



# Military Despatches

Vol 76 October 2023

## Operation Oak

The daring rescue of Benito Mussolini

## The plot(s) to kill Hitler

He survived at least 28 assassination attempts

## The greatest fighter ace

Erich 'Bubi' Hartmann

## Pro Patria Museum

Preserving the past for future generations

*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.

## Page 12



## Special Forces Ops - Operation Oak

### Features

**6**

### 10 aircraft with the most kills

The ten most successful aircraft in history in terms of aerial victories.

**16**

### German Field Marshals WWII

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

**20**

### Bless you my son

Religion and the military all too often have gone hand-in-hand. Countless wars have been fought in the name of religion. Yet sometimes it does have a lighter side.

### 24

### War, what is it good for

According to Edwin Starr, war is good for absolutely nothing. While we may agree with that statement in principle, many items that we use daily were actually developed for war.

**28**

### Unsinkable

The largest warship ever built by man, there are those that claim that she is unsinkable. But is it really? And, if not, what would it take to sink the USS Gerald Ford?

**22**

### The plot(s) to kill Hitler

From the time Hitler came to power until he committed suicide on 30 April 1945, there were at least 28 assassination attempts on his life.



### 38

### Pro Patria Museum

The Pro Patria Museum NPC aims to honour and recognise the historical role played by the South African Security Forces to create a safe and peaceful environment for an orderly political transition and to educate current and future generations about this role.

### Quiz

### 41

### SADF Shoulder Flashes

This month we're looking at shoulder flashes of the old South African Defence Force (SADF).

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

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





## Editor's Sitrep

Can you believe that three-quarters of 2023 are already a thing of the past?

We're into the second month of spring, but it doesn't seem as if the weather received the memo. Not sure what's it's like where you are, but down here in Cape Town it's been really cold. And let's not even talk about the rain, storms, and high winds.

It was tragic to learn of the loss of three South African Navy submariners. At the time of writing there is still no clarity as to what happened and why. This, however, does not distract from the fact that three people sadly lost their lives. May they rest in peace.

I'm sure that many of our readers are watching the Rugby World Cup with more than just a little interest. I know that I am.

It's always amusing to see just how many rugby 'experts' there are out there. They know just who has to be selected in the team and just what needs to be done to win a match, and the World Cup.

I am not an expert in the least. So whatever I feel is my own personal opinion and nothing more.

When I first saw the selection of the team to go to France I did

say that I thought it was a mistake that we were going without a recognised goal kicker and that it could come back to bite us.

When we won the World Cup in 1995 and again in 2007 it was due to our kicking. It was only at our third Rugby World Cup final in 2019 that we scored a try for the first time.

While I think that Manie Libbok is a good flyhalf with tremendous potential, his kicking at poles is below average. He doesn't even take the kicks for his provincial franchise.

The fact that Handre Pollard has been recalled to the side seems to bear out what I've been saying. The only problem is that Pollard hasn't played much rugby recently and he is coming back from injury.

Most readers know that I was born and raised in Ireland, but I've been in South Africa for most of my life. So who am I supporting? Well actually the 'Boks, but if they don't go all they way then I would like Ireland to do it.

Until next time, stay safe and stay healthy.

*Matt*

# Hipe! media

## PUBLISHER

Hipe Media

## EDITOR

Matt Tennyson

## PHOTO EDITOR

Regine Lord

## CONTRIBUTORS

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

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### email

editor@hipe.co.za

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# CONTENTS

Page 72



## October in military history

### Head-to-Head

42

#### Assault Rifle Ammunition

After World War II NATO, the Soviets, and the USA all chose different calibre ammunition for their assault rifles. So what was the difference?

### Famous Figures

48

#### Erich Hartmann

Nicknamed 'Bubi' (The Kid), he was a German fighter pilot during World War II and the most successful fighter ace in the history of aerial warfare.



### Forged in Battle

58

#### Messerschmitt Bf 109

The most successful fighter aircraft of World War II with more than 20,000 enemy kills.

### Battlefield

64

#### The Battle of Britain

The aerial battle between the RAF and the Luftwaffe that changed the course of World War II.

### Gaming

68

#### Door Kickers

Take charge of an elite SWAT Team and plan every move.

### Movie Review

70

#### Casualties of War

Based on a real event during the Vietnam War, starring Michael J. Fox and Sean Penn.

### Book Review

71

#### The Elite

The incredible story of the Rhodesian Special Air Service (SAS).

### Front Cover

A model of a World War II German Fallschirmjäger.

In September 1943 German paratroopers carried out a daring raid to rescue Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.





# 10 Aircraft with the most kills

The ten most successful aircraft in history in terms of aerial victories.

Warfare on land and even on sea goes back as far as recorded history.

Yet it was only during World War I (1914-1918) that warfare took to the skies. During World War II (1939-1945) aircraft were no longer regarded as a novelty, they had become a vital component of modern warfare.

Bombers could deliver tons of explosive ordnance on targets thousands of kilometres away. Dive bombers could hit a target with pin-point accuracy. Transport aircraft could ferry men and supplies over vast distances in a relatively short period of time.

Yet perhaps the most important aircraft in the sky was the fighter. Every air force wanted a fighter that was capable of ruling the skies. Something that could cancel out the threat of

bombers, take down transport aircraft and, above all, shoot down enemy fighters.

It is fair to say that success often relied on the individual skills of a fighter pilot as well as their combat experience. But a lot was also dependant on the actual aircraft. What was the top speed of an aircraft? What was its rate of climb and its service ceiling? What armaments did it carry? How well protected was the pilot? These were just some of the factors that determined the success of an aircraft.

In this article we take a look at the ten most successful fighter aircraft in history. In this case success is measured in terms of aerial victories, more commonly referred to as kills.

It is interesting to note that the most successful aircraft of World War I was the British Sopwith Camel.

The Camel was powered by

a single rotary engine and was armed with twin synchronized Vickers machine guns.

Agility in combat made the Camel one of the best-remembered Allied aircraft of World War I and it was credited with 1,294 kills.

Compare this to the most successful fighter-jet, the Soviet MiG-15. The MiG-15 was one of the first successful jet fighters to incorporate swept wings to achieve high transonic speeds.

The MiG-15 is believed to have been one of the most produced jet aircraft with more than 13,000 manufactured. It is credited with 1,097 kills.

The fact of the matter is that the ten most successful fighter aircraft in history were all from World War II. One was Japanese, one was British, two were German, and six were American.

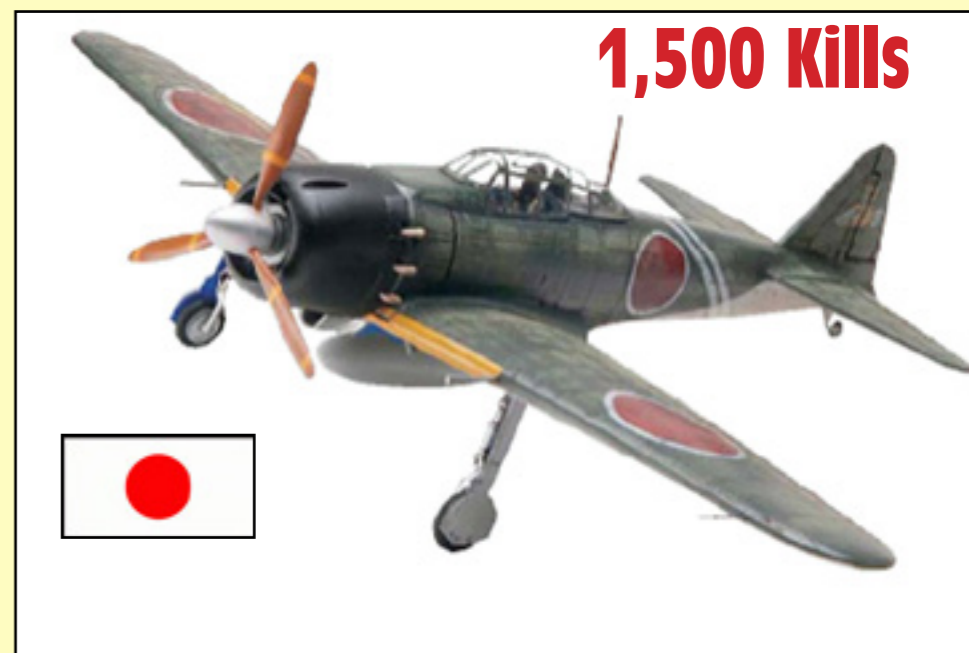


## 10. Mitsubishi A6M "Zero"

The Zero is considered to have been the most capable carrier-based fighter in the world when it was introduced early in World War II

The Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service (IJNAS) also frequently used it as a land-based fighter.

In early combat operations, the Zero gained a reputation as a dogfighter, achieving an outstanding kill ratio of 12 to 1.



1,500 Kills

- Manufacturer: Mitsubishi Heavy Industries
- Engine: 1 × Nakajima NK1C Sakae-12 14-cylinder air-cooled radial piston engine
- Fuel capacity: 518 litres
- Maximum speed: 533 km/h
- Range: 1,870 km

- Service ceiling: 10,000 metres
- Rate of climb: 15.7 m/s
- Guns: 2 × 7.7 mm Type 97 aircraft machine guns in the engine cowling, with 500 rounds per gun; 2 × 20 mm

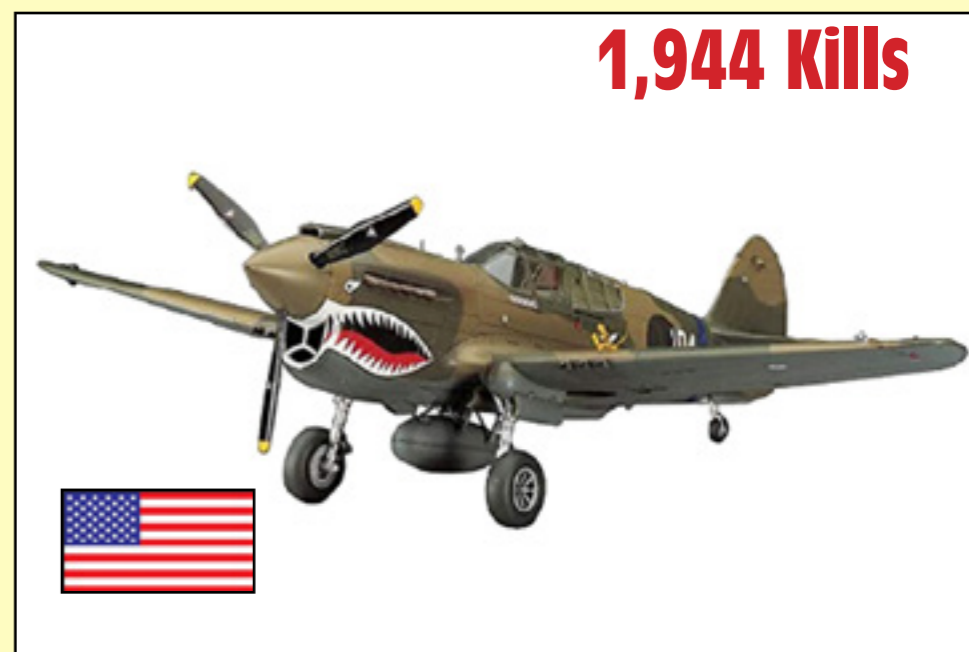
- Type 99-1 Mk.3 cannon in the wings, with 60 rounds per gun.
- Bombs: 2 × 60 kg bombs or 1 × fixed 250 kg bomb for kamikaze attacks

## 9. Curtiss P-40 Warhawk

The P-40 performed surprisingly well as an air superiority fighter, at times suffering severe losses, but also inflicting a very heavy toll on enemy aircraft.

The Warhawk was used by most Allied powers during World War II, and remained in frontline service until the end of the war.

The P-40's lack of a two-speed supercharger made it inferior to Luftwaffe fighters such as the Messerschmitt Bf 109 or the Focke-Wulf Fw 190 in high-altitude combat.



1,944 Kills

- Manufacturer: Curtiss-Wright
- Engine: 1 × Allison V-1710-39 V-12 liquid-cooled piston engine

- Fuel capacity: 507 litres
- Maximum speed: 538 km/h
- Range: 1,152 km
- Service ceiling: 8,900 metres
- Rate of climb: 10.6 m/s
- Guns: 6 × 12.7 mm M2

- Browning machine guns in the wings
- Bombs: 110 to 450 kg bombs to a total of 910 kg on hard-points under the fuselage and two underwing



**8. Vought F4U Corsair**

The Corsair was designed and operated as a carrier-based aircraft, and entered service in large numbers with the U.S. Navy in late 1944 and early 1945.

Some Japanese pilots regarded it as the most formidable American fighter of World War II.

It became one of the most capable carrier-based fighter-bombers of World War II.

The Corsair served almost exclusively as a fighter-bomber throughout the Korean War and during the French colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria.

- Manufacturer: Chance Vought
- Engine: 1 × Pratt & Whitney



- R-2800-18W radial engine
- Fuel capacity: 597 litres
- Maximum speed: 533 km/h
- Range: 1,617 km
- Service ceiling: 12,600 metres
- Rate of climb: 22.1 m/s
- Guns: 6 × 12.7 mm M2 Browning machine guns 375-400 rounds per gun
- Bombs: 1,800 kg and/or
- Rockets: 8 × 12.7 cm high velocity aircraft rockets

**7. Republic P-47 Thunderbolt**

The Thunderbolt was effective as a short- to medium-range escort fighter in high-altitude air-to-air combat and ground attack in both the European and Pacific theatres.

When fully loaded, the P-47 weighed up to eight tons, making it one of the heaviest fighters of the war.

The P-47 was noted for its firepower, as well as its ability to resist battle damage and remain airworthy.

- Manufacturer: Republic Aviation
- Engine: 1 × Pratt & Whitney R-2800-59 18-cylinder air-cooled radial piston engine
- Fuel capacity: 1,155 litres



- Maximum speed: 686 km/h
- Range: 1,660 km
- Service ceiling: 13,000 metres
- Rate of climb: 14 m/s
- Guns: 8 × 12.7 mm M2 Browning machine guns with 425 rounds per gun
- Bombs: Up to 1,100 kg of bombs
- Rockets: 10 × 127 mm HVAR unguided rockets

**6. Lockheed P-38 Lightning**

The P-38 was utilized in various aerial combat roles including as a highly effective fighter-bomber, a night fighter, and as a long-range escort fighter when equipped with drop tanks.

Unusual for a fighter of this time, the exhaust was muffled by the turbo-superchargers, making the P-38's operation relatively quiet.

- Manufacturer: Lockheed Corporation
- Engine: 2 × Allison V-1710 (-111 left hand rotation and -113 right hand rotation) V-12 liquid-cooled turbo-supercharged piston engine
- Fuel capacity: 1,586 litres
- Maximum speed: 666 km/h
- Range: 2,100 km



- Service ceiling: 13,000 metres
- Rate of climb: 24.1 m/s
- Guns: 1 × Hispano M2(C) 20 mm cannon with 150 rounds; 4 × M2 Browning machine gun 12.7 mm machine guns with 500 rpg.
- Bombs: 907 kg, or
- Rockets: 4 × M10 three-tube 112 mm M8 rocket launchers

**5. Supermarine Spitfire**

Many variants of the Spitfire were built, from the Mk 1 to the Rolls-Royce Griffon-engined Mk 24 using several wing configurations and guns. It was the only British fighter produced continuously throughout the war.

During the Battle of Britain, Spitfires were generally tasked with engaging Luftwaffe fighters - mainly Messerschmitt Bf 109E-series aircraft, which were a close match for them.

The Spitfire served in several roles, including interceptor, photo-reconnaissance, fighter-bomber, and trainer.

- Manufacturer: Supermarine
- Engine: 1 × Rolls-Royce Merlin 45 V-12 liq-



- Fuel capacity: 321 litres
- Maximum speed: 600 km/h
- Range: 771 km
- Service ceiling: 11,000 metres
- Rate of climb: 13 m/s
- Guns: 2 × 20 mm Hispano Mk II cannon (120 rounds per gun); 2 × 12.7mm M2 Browning machine guns (250 rounds per gun)
- Rockets: 2 RP-3 rockets (1 under each wing)



**4. Grumman F6F Hellcat**

The Hellcat was a well-designed carrier fighter, which was able to outperform the A6M Zero and help secure air superiority over the Pacific theatre.

The F6F series was designed to take damage and get the pilot safely back to base.

- Manufacturer: Grumman
- Engine: 1 × Pratt & Whitney R-2800-10W Double Wasp 18-cylinder air-cooled radial piston engine
- Fuel capacity: 946 litres
- Maximum speed: 629 km/h
- Range: 1,521 km
- Service ceiling: 11,400 metres
- Rate of climb: 13 m/s



**5,229 Kills**

- Guns: 6 × 12.7 mm M2 Browning machine guns, with 400 rounds per gun, (All F6F-3, and most F6F-5) or; 2 × 20 mm AN/M2 cannon, with 225 rounds per gun and 4 × 0.50 in 12.7 mm Browning machine guns with 400 rounds per gun
- Bombs: up to 1,800 kg full load
- Rockets: 6 × 5 in (127 mm) HVARs or; 2 × 298 mm Tiny Tim unguided rockets

**3. North American P-51 Mustang**

Mustangs were used by the USAAF's Eighth Air Force to escort bombers in raids over Germany.

Despite the advent of jet fighters, the Mustang remained in service with some air forces until the early 1980s.

- Manufacturer: North American Aviation
- Engine: 1 × Packard (Rolls-Royce) V-1650-7 Merlin 12-cylinder liquid cooled engine
- Fuel capacity: 1,021 litres
- Maximum speed: 710 km/h
- Range: 2,260 km
- Service ceiling: 12,800 metres
- Rate of climb: 16 m/s



**5,944 Kills**

- Guns: 6 × 12.7mm AN/M2 Browning machine guns with 1,840 total rounds (380 rounds for each on the in-board pair and 270 rounds for each of the outer two pair)
- Bombs: 1 × 45 kg or 110 kg bomb or 230 kg bomb on hardpoint under each wing
- Rockets: 6 or 10 × 127 mm T64 HVAR rockets

**2. Focke-Wulf Fw 190**

The Fw 190A started flying operationally over France in August 1941 and quickly proved superior in all but turn radius to the Spitfire Mk. V, the main front-line fighter of the Royal Air Force (RAF).

