** - Just two weeks after the Munich agreement was signed and the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced to the world "Peace In Our Time" Hitler is pushing the bounds of the agreement on the German occupation of Czechoslovakia and taking additional areas under Nazi control. Many suspect he had no intention of slowing his occupation of other countries and a second world war is inevitable.
- **1939** - The Active Citizen Force units of SA are authorised to accept volunteers for the duration of the war.
- **1941** - Holocaust in Kiev, Soviet Union: German *Einsatzgruppe C* begins the Babi Yar massacre, according to the *Einsatzgruppen* operational situation report.
- **1942** - East Africa. South African troops are landed at Tulearon (Toliara) on the south west coast of Madagascar, to support the East African force based at Tananarive (Antananarivo).
- **1977** - Four members from 4 SAI were killed in a friendly fire incident near Okalongo when a soldier who formed part of an ambush position,

opened fire. The casualties in this unfortunate incident were: Sergeant Jan Pieter Albertus Furstenburg (24). Corporal Leslie Muller (19). Rifleman Jan Joachim Jacobus de Vos (18). Rifleman Cornelius Johannes Lourens (19).

- **1979** - Ex-president Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea is executed following his overthrow on 3 August. No Equatoguinean soldier participates in the execution, because Macias Nguema was and is still believed to have magical powers. The job is done by hired Moroccan troops.
- **1981** - Two helicopter crewmen from 19 Squadron and four members of the SADF including a Medical Doctor were Killed in Action when their Aerospatiale SA330L Puma crashed at Oshakati. The casualties were: Lieutenant Desmond O'Connor (21). Sergeant Daniel Francis Lamprecht (27). Lieutenant (Dr) Cecil George Bartie (27). Candidate Officer James van Zyl (21). Private Hendrik Jacobus Badenhorst (19). Rifleman Richard Anthony Herbst (20).
- **1990** - Rifleman Barry Hart from 6 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident on Beit Bridge Road while traveling towards Vhembe Base. He was 23.
- **1990** - The YF-22, which would later become the F-22 Raptor, flies for the first time.

30 September

- **1832** - Lord Frederick Sleigh Roberts, British officer in command during Anglo-Boer War 2, is born in Cawnpore, UK.
- **1901** - The Battle of Moedwil takes place, with the Boer forces under General De la Rey and Kemp retreating after fierce fighting.
- **1901** - Cornelis Broeksma, an attorney from Holland, is executed as a traitor by firing squad at the Johannesburg Fort. Information about appalling conditions in concentration camps and the number of deaths that he had collected got into the hands of the British. His information made its way in code via Amsterdam to London.
- **1915** - Radoje Ljutovac becomes the first soldier in history to shoot down an enemy aircraft with ground-to-air fire.
- **1931** - The War Museum at the 'Vrouemonument' (Women's Memorial) in Bloemfontein is officially inaugurated by General Hertzog.
- **1966** - Nazi war criminals Albert Speer and Baldur von Schirach were released from Spandau prison after serving 20 years. The prison, originally built for 600 inmates, was left with only one prisoner, former Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess.
- **1949** - The Berlin Airlift, which delivers 2 million tons of food and fuel to West Berliners while circumvent-

ing a Soviet blockade, and in which the SAA took part, comes to an end.

- **1954** - The U.S. Navy submarine USS Nautilus is commissioned as the world's first nuclear reactor powered vessel.
- **1971** - It is officially announced that the British and South African naval units will engage in a month of joint manoeuvres in South African waters from 4 October to 3 November 1971.
- **1975** - The Hughes (later McDonnell Douglas, now Boeing) AH-64 Apache makes its first flight. Eight years later, the first production model rolled out of the

assembly line.

- **1980** - Iran continued bombing oil installations in Baghdad in retaliation for Iraq aircraft bombing it's oil refineries in the Persian Gulf. This is the 9th day of the war between these major oil producing nations with both claiming victory during each skirmish.
- **1983** - Rifleman Joshua Daniel Joubert Steyn from 4 SAI, attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was accidentally killed in a shooting Incident at Omuthiya. He was 20.
- **1988** - Sapper Robert Renison from the Army Battle School died from a gunshot

wound, accidentally self-inflicted after he shot himself in the chest while playing with his firearm in the Duty Room at Lohathla. He was 18.

- **1988** - Rifleman Lefu Andries Chauzane from 54 Battalion was accidentally killed near the entrance to 5 Maintenance Unit in Owamboland. He was 18.
- **2004** - The AIM-54 Phoenix, the primary missile for the F-14 Tomcat, is retired from service. Almost two years later, the Tomcat is retired.



F-14 Tomcat



Bullpup Silhouettes

1. FN P90
2. Vektor CR-21
3. ADS amphibious rifle
4. SA80
5. Norinco Type 86S
6. FN F2000
7. FAMAS F1
8. Desert Tech MDRX
9. A-91
10. SAR 21
11. Steyr ACR
12. QBZ-95
13. S&T Daewoo K11 DAW
14. IWI Tavor TAR-21
15. Steyr AUG



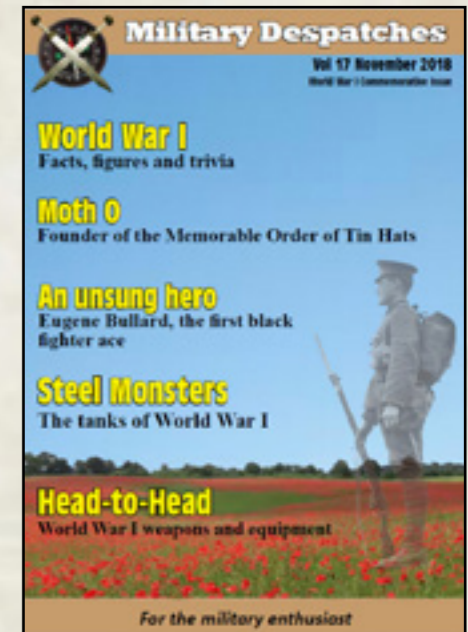
Useful links

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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Steve Jobs

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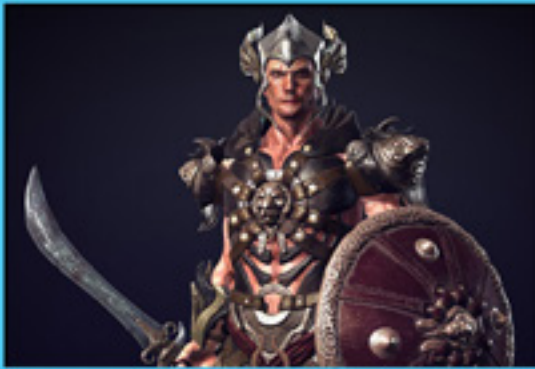
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