It was regarded as one of the best fighter planes of World War II.

The majority of its kills were achieved over the Eastern Front. Later it would be used to protect Germany against Allied daylight bombing.

- Manufacturer: Focke-Wulf
- Engine: 1 × BMW 801D-2 14-cylinder air-cooled radial piston engine
- Fuel capacity: 639 litres
- Maximum speed: 652 km/h



**20,000 Kills**

- Range: 1,000 km
- Service ceiling: 10,350 metres
- Rate of climb: 15 m/s
- Guns: 2 × 13 mm synchronized MG 131 machine guns; 2 × 20 mm MG 151/20 E cannons, synchronized in the wing roots; 2 × 20 mm MG 151/20 E cannons in mid-wing mounts
- Bombs: 1 bomb under fuselage or four bombs under wings

**1. Messerschmitt Bf 109**

It was called the Me 109 by Allied aircrew and some German aces.

13 Luftwaffe pilots scored more than 200 kills with the Bf 109, while two scored more than 300. The Soviets lost more than 21,200 aircraft.

- Manufacturer: Messerschmitt AG
- Engine: 1 × Daimler-Benz DB 605A-1 V-12 inverted liquid-cooled piston engine
- Fuel capacity: 400 litres
- Maximum speed: 520 km/h
- Range: 1,144 km
- Service ceiling: 12,000 metres
- Rate of climb: 20.1 m/s
- Guns: 2 × 13 mm synchronized MG 131 machine guns



**+20,000 Kills**

- with 300 rpg; 1 × 20 mm MG 151/20 cannon as centerline Motorkanone with 200 rpg; or 1 x 30 mm (1.18 in) MK 108 cannon as centerline Motorkanone with 65 rpg (G-6/U4 variant); 2 × 20 mm MG 151/20 underwing cannon pods with 135 rpg
- Bombs: 1 × 250 kg bomb or 4 × 50 kg bombs
- Rockets: 2 × 21 cm Wfr. Gr. 21 rockets



# Operation Oak

*Unternehmen Eiche (Operation Oak), the audacious operation by German paratroopers and Waffen-SS commandos to rescue the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.*

- **Date:** 12 September 1943
- **Location:** Hotel Campo Imperatore, Italy
- **Units involved:** 2nd Parachute Division; 502nd SS Jäger Battalion

During World War II, the Gran Sasso raid (code-named *Unternehmen Eiche*) on 12 September 1943 was a successful operation by German paratroopers and Waffen-SS commandos to rescue the deposed Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini from custody in the Gran Sasso d'Italia massif.

The airborne operation was personally ordered by Adolf Hitler, approved by General Kurt Student and planned and executed by Major Harald Mors.

## Background

On the night between 24 and 25 July 1943, a few weeks after the Allied invasion of Sicily and bombing of Rome, the Grand Council of Fascism voted a motion of no confidence against prime minister Benito Mussolini.

On the same day, King Victor Emmanuel III replaced him with Marshal Pietro Badoglio and had Mussolini arrested.

This is commonly known as the Fall of the Fascist regime in Italy (or *25 Luglio* in Italian); Badoglio's government at first continued the war on the Axis

powers' side, but after Italian and German forces were defeated during the Allied invasion of Sicily (17 August), the Italian government began secret negotiations with the Allies to surrender.

This resulted in the Armistice of Cassibile on 3 September, coinciding with the Allied invasion of mainland Italy.

## Preparations

### Badoglio government

The Italian high command, led by Marshal Badoglio, was well aware that the German army would probably try to seize control of Italy as soon as the government switched sides to the Allies.

Therefore, the Italian government wanted the Allied troops to have landed on the mainland before the armistice took effect and was announced publicly – which happened on 8 September – so that the Allies could move north quickly to help defend especially the capital city of Rome against the looming German invasion.

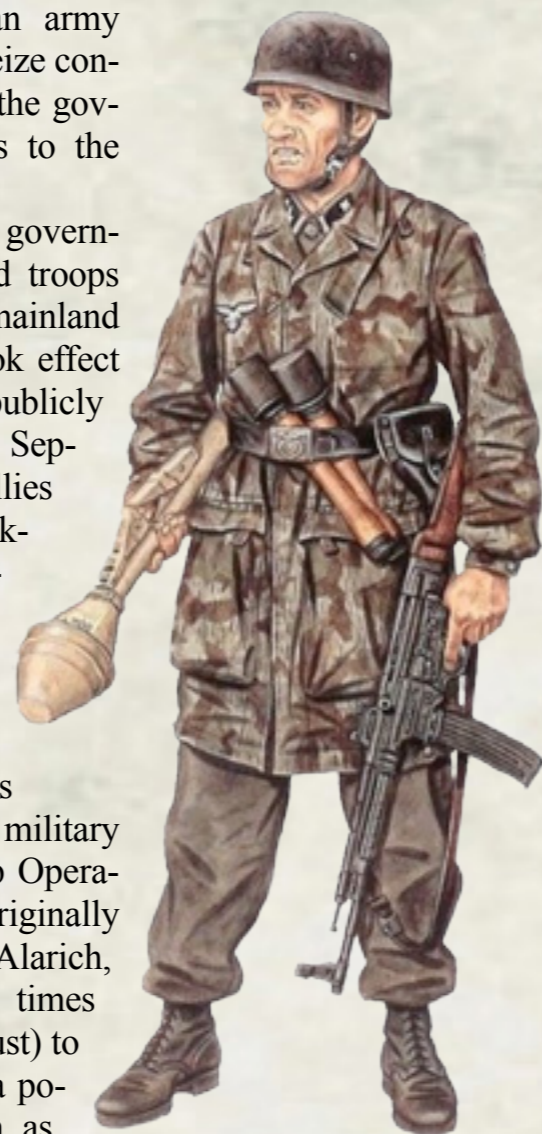
Indeed, Mussolini's fall prompted German military commanders to develop Operation Achse (the plans, originally codenamed Operation Alarich, were changed several times from 28 July to 30 August) to mitigate the impact of a potential Italian defection as

much as possible.

The Badoglio government also realised that the Germans were likely to attempt breaking Mussolini out of prison, reinstate him and rally Fascist support to keep Italy in the war on Germany's side, and so strict measures to hide and secure Mussolini were taken: he was moved several times and guarded by almost a battalion of troops.

### Mussolini's imprisonment

Mussolini was arrested on the



king's orders by the Carabinieri on 25 July just after he left the king's private residence, and he was initially brought to the Podgora Carabinieri Headquarters in Trastevere.

In the afternoon he was transferred to the Carabinieri Cadet School in the via Legnano, where he was held until 27 July. On 27 July, military police led by general Francesco Saverio Pólito took Mussolini to Gaeta, boarded the ship *Persefone* and imprisoned Mussolini in an isolated house on the island of Ponza in the Tyrrhenian Sea from 12:00 on 28 July to 7 August.

From 7-27 August, Mussolini was held in a private villa on La Maddalena. From 28 August, he was kept at the Hotel Campo Imperatore, which was built on a remote and defensible mountain plateau 2,112 metres above sea level in the Gran Sasso d'Italia mountain range.

A ski station was located next to the hotel, linked with a cable car. The hotel was one of originally three planned hotels (but the only one that was ever built) shaped in the letters 'D', 'V' and 'X', together 'DVX', the Latin word meaning "leader", from which Mussolini's Italian title *il Duce* was derived. The D-shaped Hotel Campo Imperatore constructed to celebrate Mussolini's rule served as his prison for several weeks.

### German tracking and planning

Adolf Hitler's common procedure was to give similar orders to competing German military organisations. He ordered *Hauptsturmführer* Otto Sko-

rzeny to track Mussolini and simultaneously ordered the paratroop General Kurt Student to execute the liberation.

On September 7, German signals intelligence intercepted a coded Italian report which indicated that Mussolini was imprisoned somewhere in the Abruzzi mountains.

Next, the Germans employed a ruse to confirm the exact location in which a German doctor pretended to try to establish a hospital at the hotel on the Grand Sasso.

Informants of *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Herbert Kappler used counterfeit notes with a face value of £100,000 forged under Operation Bernhard to help obtain information. Skorzeny used information gathered by agents to plan his raid.

## Raid

After the Italian government announced the Armistice of Cassibile and thereby its defection from the Axis to the Allies on 8 September, the German army launched Operation Achse and quickly occupied strategic points in northern and central Italy within days, effectively disarming hundreds of thousands of Italian soldiers who had nominally just switched sides.

The Allied Italian military and political leaders including Marshal Badoglio and King Victor Emmanuel III fled to Allied-controlled territory in southern Italy.

On 12 September 1943, Skorzeny and 16 SS troopers joined the Fallschirmjäger to rescue Mussolini in a high-risk glider mission. Ten DFS 230 glid-

ers, each carrying nine soldiers and a pilot, towed by Henschel Hs 126 planes started between 13:05 and 13:10 from the Pratica di Mare Air Base, near Rome.

The leader of the airborne operation, Oberleutnant Georg Freiherr von Berlepsch, entered the first glider while Skorzeny and his SS troopers sat in the fourth and the fifth gliders.

To gain height before crossing the close by Alban Hills, the leading three glider-towing plane units flew an additional loop.

All of the following units considered that manoeuvre to be unnecessary and preferred not to endanger the given time of arrival at the target. That led to both of Skorzeny's units arriving first over the target.

Meanwhile, the valley station of the funicular railway leading to the Campo Imperatore was captured at 14:00 in a ground attack by two paratrooper companies, led by Major Harald Mors, the commander-in-chief of the whole raid, which cut all telephone lines.

This ground attack caused the only two deaths of the operation, Italian forestry guard Pasqualino Vitocco, who was killed while attempting to warn the garrison of the approaching German troops, and carabinieri Giovanni Natale, who was killed while preparing to open fire on the attackers.

Two more carabinieri were slightly wounded by a hand grenade. At 14:05, the airborne commandos landed their ten DFS 230 gliders on the mountain near the hotel. One crashed and caused injuries.

The Fallschirmjäger and Sko-



rzeny's special troopers overwhelmed Mussolini's captors, 200 well-equipped Carabinieri guards, without a single shot being fired.

The Italian General Fernando Soleti had been forced to fly with Skorzeny on the raid, as a hostage; making himself known to the soldiers who guarded the hotel, Soleti ordered them not to shoot.

Skorzeny attacked the radio operator and his equipment and stormed into the hotel, followed by his SS troopers and the paratroopers. Ten minutes after the beginning of the raid, Mussolini left the hotel, accompanied by the German soldiers.

At 14:45, Mors accessed the hotel via the funicular railway and introduced himself to Mussolini.

Mussolini was then to be flown out by a Fieseler Fi 156 STOL plane that had arrived in the meantime. Although under the given circumstances the small plane was overloaded, Skorzeny insisted on accompanying Mussolini, which endangered the mission's success.

After an extremely dangerous but successful takeoff, they flew to Pratica di Mare. They then immediately continued to fly in a Heinkel He 111 to Vienna, where Mussolini stayed overnight at the Hotel Imperial.

The next day he was flown to Munich, and on 14 September, he met Hitler at Führer Headquarters, in Wolf's Lair, near Rastenburg.

## Aftermath

After hearing of Mussolini's escape, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stated in the



**FREEDOM:** Some of German paratroopers that carried out the raid to rescue Benito Mussolini from the Hotel Campo Imperatore.

House of Commons: "Knowing that il Duce was hidden in a safe place and that the Government of Badoglio was committed to handing him over to the Allies, a daring attack, completely beyond all foresight, prevented this from happening".

The operation granted a rare public relations opportunity to Hermann Göring late in the war, with German propaganda hailing the operation for months afterward.

The landing at Campo Imperatore was in fact led by First Lieutenant von Berlepsch, commanded by Major Mors and under orders from General Student, all of whom were Fallschirmjäger officers, but Skorzeny stewarded the Italian leader right in front of the cameras.

After an SS propaganda coup at the behest of *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler and Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, Skorzeny and his special forces of the Waffen-SS were granted the majority of the

credit for the operation.

Skorzeny received a promotion to Sturmbannführer, the award of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross and the fame that led to his image as the "most dangerous man in Europe".

Skorzeny published an autobiography in 1950 (*Geheimkommando Skorzeny*) and another book (*Meine Kommandounternehmen*) in 1976.

Historian Ulrich Trumpeiner (2015) stated that 'exaggerated credit [for the operation] was later given to a small SS detachment under Otto Skorzeny'.

Historian Óscar González López stated that Skorzeny was a 'fake liberator' created by Nazi propaganda, calling the Fallschirmjäger the 'legitimate protagonists' of the Gran Sasso raid.

After the raid, Hitler put Mussolini in charge of a puppet state in German-occupied northern Italy, the Italian Social Republic, which served as a collaborationist regime of the Germans in their fight against the Allies,



**RESCUED:** Benito Mussolini (foreground) along with Otto Skorzeny.

the Kingdom of Italy, now a co-belligerent of the Allies, and the Italian resistance.

In late April 1945, in the wake of near total defeat, Mussolini and his mistress Clara Petacci attempted to flee to Switzerland, but both were captured by Italian communist partisans and summarily executed by firing squad on 28 April 1945 near Lake Como.

## Otto Skorzeny

After the successful completion of Operation Oak, Otto Skorzeny would go on to take part in a number of other special operations.

Operation Long Jump was a planned operation to assassinate the 'Big Three' - Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin - during the 1943 Tehran Conference. The plot was uncovered by Russian intelligence before its inception.

*Unternehmen Rösselsprung* (Operation Knight's Leap) was a plan in May 1944 to capture Yugoslav Partisan leader Josip Broz, better known as Tito, alive.

During Operation Panzerfaust (known as *Unternehmen Eisenfaust* (Iron First) in Germany), Skorzeny kidnapped Hungary's Regent, Admiral Miklós Horthy's son Miklós Horthy Jr. and forced his father to resign as head of state.

Skorzeny's most infamous mission was *Unternehmen Greif* (Griffin), which was part of Hitler's last-ditch attempt at turning the tables on the Allies.

His key objective required the capture of key bridges over the Meuse river during the Battle of the Bulge.

By war's end, Skorzeny had received oak leaves for his Iron Cross, the highest honour awarded by the Nazis.

Skorzeny was interned for two years before being tried as a war criminal at the Dachau trials in 1947 for allegedly violating the laws of war during the Battle of the Bulge.

Skorzeny was detained in an internment camp at Darmstadt awaiting the decision of a denazification court.

On 27 July 1948 he escaped from the camp with the help

of three former SS officers dressed in US Military Police uniforms who entered the camp and claimed that they had been ordered to take Skorzeny to Nuremberg for a legal hearing.

He escaped to Madrid, Spain, where he set up a small engineering business.

In 1952 Egypt was taken over by General Mohammed Naguib. Skorzeny was sent to Egypt the following year by former General Reinhard Gehlen (who was now working for the CIA) to act as Naguib's military advisor.

Skorzeny recruited a staff made up of former SS and Wehrmacht officers to train the Egyptian army.

In 1963, in a complete turn around, Skorzeny was recruited by the Israeli Mossad. His mission was to obtain information on German scientists who were working on an Egyptian project to develop rockets to be used against Israel.

No confirmed source can explain Skorzeny's motives for working with Israel but he may have craved adventure and intrigue, as well as fearing assassination by Mossad.

On 5 July 1975, Otto Skorzeny died at the age of 67 from lung cancer. He had two funerals, one in Madrid, and the other at his family plot in Vienna.

At both, he received a full Nazi send-off with Nazi veterans giving him the Nazi salute and singing some of Hitler's favourite songs.



# World War II German Field Marshals (Part Four)

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

In the September edition of Military Despatches we looked at seven German Field Marshals of World War II. They were:

- Erwin von Witzleben (Army)
- Eduard von Böhm-Ermolli (Army)
- Erwin Rommel (Army)
- Georg von Küchler (Army)
- Erich von Manstein (Army)
- Friedrich Paulus (Army)
- Karl Dönitz (Navy)

This month we will look at the final 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 the final 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.



**Ernst Busch**

Born: 6 July 1885

Promoted: 1 February 1943

Ernst Bernhard Wilhelm Busch was a German Generalfeldmarschall during World War II who commanded the 16th Army (as a Generaloberst) and Army Group Centre.

During World War I, Busch served as an infantry officer and was retained in the postwar army of the Weimar Republic.

He steadily rose in seniority and by 1936 was a general and commander of the 23rd Infantry Division. During the inva-

sion of Poland, he commanded VIII Army Corps.

In 1940, he was appointed commander of the 16th Army; he led it during the 1940 Battle of France and Operation Barbarossa, the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union.

By October 1943, Busch was a field marshal and commander of Army Group Centre. He was dismissed in June 1944 after the collapse of his command during the Red Army's Operation Bagration.

He was later the commander of Army Group Northwest in the final months of the war and died as a prisoner of war in England.

Died: 17 July 1945 (aged 60)

Cause of death: Natural causes.



**Paul von Kleist**

Born: 8 August 1881

Promoted: 1 February 1943

Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist was a German field marshal of the Wehrmacht during World War II. Born into the Prussian

noble family von Kleist, Kleist entered the Prussian Army in 1900 and commanded a cavalry squadron during World War I. Kleist joined the Reichswehr of inter-war Germany before being discharged in 1938.

Recalled to active duty at the beginning of World War II, Kleist commanded a motorised corps in the Invasion of Poland.

He then became the commander of Panzer Group Kleist (later 1st Panzer Army), the first operational formation of several Panzer corps in the Wehrmacht during the Battle of France, the Battle of Belgium, the Invasion of Yugoslavia and Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union.

During the Battle of France, units under Kleist's command included Heinz Guderian's armoured corps and spearheaded the "blitzkrieg" attack through the Ardennes forest, outflanking the Maginot Line.

His panzer divisions eventually pushed deep into France, resulting in Allied defeat. He then commanded the 1st Panzer Army as it drove deep into Ukraine and the Caucasus during Operation Barbarossa.

Kleist was appointed commander-in-chief of Army Group A during the last days of Case Blue, the 1942 German summer offensive in southern Russia. His disagreements with Hitler over strategic decisions led to his dismissal in March 1944 after the German defeat in right-bank Ukraine.

Following the war, Kleist was extradited to the Soviet Union where he was sentenced to 25 years in prison for war crimes; he died in prison.

Died: 13 November 1954 (aged 73)

Cause of death: Natural causes.



**Maximilian von Weichs**

Born: 12 November 1881

Promoted: 1 February 1943

Maximilian Maria Joseph Karl Gabriel Lamoral Reichsfreiherr von und zu Weichs an der Glon was a field marshal in the Wehrmacht of Nazi Germany during World War II.

Born into an aristocratic family, Weichs joined the Bavarian cavalry in 1900 and fought in the First World War. At the outbreak of the Second World War he commanded the XIII Corps in the invasion of Poland.

He later commanded the 2nd Army during the invasions of France, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

In August 1942 during Case Blue, the German offensive in southern Russia, he was appointed commander of Army Group B. In 1944, Weichs commanded Army Group F in the Balkans overseeing the German retreat from Greece and most of Yugoslavia.

During the Nuremberg Trials, Weichs was implicated in war crimes committed in the Bal-

kans and was scheduled to take part in the US Army's Hostages Trial. He was removed from the proceeding for "medical reasons" without having been judged or sentenced.

Died: 27 September 1954 (aged 72)

Cause of death: Natural causes.



**Wolfram von Richthofen**

Born: 10 October 1895

Promoted: 16 February 1943

Wolfram Karl Ludwig Moritz Hermann Freiherr von Richthofen was a German World War I flying ace who rose to the rank of Generalfeldmarschall in the Luftwaffe during World War II.

At the age of eighteen, after leaving school, he opted to join the German Army rather than choose an academic career, and joined the army's cavalry arm in 1913.

On the outbreak of the First World War, Richthofen fought on the Western Front, winning the Iron Cross Second Class. In 1915 he was posted to the Eastern Front, where he stayed until 1917.

The Richthofen family produced several notable personalities that would become fa-



mous during the First War. His cousins, the brothers Lothar and Manfred, both became flying aces and encouraged him to join the *Luftstreitkräfte* (German Imperial Air Service). He did so, and joined Manfred's Jagdgeschwader 1 (Fighter Wing 1).

On Wolfram's first mission with his cousin, on 21 April 1918, Manfred (internationally known as 'The Red Baron') was killed. Wolfram went on to claim eight aerial victories before the armistice in November 1918. Lothar survived the war but died in a flying accident in 1922.

He served as part of the Condor Legion which supported the Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War. During this time, he recognised the need for close air support in military campaigns and championed the dive bomber. He also made innovations in ground-air communications.

When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, Richthofen commanded a specialised ground-attack air unit, *Fliegerkorps VIII* (8th Air Corps), first as a small active service unit in the Polish Campaign, and then as a full-sized Air Corps in Western Europe, from May to June 1940.

The effectiveness of his units proved decisive at certain points in the French Campaign, particularly covering the German thrust to the English Channel.

He was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross on 23 May 1940, in view of his achievements.

He continued in frontline service during the Battle of Britain and the Balkans Campaign

in 1940 and 1941. Richthofen achieved his greatest success on the Eastern Front.

In particular, he achieved notable success in the Crimean Campaigns during 1942. Despite offering vital tactical and operational support to Army Group South, he was moved to the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations, where he commanded Luftwaffe forces in the Italian Campaign.

He remained in active service until late 1944, when he was retired on medical grounds. Soon after the capitulation of Germany in May 1945, he was taken prisoner by the United States Army, but on 12 July he died in captivity.

Died: 12 July 1945 (aged 49)  
Cause of death: Brain tumour.



### Walter Model

Born: 24 January 1891  
Promoted: 1 March 1944

Otto Moritz Walter Model was a German field marshal during World War II. Although he was a hard-driving, aggressive panzer commander early in the war, Model became best known as a practitioner of defensive warfare.

His relative success as commander of the Ninth Army in

the battles of 1941–1942 determined his future career path.

Model first came to Hitler's attention before World War II, but their relationship did not become especially close until 1942.

His tenacious style of fighting and loyalty to the Nazi regime won him plaudits from Hitler, who considered him one of his best field commanders and repeatedly sent him to salvage apparently desperate situations on the Eastern Front as commander of Army Group North, Army Group North Ukraine and Army Group Centre.

In August 1944 Model was sent to the Western Front as commander of OB West and Army Group B. His relationship with Hitler broke down by the end of the war after the German defeat at the Battle of the Bulge.

In the aftermath of the defeat of Army Group B and its encirclement in the Ruhr Pocket, Model took his own life on 21 April 1945.

Died: 21 April 1945 (aged 54)  
Cause of death: Suicide.



### Ferdinand Schörner

Born: 12 June 1892  
Promoted: 5 April 1945

Ferdinand Schörner was a

German military commander who held the rank of Generalfeldmarschall in the Wehrmacht of Nazi Germany during World War II. He commanded several army groups and was the last Commander-in-chief of the German Army.

Schörner is commonly represented in historical literature as a simple disciplinarian and a slavish devotee of Adolf Hitler's defensive orders, after Germany lost the initiative in the second half of World War II in 1942/43.

More recent research by American historian Howard Davis Grier and German historian Karl-Heinz Frieser depicts Schörner as a talented commander with "astonishing" organizational ability in managing an army group of 500,000 men during the fighting in late 1944 on the Eastern Front.

He was harsh against superiors as well as subordinates and carried out operations on his own authority against Hitler's orders when he considered it necessary, such as the evacuation of the Sörve Peninsula.

Schörner was a dedicated Nazi and became well known for his ruthlessness. By the end of World War II, he was Hitler's favourite commander. Following the war he was convicted of war crimes by courts in the Soviet Union, and West Germany, and was imprisoned in the Soviet Union, East Germany and West Germany.

At his death in 1973 he was the last living German field marshal.

Died: 2 July 1973 (aged 81)  
Cause of death: Natural causes.



### Robert von Greim

Born: 22 June 1892  
Promoted: 25 April 1945

Robert Ritter von Greim was a German field marshal and First World War flying ace. He served first as an aerial observer and then later as a fighter pilot.

In World War II he became commander of the *5th Fliegerkorps* (5th Air Corps) which participated in the Battle of Britain.

Greim was promoted to *Generalleutnant* on 1 January 1940 and to *General der Flieger* (general of the aviators) on 19 July.

In April 1945, in the last days of World War II in Europe, Adolf Hitler appointed Greim commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe (German air force) after Hermann Göring had been dismissed for treason.

He is the last person ever promoted to field marshal in the German armed forces, just 12 days before Germany surrendered to the Allies.

After the surrender of Nazi Germany in May 1945, Greim was captured by the Allies. He committed suicide in an American-controlled prison on 24 May 1945.

Died: 24 May 1945 (aged 52)  
Cause of death: Suicide.

## Some trivia about British Field Marshals

- The first British Field Marshal was George Hamilton, the 1st Earl of Orkney in 1736.
- William, 1st Duke of Gloucester, was the first member of the royal family to be promoted to Field Marshal.
- Ferdinand Foch was a Marshal of France who became a British Field Marshal in 1919.
- Emperor Hirohito of Japan became a British field marshal in 1930. He became the only field marshal to be stripped of his rank. This happened shortly after the war in the Pacific started.
- On 28 May 1941 Jan Smuts became the only South African to be appointed as a Field Marshal of the British Army.
- In 1950 Thomas Blamey became the only Australian officer to become a British field marshal.
- Field Marshal Birenda Bir Bikram Shah Deva was King of Nepal. He became King in 1972 and, in 1973, became the only honorary British Field Marshal ever appointed. His father, King Mahendra, was made a field marshal in 1960.
- There has been 138 British field marshals from 1736 to 2002.



# Bless you my son

*Religion and the military all too often have gone hand-in-hand. Countless wars have been fought in the name of religion. Yet sometimes it does have a lighter side.*

Religion played a very important role in the old South African Defence Force and most functions would be opened and closed with prayer. Once a week a church parade would be held.

During basic training the SADF did try and cater for the religious needs of the conscripts.

The mainstream churches were all represented and these included the Dutch Reformed, Methodist, Apostolic, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Baptist. A Rabbi was also available for those of the Jewish faith.

## Conversion

Dale was 18 when he did his national service and recounts his memories of church parade.

"We used to have church parade every Wednesday morning from 9.00 to 9.45 am. It was compulsory and there was no way that you could avoid church parade. We used to form up on the parade ground and the company sergeant major would read out the list of available choices.

"NG (Dutch Reformed) in die *grootsaal* (in the big hall). Roman Catholics in the small hall. Baptist in Lecture Room 5.

"It was funny because they would always refer to the Catholics as "*die Roms'gevaar*" (the Roman danger). It was third behind "*die swartgevaar*" (the black danger) and "*die rooi-gevaar*" (the red (Communist)

danger.

"He would continue through his list until all of the churches and venues had been read. Corporals would then march the various groups off to their destinations. Most of the priests, pastors, whatever you want to call them, where from civvie (civilian) churches in town.

"I was a Baptist but I only attended one Baptist service. The Baptist minister was about 85 years old and he was a bore.

Every Wednesday morning I would go to the Catholic service. My dear old mom would have thrown a fit if she had known about it. But I really enjoyed the Catholic service because the priest was a scream.

"He was from Ireland and when he arrived on a Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock he was something else.

He would spend almost the entire service telling the most outrageous jokes. And he could swear like a trooper. Half the guys who used to attend were not Catholics. They used to go to hear this dear old Father carry on.

We really loved that old geezer. Not that we received that much spiritual guidance, but hell we learnt some good jokes."

## Not a believer

Not everyone was as thrilled about church parade though. Lenny was also 18 and he served his national service in the infantry in 1976. He was not

in the least amused with church parade.

"Listen, I grew up in the church. My dad was a lay preacher in a Pentecostal church and from as far back as I can remember I was forced to go to church. And I'm not talking about just once a week.

"Tuesday night was Bible Study, Thursday night was prayer meeting, and Friday night was youth. On Saturday nights we had a coffee bar at the church and I had to attend that as well.

"Sundays we would be in church for practically the whole day. At 9.00 in the morning I had to go to Sunday school. Then at 10.45 it was time for the morning service. If you got out of there by 1 o'clock you were lucky. Then it was back at 6.30 for the Evening Service. I hated it, I really did.

"It's not that I have anything against the church or against religion. It's just that I feel that it's a personal thing and should be a matter of choice. I was forced to go to church and I think that is the reason why I was so anti.

"One of the first things I thought when I was called up for national service was, "cool, now at least I won't be forced to go to church." What was the first thing the army did? Told me I had to go to church.

"When we had our first church parade the sergeant major called out all the churches and I just stood where I was. This was it. This was the day I was going to make a stand.

"Eventually I was the only person who had not fallen into a group and marched off. The sergeant major came up to me and asked me what church I belonged to.

"I'm an atheist," I told him. The sergeant major consulted his list for some time before replying.

"No," he said, very serious about it. "We don't have that on the list. I don't think that the atheist padre can make it on a Wednesday. Why don't you fall in with the Anglicans? That's almost the same thing, isn't it?"

I'm sure that the Anglicans would have been thrilled to learn that they were now considered to be atheists.

"I didn't even bother trying to explain to the sergeant major what an atheist was. I simply fell in with the Anglicans and attended their service every Wednesday. It could have been worse. At least it only lasted 45 minutes and it was only once a week."

## Who me?

Barry was 18 when he did national service in 1980. He remembers a church parade that landed him in hot water.

"We didn't have individual church parades at my unit. We had our own full time *dominee* (minister). His rank was equal to that of a colonel.

"Every Wednesday morning the entire unit would assemble in the hall and he would give the service. Because he was from the Dutch Reformed Church most of the service would be in Afrikaans. Every now and then he would throw in an English sentence for the benefit of those of use that were English speakers.

"I was on leader group course

at the time and we had to sit right in front of the hall. Now I have a huge problem. If I have to sit and listen to anyone talking in a monotone voice I fall asleep. I just can't help it.

"This particular Wednesday morning he was giving a sermon about how the youth were the future of the country. At one stage he said, in Afrikaans of course, "You people are the future of this country. Yes you! The "yes you" part had been said in English. And he had pointed his finger at his audience for effect.

"My eyes were closed and I must confess that I had fallen asleep. The loud "yes you" in English must have penetrated my slumber. I was convinced that he had noticed me sleeping and asked, "why are you sleeping? Yes you!"

"I immediately jumped to my feet, shook my head, and said, "No I'm not dominee."

This poor dominee was standing there with his mouth hanging open while I stood there looking like an idiot.

"I heard the voice of our Regimental Sergeant Major say, "Sit down. And then come and see me after the parade." I ended up getting seven extra duties.

## He's your what!

Ivan had joined the permanent force directly after he finished school.

"I wanted to be a soldier since I was in standard one. Throughout my school career that was all I wanted to be.

"When I finished matric I went straight off to join the army. Now I'm not going to tell you where this incident took place, not mention names or unit. Just in case.

After basics and junior leader

group course I lived in the single quarters at camp and, being permanent force, I had nearly every weekend off and I could go off base in the evenings.

"I had a car, but it was too far from my parent's house to drive home every weekend. One Friday night I went to the local Spur with a few of my mates. There was a group of young girls also at the Spur and we got chatting to them.

"One of the girls was really attractive and we seemed to hit it off straight away. I invited her to movies the next night and she said yes.

"After that we went out for about a month, every Friday and Saturday night. The favourite was to go the drive-in. It was the perfect place for a bit of kissing and fooling around.

"After we had been dating for a month she invited me to supper at her parent's home. I knew that she attended a local school and was in matric at the time.

"On the Saturday evening I went around to the address that she had given me. She met me at the door and then introduced me to her mother.

"We went through to the lounge and her mother brought us some coffee. I was sipping my coffee and chatting away, really trying to turn on the charm, when her father walked into the room. I nearly wet my pants.

"We had a full time padre at our unit. I think his rank was equal to a colonel. Now most priests are supposed to be these gentle and loving souls. Our padre scared the crap out of me.

"He was well-built, had these icy blue eyes, and was as tough as nails. His uniform was always immaculate and his boots gleaming. He wasn't the kind of





**SPOT THE DIFFERENCE:** Chaplains wore a purple beret (left) while members of the Parachute Battalion wore a maroon beret (right). One confused troops couldn't tell the difference.

person that you wanted to get on the wrong side of.

"And guess who this young girl's father was. Oh course, it was none other than our unit padre. I must confess that he didn't look all that happy to see me.

"After that night I told the girl that I would not be able to see her anymore. She wasn't all that happy with me, but I still think it was a good decision."

### Mistaken identity

Rivalry between the units was always fierce. Luckily most units were in separate towns and there was little danger of major confrontations between units.

Yet in a place like Tempe, Bloemfontein, there were three basic training units situated on top of each other. 1 South African Infantry Battalion, 1 Special Services Battalion, and 1 Parachute Battalion were practically next to each other. All three units carried out basic training and rivalry between the units was intense.

Steve (19) recalls an incident that happened towards the end of one particular intake.

"I was a Drill and Musketry

Instructor at 1 SAI, Bloemfontein. There was a lot of rivalry between 1 SAI, 1 SSB and One Parachute Battalion.

"One of the highlights on the calendar was the Inter-unit sports day that was held at the local athletic stadium. I promised the troops in my platoon a weekend pass to anyone of them who could bring me a parabat beret after the sports day.

"At the end of the day about four or five of my troops, looking the worse for wear, presented me with a parabat beret. I was just about to dismiss them when another of my troops came running up to me with a huge grin on his face.

"I got one corporal," he proudly told me. He handed me the beret and I went ice cold. The Parachute Battalion beret is maroon. This beret was dark purple.

"Where did you get this?" I asked him. He told me that he had gone to the toilet and found a parabat all alone.

"According to him, the parabat had smiled at him and greeted him in a friendly manner. My troop was having none of this and immediately decked the guy, knocking him onto his

bum and taking his beret.

"With a sense of foreboding I turned the beret over. The badge on the front of the beret confirmed my worst fears. It was a cross surrounded by a laurel wreath.

"My stupid troop had beaten the crap out of an army padre and stolen his beret. I threw the beret down a drain, getting rid of the evidence.

"For about a month afterwards the military police were searching for the guy who had assaulted the padre. By the way, my troop received his weekend pass, on condition that he kept his mouth shut."

### Missed the bus

I was a member of a Pentecostal church. The army referred to these as 'Free Churches'.

During basic training our unit allowed us to attend the local Full Gospel church in town. This was great on a number of levels. First of all it meant that you could get out of the camp. Secondly you would have contact with civilians and, the best part, there were a number of young girls that attended the church.

There was, however, a catch.

You couldn't just wander off base at your leisure. Those of us attending the church service had to parade beforehand.

We had to be dressed in our stepout uniform. If there was the slightest problem with your appearance then you would not be allowed to attend church.

We would then be marched off and board a Bedford truck. Then we were driven to church and dropped off. We always had a corporal that was in charge of us. We would also all have to sit together.

I really fancied one of the girls that attended the church. She was about 16 or 17 and I was smitten by her.

The church had a small library, so you could take out a book and then return it the next week. I discovered that this young girl actually ran the library.

After the church service they would lay on coffee, tea and a few snacks. We were allowed 30 minutes after the service to have something to drink and then it was back onto the truck to return to camp.

Most of the guys used this opportunity to try and chat up girls. I had a problem with this because the girl I was really keen on wasn't there. No problem, I was off to the library to take out a book.

I must admit that I was a bit nervous talking to her. I was trying to be all suave and sophisticated. Not sure how well it worked. I was 18 and had the social graces of a newt.

She was really sweet. Her name was Angela and she was 17 and in matric. I took out a book and assured her that I would return it the following week.

All I could think about the en-

tire week was Angela. I couldn't wait for the service to end so I could rush off to the library.

She seemed pleased to see me and she asked me how I had enjoyed the book. I had actually taken the time to read it and I told her that I had enjoyed it.

I asked her if she could recommend another book and she did. We chatted for ages until I eventually told her that I had better be on my way.

When I went outside it was only to find that the truck had already left and returned to camp. I was faced with a five kilometre walk back to camp.

When I arrived back the guard at the gate told me that the duty officer wanted to see me.

When they had arrived back at camp they had taken roll call and of course I was not there.

The duty officer was a young national service 2nd lieutenant. He told me that he was going to charge me for being AWOL (absent without leave). I tried to explain to him what had happened but he wasn't the slightest bit interested.

The next morning I had to go on orders in front of the unit second in command, a major.

He told me that I had been charged for being AWOL and asked me how I wanted to plead. I said that I was guilty. He then asked if I wanted to have a summary trial or if I wanted to accept his punishment. I told him that I would accept his punishment.

"Corporal," he said to my basics corporal who had marched me into his office. "This young man feels that he needs some extra motivational training. So for the rest of the week I suggest that he spends some after hours time at the obstacle course."

For the next five days I spent

an hour every evening at the obstacle course wearing my steel helmet, skeleton webbing and my rifle.

The worse was that I wasn't allowed to attend the church service for the next two weeks.

I gave the book I had taken out to one of the other guys and asked him to return it for me. I was convinced that after two weeks Angela would have forgotten all about me. This wasn't the case.

When my friend returned he told me that she had been very concerned about why I wasn't at the service.

Two Sundays later when I attended church again she had asked another girl to take over the library for the day. She had coffee with me and told me that she felt really bad. She felt that it was her fault that I had missed the transport back to camp.

The following weekend was my first pass and she asked me if I would be going home. I told her that I wasn't. It was a 12 hour drive back home and I would have to hitch hike.

She said that I could come and spend the weekend at her house. I thought she was joking.

That Friday afternoon when I walked out of the gates she was waiting for me with her father.

The spare room at her house had been made up for me. Her mom and dad also attended the same church and they were really great people. They spoilt me that weekend. After that I spent every weekend pass at their house.

Angela and I have been married now for 40 years. We have three children and two grand children. If it wasn't for the army letting us go to church on a Sunday, Angela and I would never had met.



# War, what is it good for...

According to Edwin Starr, war is good for absolutely nothing. While we may agree with that statement in principle, many items that we use daily were actually developed for war.

War, huh, good god, what is it good for, absolutely nothing. Many of you may recognise this as the opening line of the song War.

It was written in 1969 by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong for the Motown label. Whitfield first produced the song – an obvious anti-Vietnam War statement – with The Temptations as the original vocalists.

Motown decided to withhold the Temptations' version from single release so as not to alienate their more conservative fans.

The song was then recorded by Edwin Starr and released in 1970. It went on to become a Number One hit.

Yet it appears that Whitfield and Strong may have been wrong (that sentence sounds as if it could be used in a song). If war is good for any-

thing then it has to be the development of technology.

Fair enough, the majority of this technology is developed for use by the military. Yet it is surprising just how much of this technology finds its way into the commercial world.

Many items we use on a daily basis stem from technology first developed for the military.

Let's take a look at some of them.

## Aviator sunglasses

The characteristic shape and dark lenses of aviator sunglasses have become an iconic fashion item.

Their original purpose was to protect test pilots from the dangerously bright sunlight of the upper atmosphere.

In the 1930s, optics manufacturer Bausch & Lomb developed aviator goggles under the direction of the U.S. Army Air Corps.

Bausch & Lomb re-branded the sunglasses in 1937 as Ray-Ban - as they banish the sun's rays - and sold them to the civilian population. By World War II, aviators were a standard accessory for U.S. soldiers.

## Jeep

In World War II, the U.S. Army had a need for a light reconnaissance vehicle and asked automakers to develop prototypes and submit proposals.

The government chose the design of American Bantam car

company - a four-wheel drive vehicle with a top speed of just over 100 kph.

The auto-mobile's namesake, General Purpose, was abbreviated to G.P. and eventually nicknamed jeep.

The jeep proved an invaluable contribution to the U.S. military effort, with then General Dwight D. Eisenhower stating that "America could not have won World War II without it."

The company manufactured more than 600,000 jeeps during the war, and later sold the post-war surplus to the public rather cheaply.

Today, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles sells Jeeps. While the military use of jeeps has dwindled since World War II, U.S. sales of the Jeep Wrangler - which bears many of the design characteristics of the original - was over 240,000 in 2018.

## Aerosol bug spray

The next time you spray a fly or 'roach, spare a thought as to where the technology to do this came from.

In World War II, soldiers stationed in the South Pacific needed an easy way to kill mosquitos, which could potentially carry malaria.

In a partnership with the Department of Defence, two scientists with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Lyle Goodhue and William Sullivan, took on the task of developing a way to deliver insecticide as a fine mist

capable of killing mosquitos.

The first aerosol can was patented in 1941 and nicknamed "bug bomb" by soldiers.

The partnership between the USDA and the DoD has yielded other life-saving innovations, including the use of DDT in controlling typhus.

In 1949, engineer and veteran Robert Abplanalp patented a cheaper plastic aerosol valve meant for commercial mass production.

He started the Precision Valve Corporation to market the invention and turned a profit almost immediately.

The aerosol can has since been refined and is now less harmful to the environment.

## Tea bags

It has been said that the British Army wasn't fuelled so much by petrol and diesel, but rather that it was fuelled by tea. Show me a British soldier that doesn't enjoy a 'brew up'.

In 1908, a U.S. tea importer named Thomas Sullivan accidentally invented the modern teabag by sending samples of his loose leaf to customers in small silk pouches.

This revolutionary concept meant that you could now place one of these bags in a cup, pour in boiling water, add milk and sugar to your taste, and you had a cup of tea.

It really took off with the soldiers in the trenches of World War I as they could now brew individual cups of tea.

## Super Glue

Eastman Kodak was one of many companies that contributed to the war effort during

World War II.

In 1942, while testing a variety of compounds for use in a plastic rifle sight, Dr. Harry Coover a company chemist, inadvertently created cyanoacrylate, a compound later marketed as Super Glue.

The material was incredibly durable but was dismissed for being too sticky. When a colleague was testing cyanoacrylate nine years later, Dr. Coover had another encounter with the material. As the colleague complained the compound ruined his equipment, Coover realized its commercial potential.

Super Glue was first sold as a commercial product in 1958. The product was eventually adopted by military surgeons during the Vietnam War, who would spray it over wounds to stop bleeding instantly.

## Synthetic rubber

In the early 20th century, rubber was harvested from trees in South America, but soon southern Asia became the dominant producer of the world's rubber.

The global supply of natural rubber was sufficient until World War II, when the Axis powers cut off nearly all of the rubber supply from Asia.

Rubber is an incredibly valuable substance for the military. In addition to tires, the U.S. military needed rubber for airplanes, tanks, vehicles, and battleships.

In desperate need of the substance, the U.S. government turned to companies like Firestone, Goodyear, and Standard Oil to create a replacement. They quickly whipped up a synthetic rubber recipe, which

is still used to this day.

## Silly Putty

As we have already seen, the Japanese invasion of Malaysia had cut off America's supply of rubber.

In the USA many companies were trying to come up with a substitute material and eventually synthetic rubber was invented.

While trying to find a substitute for rubber, a chemist at General Electric came up with a stretchy, bouncy material made of boric acid and silicone oil. While highly unique, the material had no military application.

The material caught on, however, after GE executives began showing it off at cocktail parties and one interested party, adman Peter Hodgson, bought the manufacturing rights and changed the name to Silly Putty.

The product, packaged in small plastic eggs as a toy, began selling in 1950 and immediately caught on.

In 1968, astronauts on the Apollo 8 mission used Silly Putty to help keep their instruments in place. Since 1950, the company has sold more than 350 million Silly Putty eggs.

## Frozen juice concentrate

In 1943, the USDA and the Florida Citrus Commission set to work on the development of a frozen juice concentrate that could be sent to U.S. soldiers overseas.

At the time of their collaboration, orange juice that had been frozen and thawed would turn an unappetizing brown colour.

The thawed juice also developed a bitter taste, prompting





soldiers to nickname the beverage “battery acid” (does that sound familiar?).

Eventually, USDA scientists discovered that adding a dash of fresh orange juice to the concentrate before freezing it preserved its flavour.

The process was patented in 1945 but made available to any public or private entity that wished to use it.

Minute Maid began selling frozen juice products commercially in 1946. Orange juice is now one of the most commonly consumed fruit products in the United States.



**FROM THE TRENCHES:** Sanitary pads resulted from the material used for bandages in World War I.

### Sanitary Pads

One of the nasty side effects of war is that a lot of people end up getting wounded. This often results in a desperate shortage of medical supplies.

Bullet and shrapnel wounds use up a vast amount of bandages.

After the invention of cellulocotton, which is a pulp by-product of processed sugar cane, the absorbent yet disposable materials were used to bandage soldiers' wounds during World War I.

At the time British and American nurses began using these bandages as sanitary pads.

They worked so well that Kimberly-Clark began marketing Kotex disposable sanitary pads in 1920.

### EpiPen

A must for anyone with severe allergies, the EpiPen was initially conceived of as a military device.

Inventor Sheldon Kaplan worked at military contractor Survival Technology in Bethes-

da, Maryland, where he developed an auto-injector called the ComboPen.

This invention was first designed to deliver a treatment to soldiers who had come into contact with a nerve agent.

The ComboPen would quickly deliver the antidote into the bloodstream of the affected person.

Kaplan later tweaked this device to deliver epinephrine, which can help people who go into anaphylactic shock due to an allergic reaction.

Though his name was on the patent, Kaplan received little credit for his breakthrough during his lifetime. He died in 2009 but was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2016.

### GPS

Remember back in the days when we were in the military and wanted to plot our position.

We would use a map and a compass, take bearings, and eventually work out that according to our calculations we

were somewhere in Siberia. And here we thought we were somewhere in South West Africa. These days it's a lot easier to plot your position.

In the 1960s, the US Department of Defence developed the original Global Positioning System (GPS). The idea was to use satellites to determine a user's position on Earth by measuring his or her distance from three peripheral satellites in a process known as trilateration.

While the system became fully operational in March 1994, it captured the public's interest long before then.

President Ronald Reagan first ensured civil applications of GPS in 1983, after an incident where a Korean airliner strayed off course and was shot down by the Soviet Union demonstrated the need for better navigational technology.

The public received a comprehensive preview of the technology during the Gulf War, when soldiers used GPS to navigate across deserts and target enemies with an accuracy that was previously impossible.

Today, GPS technology is used in consumer products such as cars and phones, as well as applications like earthquake research and geocaching.

### Microwave Oven

Microwave technology was originally used as a radar to help locate enemies aircraft during World War II.

The ability of microwaves to cook food was discovered by accident. While conducting research on microwave radar technology, an engineer at defence contractor Raytheon

Company noticed that a candy bar in his pocket had melted.

This led to the realization that microwave equipment could be re-purposed to heat and cook foods. Later that year, Raytheon Company filed the first patent for a microwave oven.

The first commercial microwave was manufactured in 1954 and was about the size of a refrigerator.

### Tinned Food

The idea of tinned food is much older than you might imagine. The idea for this dates back to Napoleon and the need for food for his army.

In 1810, the French government offered a cash reward for a cheap way to preserve large amounts of food.

One inventor found that food which had been cooked in a jar stayed unspoiled until the seal was broken. This was a good, if cumbersome solution for providing food to the troops. After 15 years of attempts, Nicolas Appert perfected the canning process and this concept was transferred to metal cans.

Since World War I and many wars after that, soldiers survived on tinned foods while fighting.

Tinned foods eventually made their way to the commercial market and are now staples in supermarkets.

### Tabasco sauce

A necessity in modern food for millions, this instant taste enhancer was actually founded during the United States-Mexican war in the 1850s.

The story begins with a soldier who gave his banker friend

Edmund Mcilhenny in New Orleans some delicious Capsicum hot peppers from Mexico in the 1850s during the US-Mexico war.

Mcilhenny loved the peppers so much he planted them on his plantation at Aery Island just off the Louisiana Gulf Coast.

Eventually, the family created Tabasco Sauce. It has since become so popular that it was even used in American C-Rations during World War I.

### The Internet

You wouldn't be reading this magazine right now without the military sinking years of work and billions of dollars into ARPANET - the forerunner for the internet.

The Advanced Research Projects Agency Network began during the Cold War as a way for the U.S. military to develop an information sharing system without the need for a command centre.

The military was concerned any central location would be a Soviet target.

By the late 1960s, colleges were able to access the very limited trial run of ARPANET. At the time, the network users could only log onto a remote computer, print remotely, and transfer files. Decades of innovation honed the ARPANET into the World Wide Web created by British scientist Tim Berners-Lee.

So to answer Whitfield and Strong's question, "War, what is it good for", apparently quite a lot of stuff as indicated by this article.



The USS Gerald Ford is the largest and most advanced aircraft carrier, a ground-breaking ship the likes of which has never been seen in human history. Over 337 metres in length, 76 metres high and displacing 100,000 tons, it is the largest warship ever built by man.

There are those that claim that it is unsinkable. But is it really? And, if not, what would it take to sink the USS Gerald Ford?

On the morning of 7 April 1945 the Japanese battleship Yamato steamed towards the American task force invading Okinawa. The largest battleship ever built, the Yamato was the most feared ship in the world at

that time. With 46 cm guns that could launch shells up to a distance of 42 kilometres, Japan had spared no expense in its construction. It was armed with nine 46 cm Type 94 guns, each capable of firing high explosive and armour-piercing shells. It also had six 15.5 cm 3rd Year Type guns, 24 x 127 mm Type 89 guns, 162 x 25 mm Type 96 anti-aircraft guns, and four 13.2 mm Type 93 guns. In short the Yamato packed enough firepower to engage two or three American battleships at the same time.

Yet once spotted by American reconnaissance aircraft on that April morning its fate was sealed.

By the end of the day the Yamato lay at the bottom of the sea, the victim of an attack by 280 American bomber and torpedo bomber aircraft.

From the first attack at 12:37 to the time she exploded at 14:23, Yamato was hit by at least 11 torpedoes and six bombs. There may have been two more torpedo and bomb hits, but this is not confirmed.

Yamato never even got close enough to the American task force to fire at them.

The USS Gerald Ford has drawn many comparisons to the Yamato from sceptical defence experts. Battleships were powerful and feared weapons of war and none more so that the

Yamato. But they were already being made obsolete by the time the Yamato was in full operation. So to the sceptics fear that the aircraft carrier is even now close to becoming obsolete.

And with a further ten Ford-class carriers being planned, and at US\$13 billion price tag, if the sceptics are right the USS Gerald Ford and her sister ships could end up being a costly mistake for the United States.

But why do people fear that the aircraft carrier is nearly obsolete? The first answer to that question comes from the evolution of the long-range missile. In World War II aircraft carriers reigned supreme. They had the ability to project firepower

out of range of even the biggest battleship's guns, rendering them all but obsolete. A lesson the Yamato learnt the hard way.

Nowadays missiles threaten to out-range the aircraft carrier, with modern missiles boasting the ability to travel hundreds or even thousands of kilometres while moving at hypersonic speeds.

The second threat to the modern aircraft carrier comes from co-ordinated attacks by smaller surface vessels or drones. Imagine 20 or 30 small craft or drones

attacking at once. An aircraft carrier is a big and bulky ship. It is feared that it could fall prey to masses of unmanned small craft loaded with explosives. Or aerial drones on a kamikaze mission to sink the carrier. ISIS have already employed remote-controlled aircraft loaded with explosives against the Russians in Syria.

While well protected against traditional naval or aerial attack and aircraft carrier is not well equipped to defend itself against hordes of small attackers. So could either of these tactics work? Just what would it take to sink the USS Gerald Ford?

For a long time the prima-

# Unsinkable?

*The largest warship ever built by man, there are those that claim that she is unsinkable. But is it really? And, if not, what would it take to sink the USS Gerald Ford?*





ry threat to a carrier has come from submarines which, by their nature, are extremely difficult to detect and target. Yet the USS Gerald Ford has a speed of about 30 knots (56 km per hour) with a classified top speed. This is already faster than most submarines. Any submarine trying to speed up to catch the Ford would generate a lot of noise and quickly be identified by the Ford's escort ships or numerous anti-submarine helicopters, each loaded with dipping sonar and depth charges.

Sceptics point back to 2006 when a single Chinese submarine surfaced in the middle of a carrier group while they were on an exercise, it's important to note that the carrier and her escort ships at the time were not actively looking for submarine threats. They had no reason too.

While this could have been a potential lethal vulnerability,

a Chinese submarine attacking an American carrier would have been tantamount to a declaration of war. And during war or the build-up to a possible confrontation, the carrier and her escorts would have been actively looking for subs. This would make it difficult, if not downright impossible, for the sub to penetrate the entire battle group.

The second threat the Ford would face would be from Cruise missile attacks. Launched from extreme distances, most Cruise missiles are designed to fly low to the ocean on a pre-programmed track before popping up to engage their internal targeting radars and alter course for a hit. By flying low the Cruise missile avoids radar detection. But as soon as it pops up to engage its radar and adjust its trajectory it would appear on every radar in

the Ford's battle group.

In that scenario the battle group's Aegis cruisers would co-ordinate the defence of the entire group by firing salvos of SM6 or RIM-116 RAM missiles to destroy incoming missiles. With two RIM-162 ESSM launchers installed on the Ford and dozens across the rest of the battle group, a Cruise missile would have to penetrate several layers of anti-missile defence, each extending out for kilometres.

Even if these defences somehow failed, each ship in the battle group is equipped with Phalanx CIWS chain guns capable of tracking incoming missiles and spitting out over 50 rounds per second. The Ford alone has three of these weapon turrets.

The best way to overcome the Ford's missile defences would be to launch a large volley of Cruise missiles.



### USS Gerald R. Ford

But Cruise missiles have one fundamental weakness – they require a launch platform. Either a ship, submarine or aircraft.

With the Ford's 90 plus complement of aircraft and four E-2D Hawkeye early-warning radar planes the carrier can cast a protective bubble of surveillance hundreds of kilometres around the entire battle group.

Easily spotted, there simply exists no naval or air force in the world that could survive long enough to get within range of the Ford and its battle group.

Even during the Cold War Soviet military doctrine dictated the sacrifice of dozens of Tupolev Tu-22M Backfire bombers in kamikaze missions against American carrier battle groups.

Few, if any, were expected to survive the attempt to attack an American carrier and the US was so confident of their ability to defend their carriers that their own military doctrine dictated the wide spread use of carriers in a conflict against the Soviet Union.

Ballistic missiles prove a much bigger threat, however, as they can be launched from

thousands of kilometres away. This makes the launch platforms difficult, if not impossible, to neutralise early.

While typically used for delivering nuclear weapons to major cities, modern ballistic missiles such as those developed by China and Russia reportedly have the ability to alter their course on their decent trajectory. This means they could target a small moving target such as an aircraft carrier.

Yet while touting its arsenal of hundreds of Dong-Fend 26 Carrier-Killer missiles, these weapons require long and complex kill chains. They need to (a) spot a carrier, (b) identify the carrier, (c) track the carrier, and, (d) accurately target the carrier.

These links range from aerial platforms, tracking satellites, command and control centres down to the actual missile itself. China has, to date, not shown the capability of mastering every link in this long and complicated chain. Nor has it shown the ability to defend these assets from attack, which would then disrupt its entire capability.

Even so, Ford's battle group is well equipped to defend itself against ballistic missiles, as shown by recent tests of the SM-6 missiles carried by the groups Aegis cruisers. Though a saturation attack of dozens of missiles would have a good chance of overwhelming the carrier's defences, it is unlikely that China or Russia could protect the vital communications and tracking elements needed to guide those missiles in the first place, long enough to hit a

fast-moving Ford carrier. The last threat to the American Ford-class carriers comes from swarms of drones and speedboats laden with explosives. Both of these attacks would require the carrier to be operating extremely close to hostile shores, something a Ford carrier would never do during war time.

A swarm of fast attack boats would probably not have to range to find and close with a carrier group on the open seas. Even if they did, they would have to face a gauntlet of helicopters and escort ships packed with 12.7 mm heavy machine guns.

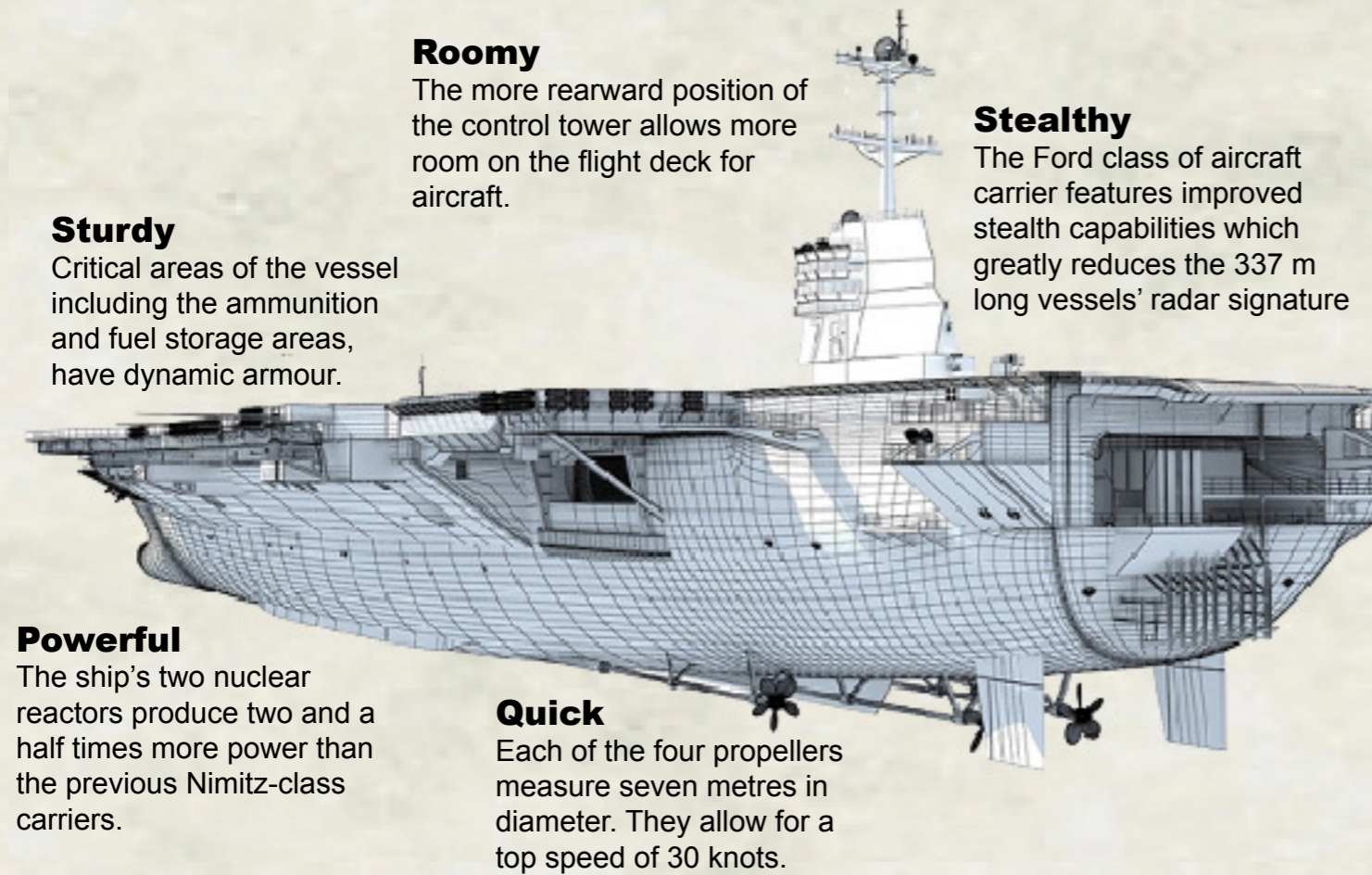
Never ones to leave it up to chance however, American defence companies have already begun testing direct energy weapons and other similar systems to defend against just such threats.

The USS Gerald Ford is the first in the line of new Ford-class carriers. It was launched on 11 October 2013 and commissioned on 22 July 2017.

The next two Ford-class carriers, the USS John F. Kennedy and the USS Enterprise, will be commissioned in 2024 and 2027 respectively.

Is it possible to sink the USS Gerald Ford? Only time, and combat, will tell.

I just can't help thinking about another ship that they said was unsinkable. It was called the Titanic. You probably saw the movie.



#### Roomy

The more rearward position of the control tower allows more room on the flight deck for aircraft.

#### Stealthy

The Ford class of aircraft carrier features improved stealth capabilities which greatly reduces the 337 m long vessels' radar signature

#### Sturdy

Critical areas of the vessel including the ammunition and fuel storage areas, have dynamic armour.

#### Powerful

The ship's two nuclear reactors produce two and a half times more power than the previous Nimitz-class carriers.

#### Quick

Each of the four propellers measure seven metres in diameter. They allow for a top speed of 30 knots.



# The Plot(s) to kill Hitler

Even before the Nazis came to power in 1933 there were at least four attempts on Adolf Hitler's life. From the time Hitler came to power until he committed suicide on 30 April 1945, there were at least 28 assassination attempts on his life. We look at some of them.

There is no denying that Adolf Hitler was popular with a lot of people. Especially in Germany. After the debacle of World War I many regarded him as the saviour of Germany.

Yet when you become one of the most despised tyrants in human history, spread totalitarianism through Europe, orchestrate the invasion of numerous countries, commit countless war crimes, including the attempted genocide of the Jewish people, and basically start a world war, then you are going to lose popularity.

A lot of people wanted Hitler dead. And it wasn't only the Allies that organised secret plots to kill Hitler. Members of the German High Command wanted him dead as well.

Many hoped his death would bring about an end to the Second World War; others simply wanted to put an end to his atrocities.

As we will see in this article, there were as many reasons for killing Hitler as there were attempts made and methods used.

Yet, as people discovered, killing Hitler was not as easy as it sounded.

Adolf Hitler was a strong believer in *Vorsehung*, or "providence." The Führer felt that if anything was going to happen to him, such as assassination, there was nothing he could do about it. He had been selected

by fate to achieve something great; he would not die, either by accident or assassination, until he had fulfilled that God-given mission. And for the better part of two decades, it appeared as if providence was on his side.

Even before the Nazis came to power in 1933 there were at least four attempts to kill Hitler. This included one where they tried to poison him at the Hotel Kaiserhof in 1930.

Once Hitler came to power there were many who conspired to kill or depose him. Most of the early attempts were divided between half-crazed lone gunmen and half-hearted former government officials.

The former tended to fail because they were disorganised, careless, and inept. The later failed because they were naively convinced that all they had to do was arrest Hitler and depose his government.

Here are just some of the attempts that failed.

## Beppo Römer

Josef "Beppo" Römer was a veteran of World War I. He was a member of the *Freikorps Oberland*, one of the paramilitary organizations that sprang up around Germany as soldiers returned in defeat from World War I.

When he was kicked out of his own organisation in the mid-1920s he had a change of heart

and converted to communism. He earned a law degree and started organising workers into labour unions.

He was appalled at Hitler's rise to power and, when the Nazis came to power in 1933, he conspired with a handful of other communists to kill the new Chancellor.

There plot never even got past the planning stages before they were arrested. Römer was lucky to escape execution and he was thrown into Dachau concentration camp.

After his release in 1939, Römer immediately got back to work organising plots to kill Hitler. He seemed oblivious to the fact that the Gestapo would be watching him like a hawk and in 1942 he was back in prison.

In September 1944, Römer was finally executed.

## Helmut Hirsch

If anyone had a grievance it would have been Helmut Hirsch.

He was born in Stuttgart but was technically an American citizen, even though he had never even visited the United States.

Add to that the fact that he was Jewish and also had a doubtful legal status in Hitler's Germany and it's not difficult to see why he joined a Czechoslovakian anti-Nazi group.

The group was known as the



**MINUTES TOO LATE:** The aftermath of the bomb planted by Georg Elser at the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich. It missed killing Hitler by only 13 minutes.

Black Front. Unfortunately for Hirsch the group had been thoroughly penetrated by German intelligence.

In 1938, somebody in the group – possibly the Nazi agent who later gave evidence at Hirsch's trial – sent him across the German border with instructions to pick up a couple of bombs and kill Hitler. Instead, Hirsch was picked up at the border, interrogated by the Gestapo, and beheaded in 1939.

## Maurice Bavaud

To say that Maurice Bavaud was an odd man would be an understatement.

A devout Catholic, he travelled from Switzerland to Germany in 1938 with the intention of killing Hitler. His orders were given to him by a man that Bavaud believed - of all things - was the heir to the Romanov dynasty.

Bavaud's multiple attempts on Hitler's life could have

come straight from the pages of a Monty Python script.

At the 1938 Nuremberg rally, Bavaud positioned himself on an overpass. When Hitler passed underneath him, Bavaud would take a .25 pistol from his pocket and shoot Hitler.

As Hitler approached, Bavaud reached for his gun, ready to take his shot. The problem is that the crowd all stood up in front of Bavaud and saluted their Führer, blocking his view. He lost sight of his target and the opportunity was lost.

Bavaud resorted to plan B. He had heard that Hitler would be relaxing in Berchtesgaden after the rally. He bought a train ticket for Berchtesgaden, only to discover on his arrival that Hitler was still in Munich.

Badaud bought another train ticket to Munich, only to learn when he got there that Hitler was now in Berchtesgaden.

The problem was that he had now run out of money. He was

arrested at the train station for vagrancy.

The police found the gun, a forged letter of introduction, and another document that was addressed to Hitler himself.

He was handed over to the Gestapo, who could be very persuasive with their interrogation methods, and Bavaud soon confessed to everything. He was sent to the guillotine in 1941.

This, however, was not the end of the story. For some bizarre reason the German government put Bavaud on trial twice after his death. The first time in 1955 and a year later in 1956.

In his first retrial his death sentence was commuted to five years in prison, which would have been nice to year 14 years earlier. A year after that, Bavaud's conviction was overturned entirely and his family given a pension for his anti-Hitler activities.

## Georg Elser

A mere 13 minutes is all that stood between success and failure for Georg Elser.

On 8 November 1939, Adolf Hitler would be giving his customary speech at the *Bürgerbräukeller* in Munich. This was to commemorate the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch.

Elser had spent two months planning and planting a bomb behind the speaker's podium. It was set to detonate while Hitler was making his speech.

Unknown to Elser, Hitler had initially cancelled his speech at the *Bürgerbräukeller* to devote his attention to planning the imminent war with France, but



changed his mind and attended after all.

The start time of the reunion was brought forward half an hour to 20h00, and Hitler cut his speech from the planned two hours to a one-hour duration.

The high-ranking Nazis who accompanied Adolf Hitler to the anniversary of the Beer Hall Putsch on 8 November 1939 were Joseph Goebbels, Reinhard Heydrich, Rudolf Hess, Robert Ley, Alfred Rosenberg, Julius Streicher, August Frank, Hermann Esser and Heinrich Himmler. Hitler was welcomed to the platform by Christian Weber.

Only 13 minutes after Hitler and his entourage had left, the bomb exploded.

The bomb brought down part of the ceiling and roof and caused the gallery and an external wall to collapse, leaving a mountain of rubble. About 120 people were still in the hall at the time. Seven were killed. Another sixty-three were injured, sixteen seriously, with one dying later.

Elser was arrested trying to cross the Swiss border. He had wires and bomb components in his pockets, photographs of the beer cellar, and diagrams of the explosive device he had built.

Elser was remanded to the Gestapo. According to a witness, non other than Heinrich Himmler himself took part in the beating Elser got. After several delays, Elser was sent to Dachau concentration camp.

He was executed on 9 April 1945, only days before the camp was liberated.



**PEACE IN OUR TIME:** Neville Chamberlain's agreement with Hitler over the Sudetenland was a spoke in the wheels of the generals' plans to arrest Hitler.

### Internal plots

All of the attempts we've looked at so far were made by civilians, most of them amateurs at the assassination game. The attempts were carried out with little or no outside help.

Starting in 1938, however, a series of increasingly desperate plots were hatched by members of the German military elite.

Following several scandals that discredited high-ranking German officers in 1938, Hitler took the opportunity to clean house. The German War Minister was fired for having married an ex-prostitute, and the Army Chief of Staff was cashiered for disloyalty. One field marshal was even court-martialed for suspected (later disproved) homosexuality.

Senior officers were outraged by Hitler's purges. Some of these officers got together and started plotting to remove Hitler.

The leader was Ludwig Beck, who had recently been fired as

Chief of Staff. It was his task to coordinate efforts to dispose Hitler in the name of the German people.

While none of their efforts were successful, it wasn't for lack of trying. For almost seven years the conspirators cooked up one plot after another. And, like the good staff officers they were, they committed all of their plans to paper.

Again and again, bad luck dashed the plotters' hopes and let Hitler unwittingly stroll right past men who were ready to die for the chance to kill him.

### Hitler's unwitting ally

With help from members of the *Abwehr* (German military intelligence), Beck made contact with British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and other members of the British government. He was looking for their support, but there is no evidence that they received any support whatsoever. This left the generals operating alone for



**SAFELY HOME:** Adolf Hitler arrives back in Berlin after visiting the Russian Front. A plot to blow up his aircraft was unsuccessful when the bombs failed to explode.

the time being.

Czechoslovakia had been created in 1919. The new nation was created out of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire and it contained numerous nationalities, including 3,2 million Germans.

Most of the Germans lived in the region on the western border with Germany – the Sudetenland.

Hitler wanted the Sudetenland back as part of Germany. And he was quite prepared to send his army in to do the job.

The plan was for the generals to overthrow and arrest Hitler if he fomented crisis over the Sudetenland. The plans for the putsch were all but finalised when Hitler was assisted by an unwitting ally.

Chamberlain announced that

he would meet with Hitler in Munich. Everybody knew right away this meant Hitler had won his gambit, which made arresting him impossible. The plan was shelved.

### The Spirit of Zossen

The next attempt took shape while Hitler was planning the invasion of France.

The generals were all veterans of World War I and they remembered what had happened the last time Germany had gone to war against the French.

They were convinced that Hitler's plan would spell the doom of Germany. Their old plans were updated and they got ready to move.

One of the plotters, serving Chief of Staff Franz Halder, insisted on waiting for the out-

come of one last meeting with Hitler, where the staff's objections would be formally presented. The meeting didn't go quite the way Halder expected.

Hitler flew into one of his trademark rages, ranting about how he knew all about the generals' disloyalty and promised to crush what he called "the spirit of Zossen" (Zossen was where the general staff were head quartered).

The tirade was probably nothing more than Hitler blowing off steam – something he did frequently. But Halder was convinced that the plot had been exposed. Once again the plans were shelved.

On 10 May 1940 the Germans invaded France. Six weeks later, on 25 June, it was all over. France had surrendered and in just 46 days the Germans had achieved what they couldn't do in four years from 1914 to 1918. The generals could hardly arrest Hitler now.

### Operation Valkyrie

With the Germans achieving success after success, the generals were left with little to do but bide their time.

Then, after Germany had invaded Russia, their armies were bogged down outside Moscow in 1941. The time was right for another attempt to get rid of Hitler.

Henning von Tresckow, the commander of the Moscow military district, took charge of the plot and worked it up into a full-scale plan codenamed Operation Valkyrie.

The plotters made contact with both British and American intelligence and prepared for a



military occupation of Berlin. Most importantly, the plotters' resolve had hardened. This time it would not be enough to just arrest Hitler - he would have to die.

On March 13, 1943, shortly after the surrender at Stalingrad and just before the disaster at Kursk, Hitler arrived in Smolensk for consultations.

One of the plotters, Helmuth Stieff, gave one of Hitler's aides a case of brandy for the plane trip back. Two of the bottles inside were not filled with brandy, but rather with explosives prepared by British intelligence. They were set with a 30-minute timer.

It was the perfect plan. Except for one small flaw. Two hours after take off, Hitler's plane landed safely in Berlin. The bombs had both failed to detonate.

Another plotter hurried to switch the case with another case of real brandy. On investigation it was discovered that both of the bombs had been duds.

One week after the failed bomb plot, Hitler was scheduled to speak at an exhibition of war trophies in Berlin. A German colonel got there first with a bomb in his pocket. His plan was to set the bomb's 10-minute timer and stand next to Hitler until it went off.

At the last moment, the colonel was told Hitler would only be staying for around eight minutes. That was cutting it too close. The would-be bomber disabled the device and gave up.

A few months later, in November 1943, Hitler was sched-

uled to have a look at some winter uniforms the *Wehrmacht* had ordered.

One of those selected to model the uniforms was Axel von dem Bussche, a *Wehrmacht* colonel. He had once witnessed a mass shooting in the east and since then had no love for Hitler or the Nazis.

His plan was simple. He would carry a grenade in his pocket. Then, as Hitler approached him, he would pull the pin and tackle Hitler.

The plan would probably have worked. Yet, as had happened in the past, the plan was thwarted by the Allies.

An Allied bombing raid destroyed the train that was carrying the uniforms and the show was cancelled.

## The 20 July plot

Operation Valkyrie's big plot finally came off on 20 July 1944.

The attempt to kill Hitler took place at *Wolfsschanze* (Wolf's Lair). It was Hitler's first Eastern Front military headquarters and was built for the start of Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.

Count Claus von Stauffenberg, a *Wehrmacht* colonel, would place a British-made suitcase bomb in Hitler's situation room. It would detonate while Hitler was attending a briefing.

What many people may not know was that there were three previous plots to kill Hitler at the Wolf's Lair.

In 1943 an unknown Pole tried to kill Hitler at the Wolf's Lair. Little information is avail-

able on this plot, but the attempt didn't even come close.

The attempt in November 1943 by Colonel Axel von dem Bussche would also have taken place at the Wolf's Lair.

When the demonstration of the new winter uniforms was finally set to go ahead at the Wolf's Lair, von dem Bussche was no longer available. He had been wounded in action earlier.

A young infantry officer, Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist-Schmenzin, was then designated to kill Hitler.

Kleist planned to set off explosives hidden in his briefcase. But like earlier attempts, the plan was not carried out, as Hitler kept putting off the scheduled uniform demonstration.

After the plot's failure, he managed to cover up his resistance activities and proceedings against him were dropped in December 1944 for want of evidence.

He was, thereby, spared a trial before the *Volksgerechtshof*, (People's Court) which would almost certainly have ended with a death sentence, as it did for many of his fellow plotters, including his own father. However, he was imprisoned at the Ravensbrück concentration camp, and subsequently sent to the front, where he remained until the war ended. He died in Munich on 8 March 2013 at the age of 80.

The attempt on 20 July 1944 came very close to succeeding. The location of the briefing had been unexpectedly changed from the subterranean *Führerbunker* to Albert Speer's wooden hut due to it being a hot summer's day.



**AFTERMATH:** Members of the German High Command survey the damage cause by the bomb on 20 July 1944. To the left are Martin Bormann and head of the *Luftwaffe* Hermann Göring.

Von Stauffenberg entered the briefing room carrying a briefcase containing two small bombs. He left the room to arm the first bomb with specially adapted pliers, a task made difficult because he had lost his right hand and had only three fingers on his left. A guard knocked and opened the door, urging him to hurry as the meeting was about to begin.

As a result, Stauffenberg was able to arm only one of the bombs. He left the second bomb with his aide-de-camp, Werner von Haeften, and returned to the briefing room, where he placed the briefcase under the conference table, as close as he could to Hitler. Some minutes later, he excused himself and left the room. After his exit, the briefcase was inadvertently moved behind a thick wooden table leg by Colonel Heinz Brandt. This action probably saved Hitler's life.

When the bomb went off the

table shield Hitler from the main force of the explosion. The bomb wasn't designed with any shrapnel, so everybody who wasn't killed by the blast force alone was more-or-less okay and Hitler was only slightly wounded.

It eventually turned out that the conspiracy had been compromised by the SS, and Himmler himself knew the names of almost every plotter, thanks to an outrageous act of negligence on the part of American intelligence.

The plotters had been in regular contact with Allen Dulles, the Organisation of Strategic Services (OSS) station chief in Switzerland. Dulles would later go on to head the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The liaison, Hans Bernd Gisevius, visited Dulles and gave him a list of the conspirators. Gisevius hated von Stauffenberg for personal reasons, so he didn't include the man's name

on the list. That's why, when Dulles transmitted the names over a compromised channel, the SS agents who intercepted the message were at a loss to know who the actual bomber was.

In the 24 hours following the bombing, the Gestapo effortlessly rounded up almost all of the conspirators who survived. Beck had committed suicide with a gunshot to the head on the night Valkyrie failed. Von Tresckow, at his post on the Eastern Front, got news of the failure over the radio, grabbed a grenade, walked out toward the Soviet lines, and blew himself away.

The SS reaction to the July 20 plot was as brutal as it was swift. Thousands of people, both real and alleged plotters, were rounded up and executed. Many were tortured for days before execution. Leading plotters were given a show trial and slowly hung from piano wire suspended on meat hooks.

*Abwehr* chief Wilhelm Canaris, who had been swept up in the July 20 backlash, was executed at Flossenbürg concentration camp on 9 April 1945. He was survived by a widow who spent the rest of her life collecting a pension from the CIA, hinting at the role American intelligence had played in these failed plots.

Four months after the last attempt on his life, Hitler moved into a bunker under the Chancellery building in Berlin. Five months after that, he took his own life with cyanide and a self-inflicted gunshot, finally achieving what so many other had failed to do.



# Pro Patria Museum

*The Pro Patria Museum NPC aims to honour and recognise the historical role played by the South African Security Forces to create a safe and peaceful environment for an orderly political transition and to educate current and future generations about this role.*

For 28 years from 1966 to 1989 plus-minus 600 000 South African men and women put their lives at risk during the Borderwar against a superpower to create a safe and peaceful environment to ensure a peaceful transition of political power.

Every facet of daily living in South Africa was touched by this conflict: Father played his part in the Commando, Mother baked for the Southern Cross Fund, Sis had a boyfriend on the Border and Sonny boy was trained by the SA Defence Force into a professional, responsible, and capable soldier to defend his Country.

This generation has been characterised by courage, sacrifice, innovation, and bravery – they deserve to be remembered and honoured.

The SADF Wall of Remembrance at the Voortrekker Monument (VTM) displays the names of those that paid the highest price. The Wall pays tribute and represents those honoured by the second minute

of silence during remembrance services.

The Pro Patria Museum (PPM) is currently being created to preserve this important heritage. It is not only for those who paid the Highest Price, but is there specifically for those that returned. It will serve as a testimony and symbol of life.

In this manner the museum aims to recognise military veterans' and their families' contribution to the RSA and thus honour and preserve their heritage for their offspring.

## Pro Patria Museum

The Pro Patria Museum Non-Profit Company (NPC) was established in January 2022 to inspire participants in the conflict, their families, and offspring to remember and honour the historic events during this period.

The NPC's Board of Directors and Board of Control comprise competent veterans and business leaders who strive to achieve and maintain the highest standards of excellence,

professionalism, and fiduciary responsibility.

The PPM Board has thus signed a formal Memorandum Of Understanding with the VTM to initially establish an interim museum in the short term, and later a permanent museum. They are now entering Phase 1 of the project.

### Phase 1

The Pro Patria Museum is situated at Fort Schanskop. The PPM has conference facilities, use of the amphitheatre and the entertainment lapa to them, their supporters and their families' disposal.

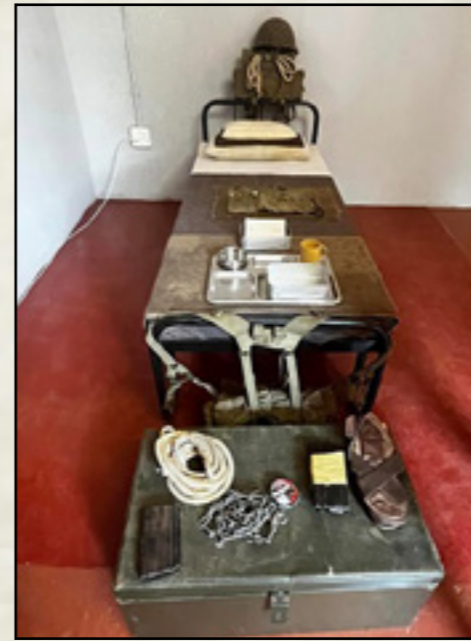
The interim exhibition opened for the public on Heritage Day, the 24th of September 2022.

### Phase 2

The "Affordable World-Class Pro Patria Museum" is planned in and around the Amphitheatre building of 3 500 m<sup>2</sup>.

This project will be launched and executed by the military veteran society and will reflect and honour the era (1966 - 1989) in all its glory.

A typical Bush Base Camp is envisaged, a Veteran Wall of Recognition, as well as a Main Equipment Display in addition to the Exhibition area and supporting facilities in the space underneath the Am-



### READY FOR INSPECTION:

An example of the layout of a bed for morning inspection. The layout would often vary from unit to unit.

phitheatre Parking Lot. Plans for these elements in the PPM Museum Complex are well underway and the target is to complete it in the next 24 months.

### Phase 3

Phase 3 will commence when finances allow. It envisages a re-designed lay-out of higher quality and sophistication and focuses specifically on the Exhibition area and its concomitant enabling facilities, e.g., the library, coffee shop, Cuca-shop, meeting and recreational halls and offices.

The Pro Patria Museum will also endeavour to provide orientation, educational and leadership programs to empower the youth – our future - to contribute towards and prepare them for the challenges of adulthood and life in general.

The "Affordable Pro Patria

Museum" of phase 2 is envisaged to cost in the vicinity of R20 million. They plan and strive to raise this amount by December 2023.

To build a world-class museum for a world-class generation, the museum needs your support. If you feel that the Borderwar tales of courage, innovation and sacrifice deserve to be remembered, and if the SADF and the compatriots you served with, added value to your life, you now could contribute to the Pro Patria Museum.

This contribution will initially be recognised in a virtual Veteran Wall of Recognition and later in the physical Veteran Wall of Remembrance.

This will be done in the form of the proverbial Dog Tag (Military Documentation Tag) engraved on a stainless-steel sheet. These sheets will be displayed on the Wall, grouped in the various force number year groups. The Wall is to be erected around the Troopie Monument – which will form the focus point of the Veteran Wall of Recognition.

## Dog Tag Project

To build a world-class museum for a world-class generation, the museum needs your support. If you feel that the Borderwar tales of courage, innovation and sacrifice deserve to be remembered, and if the SADF and the compatriots you served with, added value to your life, you now could contribute to the Pro Patria Museum.

One of the ways you can support the museum is by donating

your or your parents' original 'browns', books, photos - They can use everything. The items can also be made available on loan.

The other method of supporting the museum is through the Dog Tag Project. This will be done in the form of the proverbial Dog Tag (Military Documentation Tag) engraved on a stainless-steel sheet. These sheets will be displayed on the Wall, grouped in the various force number year groups. The Wall is to be erected around the Troopie Monument – which will form the focus point of the Veteran Wall of Recognition.

The first 1000 members that purchase a dog tag will be recognised as Founder Members.

This contribution will initially be recognised in a virtual Veteran Wall of Recognition and later in the physical Veteran Wall of Remembrance.

The cost of a Dog Tag is R1,000, with various payment options available.

If you would like to find our more information on the Dog Tag Project or more information on the Pro Patria Museum, then click on [this link](#).

We at Military Despatches believe that this is a necessary and worthwhile project, and one that we fully support. We urge our readers to support this project where and if they can.

In future issues of Military Despatches we will be bringing you regular updates on the Pro Patria Museum, as well as on the Dog Tag Project.







# SADF Shoulder Flashes

This month we're looking at shoulder flashes of the old South African Defence Force (SADF). These were worn on the shoulder of the step-out jacket. Later they brought out a 'Tuperware' version of the flashes that were worn with browns. How many of these do you remember? Answers on page 92.



**LEFT:** Examples of different SADF uniforms including browns, step-outs, and mess dress.

**BELOW:** The cuca shop. Anyone that served in Ovamboland will know what a cuca shop was.



**ABOVE:** An example of a table laid out for a formal dinner.



**RIGHT:** Examples of various radio equipment used by the SADF.



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



## Assault rifle ammunition

After World War II the NATO countries chose 7.62x51 mm ammunition, while the Soviets chose 7.62x39mm. The United States, however, went with 5.56x45 mm calibre.

For most of the Cold War NATO used 7.62x51 mm ammunition, while the Warsaw Pact countries opted for 7.62x39 mm ammunition. China also went with the 7.62x39 mm calibre round.

Between 1957 and 1964 the United States also used 7.62x51 mm for the standard U.S. service rifle. From 1962, during the Vietnam War, they began to switch to 5.56x45 mm ammunition.

So what were the differences between the different calibres of ammunition, and why were they used?

In this months Head-to-Head we look at the differences between the ammunition, as well as some of the iconic weapons that used them.

### 7.62×51mm NATO

The 7.62×51mm NATO (official NATO nomenclature 7.62 NATO) is a rimless, bottlenecked rifle cartridge. It is a standard for small arms among NATO countries.

First developed in the 1950s, the cartridge had first been introduced in U.S. service for the M14 rifle and M60 machine gun.

While the 7.62×51mm was accurate, it needed a longer, heavier weapon to be effective.

In 1957 the M14 rifle became the standard-issue rifle for the U.S. military, replacing the M1 Garand rifle.

Around the same time Britain and Canada adopted the Belgian FN FAL. In Britain it was known as the L1A1 SLR.

The West German Army des-

ignated it as the G1. The Germans soon transitioned to a modified version of the Spanish CETME rifle by Heckler & Koch that was adopted as the G3.

South Africa also adopted the FN-FAL where it was manufactured under licence as the R1.

With all of these firearms, it was clear that the 7.62×51mm NATO could not be fired controllably in fully automatic because of recoil.

### 7.62×39 mm

The 7.62×39mm round is a rimless bottlenecked intermediate cartridge of Soviet origin. The cartridge is widely used due to the worldwide proliferation of Russian SKS and AK-47 pattern rifles, as well as RPD and RPK light machine guns.



7.62x51 mm

7.62x39 mm

5.56x45 mm

The 7.62×39mm rounds in use with the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation are designed for AKM assault rifles and AK-derived light machine guns. As per 2003 there were several variants of 7.62×39mm produced for various purposes. All use clad metal as case material.

The Warsaw Pact focused on quantity over quality, producing large numbers of weapons that were often simpler, cheaper and easier to maintain and operate than their NATO counterparts.

The first weapon to use the 7.62×39mm round was the SKS (Samozaryadny Karabin sistemy Simonova) carbine in 1945.

This was followed by the iconic AK-47 in 1949. The AKM, an improved variant of the AK-47, was introduced in 1959 - although the AK-47 still remained the standard issue weapon for many Russian units.

There have been many copies of the AK-47, sometimes under licence.

The Type 56 carbine was a licensed variant of the SKS produced by China. The Type 56 assault rifle was a Chinese variant of the AK-47 and AKM.

Produced by Yugoslavia, the Zastava M70 is an unlicensed derivative of AK-47.

From the early 2002s Russia began to replace the AK-47 and AKM with more modern assault rifles. These include the AK-103 and AK-104 (2001), the AK-15 (2016), and the AK-203 (2022).

### 5.56×45 mm NATO

The United States had originally gone with the 7.62×51mm M14 rifle. From as early as 1955 the US Armed Forces were becoming involved in the conflict in Vietnam.

They soon began to realise that the M14 was both too large and too heavy for the close confines of the Vietnam jungles. They were also looking for a weapon with a larger magazine capacity.

In 1959 designers Eugene Stoner and L. James Sullivan began working on the M16 rifle, which adapted from the ArmaLite AR-15 rifle for the United States military. The original M16 rifle used a .223 Remington cartridge with a 20-round magazine.

The 5.56×45mm NATO is a rimless bottlenecked intermediate cartridge family developed in the late 1970s in Belgium by FN Herstal.

It consists of the SS109, L110, and SS111 cartridges. On 28 October 1980, under STANAG 4172, it was standardized as the second standard service rifle cartridge for NATO forces as well as many non-NATO countries.

Though they are not entirely identical, the 5.56×45mm NATO cartridge family was derived from and is dimensionally similar to the .223 Remington cartridge designed by Remington Arms in the early 1960s.

In 1964, the M16 entered US military service and the following year was deployed for jungle warfare operations during

the Vietnam War.

In 1969, the M16A1 replaced the M14 rifle to become the US military's standard service rifle.

The M16A1 incorporated numerous modifications including a bolt-assist, chrome-plated bore, protective reinforcement around the magazine release, and revised flash hider.

In 1983, the US Marine Corps adopted the M16A2 rifle, and the US Army adopted it in 1986. The M16A2 fires the improved 5.56×45mm (M855/SS109) cartridge and has a newer adjustable rear sight, case deflector, heavy barrel, improved handguard, pistol grip, and buttstock, as well as a semi-auto and three-round burst fire selector.

Adopted in July 1997, the M16A4 is the fourth generation of the M16 series. It is equipped with a removable carrying handle and Picatinny rail for mounting optics and other ancillary devices.

Israel had originally used the Belgian FN FAL rifle. The FAL had its limitations, a common complaint being that the abundant local sand and dust exposure would cause weapon malfunction (later attributed to lack of stringent maintenance).

Overall, however, the FN FAL was considered long and bulky. Its length and malfunctions became such consistent issues that during the 1973 Yom Kippur War some soldiers began arming themselves with the much smaller Uzi.

Hence the IDF (Israeli Defence Force) specifically sought



a weapon that would offer the same benefits as AK-47, such as low maintenance requirements, but would also have the accuracy of the M16 and FN FAL.

The result was the 5.56×45 mm Galil and, from 1972, it began to replace the FN-FAL.

Then in 1978 Austria introduced a revolution in rifle design, the Steyr AUG Bullpup

assault rifle.

Also in 1978 France began producing the FAMAS Bullpup assault rifle.

In 1980 South began replacing their 7.62×51mm R1 rifle with the 5.56×45 mm R4, a licensed variant of the IMI Galil.

In 1985 the 5.56×45 mm SA80 replaced the L1A1 SLR with the British Armed Forces.

In 1997 the 5.56×45 mm Heckler & Koch G36 became the standard issue rifle for the German *Bundeswehr*.

From 1994 the M4 carbine has become the standard issue rifle for the US Armed Forces.

These days most NATO countries have adopted weapons that use 5.56×45 mm calibre rifles.

## Iconic 7.62×51 mm rifles

### M14

- Designed: 1954
- Manufacturer: Springfield Armoury
- Weight: 4.9 kg
- Length: 1,126 mm
- Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 700–750 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 457 metres
- Feed system: 20-round detachable box magazine

### FN FAL

- Designed: 1947–53
- Manufacturer: FN Herstal
- Weight: 4.25 kg
- Length: 1,090 mm
- Action: Short-stroke gas piston, closed tilting breechblock
- Rate of fire: 650–700 rounds/min



- Max firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 20-round detachable box magazine

### Heckler & Koch G3

- Designed: 1950s
- Manufacturer: Heckler & Koch
- Weight: 4.38 kg
- Length: 1,025 mm
- Action: Roller-delayed blowback
- Rate of fire: 500–600 rounds/min



- Max firing range: 1,000 metres
- Feed system: 20-round detachable box magazine

## Iconic 7.62×39 mm rifles

### SKS

- Designed: 1945
- Manufacturer: Tula Arsenal
- Weight: 3.85 kg
- Length: 1,020 mm
- Action: Short stroke gas piston, tilting bolt, self-loading
- Rate of fire: 35-40 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 400 metres
- Feed system: 10-round stripper clip, internal box magazine

### AK-47

- Designed: 1946–1948
- Manufacturer: Kalashnikov Concern
- Weight: 3.47 kg
- Length: 880 mm
- Action: Gas-operated, closed rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 600 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 350 metres
- Feed system: 30-round detachable box magazine

### AK-12

- Designed: 2011
- Manufacturer: Kalashnikov Concern
- Weight: 3.5 kg
- Length: 922 mm
- Action: Gas-operated, long stroke gas piston, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 700 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 440 metres
- Feed system: 30-round detachable box magazine

### AK-203

- Designed: 2007-2010
- Manufacturer: Kalashnikov Concern
- Weight: 3.8 kg
- Length: 940 mm
- Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 700 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 30-round detachable box magazine



## Iconic 5.56×45 mm rifles

### M16

- Designed: 1959
- Manufacturer: Colt's Manufacturing Company
- Weight: 2.89 kg
- Length: 986 mm
- Action: Gas-operated closed rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 700-800 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 550 metres
- Feed system: 30-round detachable box magazine

### Galil

- Designed: Late 1960s
- Manufacturer: Israel Military Industries
- Weight: 3.75 kg
- Length: 850 mm
- Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 650 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 410 metres
- Feed system: 30-round STANAG magazine

### Steyr AUG

- Designed: 1977
- Manufacturer: GIAT Industries
- Weight: 3.6 kg
- Length: 790 mm
- Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 680-750 rounds/min



- Max firing range: 3,200 metres
- Feed system: 30-42-round proprietary detachable box magazine

### FAMAS F1

- Designed: 1967-1971
- Manufacturer: Kalashnikov Concern
- Weight: 3.61 kg
- Length: 757 mm
- Action: Lever-delayed blowback
- Rate of fire: 900-1,100 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 30-round detachable box magazine

### Heckler & Koch G36

- Designed: 1990-1995
- Manufacturer: Heckler & Koch
- Weight: 3.63 kg
- Length: 999 mm
- Action: Short-stroke piston, closed rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 750 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 600 metres
- Feed system: 30-round proprietary detachable box magazine

### SA80

- Designed: 1970s-1980s
- Manufacturer: RSAF Enfield
- Weight: 4.98 kg
- Length: 785 mm
- Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 610-775 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 300 metres
- Feed system: 30-round detachable STANAG magazine

### IWI Tavor

- Designed: 1995-2003
- Manufacturer: Israel Military Industries
- Weight: 3.27 kg
- Length: 720 mm
- Action: Long-stroke gas-operated, closed rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 750-950 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 550 metres
- Feed system: 30-round detachable box STANAG magazine

### M4 carbine

- Designed: 1982-1993
- Manufacturer: Colt's Manufacturing Company
- Weight: 3.52 kg
- Length: 838 mm
- Action: Gas-operated, closed rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 700-970 rounds/min



- Effective firing range: 500 metres
- Feed system: 30-round detachable box magazine



# Erich Hartmann

Nicknamed 'Bubi' (The Kid), Erich Alfred Hartmann was a German fighter pilot during World War II and the most successful fighter ace in the history of aerial warfare.

Erich Alfred Hartmann was the most successful fighter ace in the history of aerial warfare. He flew 1,404 combat missions and participated in aerial combat on 825 separate occasions.

He was credited with shooting down a total of 352 Allied aircraft: 345 Soviet and 7 American while serving with the Luftwaffe.

During his career, Hartmann was forced to crash-land his fighter 16 times after either mechanical failure or damage received from parts of enemy aircraft he had shot down; he was never shot down by direct enemy action.

On 29 October 1943, Hartmann was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for destroying 148 enemy aircraft and the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross for destroying 202 enemy aircraft on 2 March 1944.

Exactly four months later, he received the Swords to the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves for shooting down 268 enemy aircraft. Ultimately, Hartmann earned the coveted Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Dia-

monds on 25 August 1944 for 301 aerial victories. At the time of its presentation to Hartmann, this was Germany's highest military decoration.

## Early life and career

Erich Hartmann was born on 19 April 1922 in Weissach, Württemberg, to Doctor Alfred Erich Hartmann and his wife,

Elisabeth Wilhelmine Machtholf.

The economic depression that followed World War I in Germany prompted Doctor Hartmann to find work in China, and Erich spent his early childhood there. The family was forced to return to Germany in 1928, when the Chinese Civil War broke out.

During World War II, Hartmann's younger brother, Alfred, also joined the Luftwaffe, serving as a gunner on a Junkers Ju 87 in North Africa. Alfred Hartmann was captured by the British and spent four years as a prisoner of war.

Hartmann was educated at the Volksschule in Weil im Schönbuch (April 1928 – April 1932), the Gymnasium in Böblingen (April 1932 – April 1936), the National Political Institutes of Education (Nazi Secondary Education School) in Rottweil (April 1936 – April 1937), and the Gymnasium in Korntal (April 1937 – April 1940), from which he received his Abitur.

It was at



Korntal that he met his wife-to-be, Ursula "Usch" Paetsch.

Hartmann's flying career began when he joined the glider training program of the fledgling Luftwaffe and was taught to fly by his mother, one of the first female glider pilots in Germany.

The Hartmanns also owned a light aircraft but were forced to sell it in 1932 as the German economy collapsed. The rise to power of the Nazi Party in 1933 resulted in government support for gliding, and, in 1936, Elisabeth Hartmann established the glider club in Weil im Schönbuch for locals and served as instructor.

The 14-year-old Hartmann became a gliding instructor in the Hitler Youth. In 1937, he gained his pilot's license, allowing him to fly powered aircraft.

Hartmann began his military training on 1 October 1940 at the 10th Flying Regiment in Neukuhren. On 1 March 1941, he progressed to the *Luftkriegsschule 2* (Air War School 2) in Berlin-Gatow, making his first flight with an instructor four days later, followed in just under three weeks by his first solo flight.

He completed his basic flying training in October 1941 and began advanced flight training at pre-fighter school 2 in Lachen-Speyerdorf on 1 November 1941. There, Hartmann learned combat techniques and gunnery skills.

His advanced pilot training was completed on 31 January

1942, and, between 1 March 1942 and 20 August 1942, he learned to fly the Messerschmitt Bf 109 at the *Jagdfliegerschule 2* (Fighter Pilot School 2).

## World War II

In October 1942, Hartmann was assigned to fighter wing *Jagdgeschwader 52* (JG 52—52nd Fighter Wing), based at Maykop on the Eastern Front in the Soviet Union.

The wing was equipped with the Messerschmitt Bf 109G, but Hartmann and several other pilots were initially given the task of ferrying Junkers Ju 87 Stukas down to Mariupol.

His first flight ended with brake failure, causing the Stuka to crash into and destroy the controller's hut. Hartmann was assigned to III. Gruppe of JG 52, led by Gruppenkommandeur (group commander) Major Hubertus von Bonin, and placed under the experienced Oberfeldwebel Edmund "Paule" Roßmann, although he also flew with such experienced pilots as Alfred Grislawski, Hans Dammers and Josef Zwernemann.

After a few days of intensive mock combats and practice flights, Grislawski conceded that, although Hartmann had much to learn regarding combat tactics, he was a talented pilot.

Hartmann was placed as wingman to Paule Roßmann, who acted as his teacher, and one of the factors that enabled Hartmann's success. Grislawski also gave Hartmann pointers on where to aim.[18]

Hartmann eventually adopted the tactic "See – Decide – Attack – Break".

The tactics were learned from Roßmann who had been injured in one arm and was not able to fly in physically demanding dogfights. Roßmann's solution was to "stand off", evaluate the situation, then select a target that was not taking evasive action and destroy it at close range.

## Early aerial combat

On 19 September 1942, III. Gruppe had relocated to an airfield named Soldatskaja, located approximately halfway between Mozdok and Pyatigorsk. The Gruppe stayed at this airfield until 1 January 1943. During this period, the pilots occasionally also operated from airfields at Mozdok (15, 18, 19, 21, 22 and 23 October) and from Digora (5 to 17 November 1942), supporting Army Group A in the Battle of the Caucasus.

Hartmann flew his first combat mission on 14 October 1942 as Roßmann's wingman. When they encountered 10 enemy aircraft below, an impatient Hartmann opened full throttle and separated from Roßmann.

He engaged an enemy fighter, but failed to score any hits and nearly collided with it. He then ran for cover in low cloud, and his mission subsequently ended with a crash landing after his aircraft ran out of fuel.

Hartmann had violated almost every rule of air-to-air combat, and von Bonin sentenced him to three days of working with



the ground crew.

According to Günther Rall, who later became Hartmann's Gruppenkommandeur, Roßmann refused to fly with Hartmann again following this incident. Hartmann was then paired up with Grislawski as his wingman.

Twenty-two days later, Hartmann claimed his first victory, an Ilyushin Il-2 Sturmovik of the 7th Guards Ground Attack Aviation Regiment, but by the end of 1942, he had added only one more victory to his tally.

As with many high-claiming aces, it took him some time to establish himself as a consistently successful fighter pilot. On 5 November 1942, debris from an Il-2 damaged his Bf 109 G-2 engine resulting in a forced landing at Digora.

His Gruppe was moved to the combat area of the Kuban bridgehead on 1 April 1943 where it was based at an airfield at Taman. Operating from Taman until 2 July, III. Gruppe also flew missions from Kerch on 12 May, from Sarabuz and Saky on 14 May, Zürichtal, present-day Solote Pole, a village near the urban settlement Kirovske on 23 May, and Yevpatoria on 25/26 June.

Hartmann's youthful appearance earned him the nickname "Bubi" (the hypocoristic form of "young boy" in the German language; roughly equivalent to "Kid"), and Walter Krupinski, to whom Hartmann was assigned as wingman, would constantly urge him: "Hey, Bubi, get in closer" or chastise him with "What was that, Bubi?"

The danger of this method was evident on 25 May 1943



**TAKING A BREAK:** Eric Hartmann (left) relaxes on the wing of his fighter between missions,

when he collided with a Soviet fighter instead of shooting it down. Nevertheless, Hartmann steadily improved. In Krupinski's absence, from the third week of May to the first week of August, Hartmann's number of claims rose from 17 to 60.

In preparation for Operation Citadel, III. Gruppe was relocated to the central sector of the eastern Front. The Gruppe first moved to Zaporizhzhia and then to Ugrim on 3 July.

There, under the command of Luftflotte 4, they supported Army Group South fighting on the southern flank of the salient.

On 5 July Hartmann claimed four victories during the large dogfights that took place during the Battle of Kursk. The day ended badly when Hartmann was unable to prevent Krupinski from being shot down and wounded over Ugrim airfield. Hartmann remarked; "the departure of Krupinski was a severe strike against the Staffel, and particularly against me."

During Krupinski's convalescence, Hartmann served as temporary Staffelkapitän (squadron leader) of 7. Staffel until 12 August. Hartmann began to score successes regularly in a target rich environment.

On 7 July, he for the first time became an "ace-in-a-day", claiming seven aerial victories that day, three Il-2 ground attack aircraft and four Lavochkin-Gorbunov-Gudkov (LaGG) fighters. This figure includes two Il-2s from the 1 ShAK regiment claimed shot down on an early morning mission.

On 8 July, he claimed four aerial victories and three the next day. On the former date, Hartmann claimed two aircraft on each mission he flew.

In the first, Soviet records show at least one La-5 was lost. Major Tokarev of the 40 IAP (Fighter Aviation Regiment—*Istrebitelny Aviatsionny Polk*) was killed. In the afternoon, a two-man patrol with Rall resulted in two claims, and a third

for Rall.

At the start of August 1943, his tally stood at 42, but Hartmann's tally had more than doubled by the end. The Red Army began a counter-offensive in the region to contain the German operation and destroy its forces (Operation Kutuzov and Operation Polkovodets Rumyantsev). JG 52 was engaged in defensive operations throughout the month. On 1 August 1943, Hartmann again became an "ace-in-a day" by claiming five victories over LaGG fighters.

Another four followed on 3 August and five on 4 August. On 5 August, III. Gruppe was ordered to an airfield named Kharkov-Rogan, 10 kilometers east of Kharkov where they fought against the Soviet Belgorod–Kharkov offensive operation.

That day, he again claimed five aircraft destroyed, followed a single on 6 August, and a further five on 7 August. On 8 and 9 August he claimed another four Soviet fighters. Hartmann's last claim of the month came on the 20th, when he accounted for an IL-2 for his 90th victory.

The next month, on 2 September, he was appointed *Staffelkapitän* of 9./JG 52. He replaced Leutnant Berthold Korts in this capacity who had been reported missing in action on 29 August.

In his first year of operational service, Hartmann felt a distinct lack of respect towards Soviet pilots. Most Soviet fighters did not even have effective gunsights and their pilots, some cases in the early weeks, were forced to draw one on the wind-

screen by hand:

"In the early days, incredible as it may seem, there was no reason for you to feel fear if the Russian fighter was behind you. With their hand-painted gunsights they couldn't pull the lead properly (deflection shooting) or hit you."

Hartmann also considered the Bell P-39 Airacobra, the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk, and the Hawker Hurricane to be inferior to the Focke-Wulf Fw 190 and Bf 109, although they did provide the Soviets with valuable gunsight technology.

Hartmann said the German pilots themselves still learned from their enemy. Oil freezing in the DB 605 engines of the Bf 109G-6s made them difficult to start in the extreme cold of the Russian winter. A captured Soviet airman showed them how pouring fuel into the aircraft's oil sump would thaw the oil and enable the engine to start on the first try. Another solution, also learned from the Soviets, was to ignite fuel under the engine.

### Fighting techniques

In contrast to Hans-Joachim Marseille, who was a marksman and expert in the art of deflection shooting, Hartmann was a master of stalk-and-ambush tactics, preferring to ambush and fire at close range rather than dogfight.

When the decorated British test pilot Captain Eric Brown asked Hartmann how he had accomplished his total, Hartmann remarked, that along with firing at close range, inadequate Soviet defensive armament and manoeuvre tactics allowed him to claim a victim in every attack.

His preferred method of attack was to hold fire until extremely close (20 metres) or less), then unleash a short burst at point-blank range - a technique he learned while flying as wingman of his former commander, Walter Krupinski, who favoured this approach. This technique, as opposed to long-range shooting, allowed him to:

- Reveal his position only at the last possible moment
- Compensate for the low muzzle velocity of the slower-firing 30 mm MK 108 equipping some of the later Bf 109 models (though most of his victories were claimed with Messerschmitts equipped with the high-velocity 20mm MG 151 cannon)
- Place his shots accurately with minimum waste of ammunition
- Prevent the adversary from taking evasive action

Hartmann's guidance amplified the need to detect while remaining undetected. His approach was described by himself by the motto: "See–Decide–Attack–Reverse"; observe the enemy, decide how to proceed with the attack, make the attack, and then disengage to re-evaluate the situation.

Hartmann's instinct was to select an easy target or withdraw and seek a more favourable situation. Once the attack was over, the rule was to vacate the area; survival was paramount. Another attack could be executed if the pilot could re-enter the combat zone with the advantage.

If attacked in-kind Hartmann flew straight and used the rud-



der [yaw] to point the Bf 109 in a slightly different direction to mislead the attacker in the amount of deflection needed. Hartmann then forced the column into the corner of the cockpit beginning the outside rotation of an oblique loop. It was an emergency measure if ambushed and it saved his life several times.

These tactics inflated Hartmann's successes over the summer of 1943. By 7 July he had claimed 21 Soviet aircraft destroyed and by 20 September he had claimed over 100.

### Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross

The demands on fighter pilots increased after Kursk. In early August Hartmann flew 20 missions totalling 18 hours and 29 minutes in six days. By late August 1943, Hartmann had 90 aerial victories.

On 20 August, in combat with Il-2s, his Bf 109 G-6 was damaged by debris, and he was forced to land behind Soviet lines at 06:20 in the vicinity of Artemivsk.

Hartmann's Geschwaderkommodore, Dietrich Hrabak, had given orders to Hartmann's unit to support the dive bombers of Sturzkampfgeschwader 2, led by Hans-Ulrich Rudel in a counter-attack.

The flight of eight German fighters engaged a mass of Soviet Yakovlev Yak-9 and Lavochkin La-5 fighter aircraft. Hartmann claimed two enemy aircraft before his fighter was hit by debris and he was forced to make an emergency landing.

In accordance with regula-



**KNIGHTS OF THE SKY:** Hartmann (left) chats with Hungarian pilot László Potyondy

tions, he attempted to recover the precision board clock. As he was doing so, Soviet soldiers approached.

Realising that capture was unavoidable, he faked internal injuries. Hartmann's acting so convinced the Soviets that they put him on a stretcher and placed him on a truck.

When Hartmann's Crew Chief, Heinz Mertens, heard what had happened, he took a rifle and went to search for Hartmann.

Mertens was another important factor behind Hartmann's success, ensuring the aircraft was reliable. Hartmann subsequently escaped, and returned to his unit on 23 August.

This period was very successful; during five days of August 1943, Hartmann claimed 24 Soviet aircraft in 20 missions.

On 18 September, Hartmann downed two Yaks from the 812 IAP regiment for claims 92 and 93. On 20 September 1943, Hartmann was credited with his 100th aerial victory - he claimed four this day to end it on 101.

He was the 54th Luftwaffe pilot to achieve the century mark. Nine days later, Hartmann downed the Soviet ace Major Vladimir Semenishin of the 104 GvIAP (Guards Fighter Aviation Regiment—*Gvardyevskiy Istrebitelny Aviatsionny Polk*) while protecting bombers from Kampfgeschwader 27 for his 112th victory.

In October 1943, Hartmann claimed another 33 aerial victories. On 2 and 12 October he accounted for four victories and achieved a treble on 14, 15 and 20 October and double claims on 24, 25 and 29 October.

On 29 October, he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross (*Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes*), at which point his tally stood at 148. By the end of the year, this had risen to 159. [58] On 14 November 1943, his Bf 109 G-6 suffered engine failure resulting in a forced landing at Kirovohrad airfield.

On 10 January 1944, III. Gruppe moved to an airfield at Novokrasne located approximately 40 kilo-

meters south-southwest of Novoukrainka. While based at Novokrasne, elements of the Gruppe also operated from Ivanhorod (11 to 13 January), at Velyka Lepetykha (3 to 22 February), and Mykolaiv (2 to 23 February).

In the first two months of 1944, Hartmann claimed over 50 Soviet aircraft. On 22 February, he crashed another Bf 109 G-6 on a transfer flight to Uman. The successes included four on 17 January 1944 and on 26 February, a further 10 fighters were claimed shot down; all of them Soviet-flown P-39s to reach 202.

His spectacular rate of success raised a few eyebrows even in the Luftwaffe High Command; his claims were double and triple-checked, and his performance closely monitored by an observer flying in his formation.

By this time, the Soviet pilots were familiar with Hartmann's radio call sign of Karaya 1, and the Soviet Command had put a price of 10,000 rubles on the German pilot's head.

Hartmann was nicknamed the *Cherniy Chort* ("Black Devil") because of his skill and paint scheme of his aircraft. This scheme was in the shape of a black tulip on the engine cowling; though this became synonymous with Hartmann in reality he flew with the insignia on only five or six occasions.

Hartmann's opponents were often reluctant to stay and fight if they noticed his personal design. As a result, this aircraft was often allocated to novices, who could fly it in relative safety.

On 21 March, it was Hartmann who claimed JG 52's 3,500th victory of the war. Adversely, the supposed reluctance of the Soviet airmen to fight caused Hartmann's kill rate to drop.

Hartmann then had the tulip design removed, and his aircraft painted just like the rest of his unit. Consequently, in the following two months, Hartmann claimed over 50 victories.

In March 1944, Hartmann, Gerhard Barkhorn, Walter Krupinski and Johannes Wiese were summoned to Adolf Hitler's Berghof in Berchtesgaden. Barkhorn was to be honoured with the Swords, while Hartmann, Krupinski and Wiese were to receive the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves (*Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes mit Eichenlaub*).

According to Hartmann, all four of them got drunk on cognac and champagne. On arrival at Berchtesgaden, Hartmann was reprimanded by Hitler's adjutant for intoxication and for handling Hitler's hat.

### Diamonds to the Knight's Cross

In April and May 1944, 9./JG 52 resisted the Soviet Crimean Offensive. In April Hartmann claimed five victories. In May, Hartmann filed claims number 208 to 231 which included six on 6 May. On 8 May 1944, JG 52 fled the region as the German defence collapsed. JG 52 subsequently took part in the fighting on the Romanian border.

III. Gruppe relocated to Roman on 18 May.[68] Three days

later, Hartmann engaged United States Army Air Forces aircraft in Defence of the Reich for the first time flying in defence of the Ploiești oilfields and engaging North American P-51 Mustang fighters for the first time over Romania.

On 24 June, the United States Army Air Forces' (USAAF) Fifteenth Air Force attacked various targets in Romania with 377 bombers. A fraction of this attack force, consisting of 135 Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers and Lockheed P-38 Lightning and P-51 fighters, headed for the Ploiești oilfields.

Defending against this attack, Hartmann claimed a P-51 shot down. Only one other claim against this type was made by Hartmann in 1945.

Later that month, P-51s ran his Messerschmitt out of fuel. During the intense manoeuvring, Hartmann ran out of ammunition. One of the P-51Bs flown by Lt. Robert J. Goebel of the 308th Squadron, 31st Fighter Group, broke away and headed straight for Hartmann while he hung in his parachute.

Goebel was making a camera pass to record the bailout and banked away from him only at the last moment, waving at Hartmann as he went by.

On 15 August, III. Gruppe moved to Warzyn Pierwszy, Poland. The airfield was located approximately 15 kilometres west of Jędrzejów.[74] Two days later, Hartmann became the top scoring fighter ace, surpassing fellow JG 52 pilot Gerhard Barkhorn, with his 274th victory.

On 23 August, Hartmann claimed eight victories in three



combat missions, an “ace-in-a-day” achievement, bringing his score to 290 victories.

He passed the 300-mark on 24 August 1944, a day on which he shot down 11 aircraft in two combat missions south of Radom-Lublin, representing his greatest ever victories-per-day ratio (a “double-ace-in-a-day”) and bringing the number of aerial victories to an unprecedented 301.

Every aerial victory filed by a pilot of III. Gruppe on 23 and 24 August was claimed by Hartmann, earning him two named reference in the Wehrmachtbericht on 24 and 25 August respectively.

Hartmann became one of only 27 German soldiers in World War II to receive the Diamonds to his Knight's Cross.

Hartmann was summoned to the *Führerhauptquartier Wolfsschanze*, (the “Wolf's Lair”) Adolf Hitler's military headquarters near Rastenburg, to receive the coveted award from Hitler personally.

Hartmann was asked to surrender his side arm – a security measure heightened by the aftermath of the failed assassination attempt on 20 July 1944.

According to one account, Hartmann refused and threatened to decline the Diamonds if he were not trusted to carry his pistol.

During Hartmann's meeting with Hitler, Hartmann discussed at length the shortcomings of fighter pilot training. Allegedly, Hitler admitted to Hartmann that he believed that, “militarily, the war is lost,” and that he wished the Luftwaffe had “more like him and Rudel.”



**BLACK TULIP:** Hartmann's aircraft was easily recognizable from the painting design on his engine cowling. Most Soviet pilots tended to avoid him as much as possible.

The Diamonds to the Knight's Cross also earned Hartmann a 10-day leave. On his way to his vacation, he was ordered by General der Jagdflieger Adolf Galland to attend a meeting in Berlin-Gatow. Galland wanted to transfer Hartmann to the Messerschmitt Me 262 test program but, at Hartmann's request, the transfer was cancelled on the grounds of his professed attachment to JG 52.

Hartmann argued to Göring that he best served the war effort on the Eastern Front. On 10 September, Hartmann married his long-time teenage love, Ursula “Usch” Paetsch. Witnesses to the wedding included his friends Gerhard Barkhorn and Wilhelm Batz.

On 25 May, II. Gruppe was ordered to transfer one Staffel to the west in Defence of the Reich. Barkhorn, the commander of II. Gruppe, selected Leutnant Hans Waldmann's

4. Staffel which was officially assigned to the II. Gruppe of Jagdgeschwader 3 “Udet” (JG 3—3rd Fighter Wing).[84] On 10 August, this squadron officially became the 8. Staffel of JG 3.

In consequence, Hartmann was transferred on 30 September and tasked with creation and leadership of a new 4. Staffel of JG 52. Command of his former 9. Staffel was passed on to Leutnant Hans-Joachim Birkner.

At the time, II. Gruppe was based in Nagyrábé, Hungary. Before flying further combat missions, Hartmann had to train the new inexperienced pilots. He led this squadron until 16 January 1945 when he was given command of I. Gruppe of JG 52, thus succeeding Major Barkhorn in this capacity. Hartmann transferred command of 4. Staffel to Leutnant Friedrich Haas.

## Last combat missions

On 31 January 1945, Hartmann transferred command of I. Gruppe of JG 52 to Major Batz. From 1–14 February, he then briefly led I. Gruppe of Jagdgeschwader 53 (JG 53—53rd Fighter Wing) as acting Gruppenkommandeur until he was replaced by Hauptmann Helmut Lipfert, substituting for Major Jürgen Harder who had been transferred.

At the time, the Gruppe was based in Veszprém and was fighting in the siege of Budapest. He claimed his only aerial victory with JG 53 on 4 February when he shot down a Yak-9 fighter.

In March 1945, Hartmann, his score now standing at 337 aerial victories, was asked a second time by General Adolf Galland to join the Me 262 units forming to fly the new jet fighter.

Hartmann attended the jet conversion program led by Heinrich Bär. Galland also intended Hartmann to fly with Jagdverband 44. Hartmann declined the offer, preferring to remain with JG 52.

Some sources report that Hartmann's decision to stay with his unit was due to a request via telegram made by Oberstleutnant Hermann Graf.

On 1 February, Hartmann was appointed *Gruppenkommandeur* of I./JG 52, succeeding Hauptmann Adolf Borchers. Hartmann claimed his 350th aerial victory on 17 April, in the vicinity of Chrudim.

The last wartime photograph of Hartmann known was taken in connection with this victory.

Hartmann's last aerial victory occurred over Brno, Czechoslovakia, on 8 May, the last day of the war in Europe.

Early that morning, he was ordered to fly a reconnaissance mission and report the position of Soviet forces. Hartmann took off with his wingman at 08:30 and spotted the first Soviet units just 40 kilometres away. Passing over the area, Hartmann saw a Yak-9, ambushed it from his vantage point at 3,700 metres and shot it down.

When he landed, Hartmann learned that the Soviet forces were within artillery range of the airfield, so JG 52 destroyed Karaya One, 24 other Bf 109s, and large quantities of ammunition.

Hartmann and Hermann Graf were ordered to fly to the British sector to avoid capture by Soviet forces while the remainder of JG 52 was ordered to surrender to the approaching Soviets. As Gruppenkommandeur of I./JG 52, Hartmann chose to surrender his unit to members of the US 90th Infantry Division.

## Prisoner of war

After his capture, the U.S. Army handed Hartmann, his pilots, and ground crew over to the Soviet Union on 14 May, where he was imprisoned in accordance with the Yalta Agreements, which stated that airmen and soldiers fighting Soviet forces had to surrender directly to them. Hartmann and his unit were led by the Americans to a large open-air compound to await the transfer.

In Hartmann's account, the Soviets attempted to convince him to cooperate with them. He

was asked to spy on fellow officers, but refused and was given ten days' solitary confinement in a 1.2 m × 2.7 m × 1.8 metre chamber.

He slept on a concrete floor and was given only bread and water. On another occasion, according to Hartmann, the Soviets threatened to kidnap and murder his wife (the death of his son was kept from Hartmann).

During similar interrogations about the Me 262, Hartmann was struck by a Soviet officer using a cane, prompting Hartmann to hit the assailant with a chair, knocking him out. Expecting to be shot, he was transferred back to the small bunker.

Hartmann, not ashamed of his war service, opted to go on a hunger strike and starve rather than fold to “Soviet will”, as he called it.

The Soviets allowed the hunger strike to go on for four days before force-feeding him. More subtle efforts by the Soviet authorities to convert Hartmann to communism also failed. He was offered a post in the East German Air Force, which he refused.

## War crimes charges

During captivity, Hartmann was first arrested on 24 December 1949, and three days later, sentenced to 20 years in prison.

The sentence was carried out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Ivanovo district. The preliminary criminal investigation was carried out only formally.

He was condemned for atrocities against Soviet citizens, the attack on military objects and destruction of Soviet aircraft



and therefore significant damage to the Soviet economy.

Hartmann protested multiple times against this judgment. In June 1951, he was charged for a second time as an alleged member of an anti-Soviet group.

The second trial was carried out under military authority in the military district of Rostov-on-Don.

Hartmann was charged with war crimes, specifically the “deliberate shooting of 780 Soviet civilians” in the village of Briansk, attacking a bread factory on 23 May 1943, and destroying 345 “expensive” Soviet aircraft.

He refused to confess to these charges and conducted his own defence, which was, according to Hartmann, denounced by the presiding judge as a “waste of time”.

Sentenced to 25 years of hard labour, Hartmann refused to work, and was put into solitary confinement, which led to a riot by some of his fellow detainees, who overpowered the guards and temporarily freed him.

He made a complaint to the Kommandant's office, asking for a representative from Moscow and an international inspection, as well as a new trial hearing to overturn his sentence.

This was refused, and he was transferred to a camp in Novocherkassk, where he spent five more months in solitary confinement.

He was later put before a new tribunal, which upheld the original sentence. He was subsequently sent to another camp, this time at Diaterka in the Ural Mountains. In late 1955, Hart-

mann was released as a part of the last *Heimkehrer*.

In January 1997, over three years after his death, Hartmann's case was reviewed by the Chief Military Prosecutor in Moscow, Russia, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and he was acquitted of all historical charges against him in Russian law. The government agency stated that he had been wrongly convicted.

### Post-war years

During his long imprisonment, Hartmann's son, Erich-Peter, was born in 1945 and died as a three-year-old in 1948, without his father ever having seen him. Hartmann later had a daughter, Ursula Isabel, born on 23 February 1957.

When Hartmann returned to West Germany, he reentered military service in the Bundeswehr and became an officer in the West German Air Force, where he commanded West Germany's first all-jet unit from 6 June 1959 to 29 May 1962, Jagdgeschwader 71 “Richthofen”. This unit was initially equipped with Canadair Sabres and later with Lockheed F-104 Starfighters.

Hartmann also made several trips to the United States, where he trained on U.S. Air Force equipment. In 1957, Hartmann began training with American instructors.

He and other German pilots were trained at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona. The Republic F-84 Thunderjet fighter course lasted 60 days and consisted of 33 hours of flight time in the Lockheed T-33 and 47 hours in the Republic F-84F Thun-

derstreak. Hartmann and the former Luftwaffe pilots needed only familiarisation training.

Hartmann considered the F-104 a fundamentally flawed and unsafe aircraft and strongly opposed its adoption by the Air Force.

Already in 1957, Hartmann had recommended to Kammhuber to first buy and evaluate a few new and unfamiliar aircraft before committing the air force to a new aircraft type.

Although events subsequently validated his low opinion of the aircraft (269 crashes and 116 German pilots killed on the F-104 in non-combat missions, along with allegations of bribes culminating in the Lockheed scandal), Hartmann's outspoken criticism proved unpopular with his superiors, and he was forced into early retirement in 1970.

From 1971 to 1974, Hartmann worked as a flight instructor in Hangelar, near Bonn, and also flew in fly-ins with other war-time pilots.

Hartmann died on 20 September 1993, at the age of 71 in Weil im Schönbuch. In 2016, Hartmann's former German Air Force unit, JG 71, honoured him by applying his tulip colour scheme to their aircraft.



# World War II flying aces

Many pilots during World War II became ‘Aces’. This meant that they had shot down more than five enemy aircraft. Yet when it came to the number of aces, the German Luftwaffe ruled the roost.

**A** flying ace, fighter ace or air ace is a military aviator credited with shooting down five or more enemy aircraft during aerial combat.

The exact number of aerial victories required to officially qualify as an ace is varied, but is usually considered to be five or more.

During World War I the pilot that claimed the most enemy kills was Manfred von Richthofen of the *Deutsche Luftstreitkräfte* (German Air Force). Known as the ‘Red Baron’ he had 80 confirmed kills at the time of his death.

During World War II no fewer than 157 pilots managed to get 80 or more kills.

A total of 107 pilots had 100 or more kills. 15 pilots had 200 or more kills and two pilots ended with more than 300 kills. All of them were from the German *Luftwaffe*.

In fact the top 120 aces of World War II were from the *Luftwaffe*. The top non-German ace of the war was Ilmari Juuttilainen of the Finnish Air Force. He was credited with 94 kills, all against the Soviet Union.

Erich Hartmann of the *Luftwaffe* was the top ace of World War II, and the top ace in history. He finished with 352 kills.

He was followed by Gerhard Barkhorn with 301 kills. After the war both Barkhorn and Hartmann joined the *Bundesluftwaffe*, the newly created

German Air Force.

Among the other Axis Power pilots Hiro Yoshi Nishizawa of the Japanese Navy Air Service scored 87 kills. Mario Visintini of the *Regia Aeronautica* (Royal Italian Air Force) had 16 kills. These included two in Spain during the Spanish Civil War.

The top Allied ace of World War II was Ivan Kozhedub of the Soviet Air Force. He had 64 kills. Lydia Litvyak and Katya Budanova, both of the Soviet Air Force, became the world's only two female fighter aces.

The top fighter ace of the Royal Air Force was Marmaduke ‘Pat’ Prattle with 41 kills. Prattle was a South African.

The leading British fighter ace was James ‘Johnnie’ Johnson with 38 kills.

Australia's top fighter ace was Clive Caldwell. Flying for the RAF he claimed 30 kills.

With 28 kills Brendan ‘Paddy’ Finucane was the top Irish ace. His victories were claimed while serving with the RAF.

The top Polish ace was Francis ‘Gabby’ Gabreski. He had 28 kills while flying for the RAF.

Colin Gray was from New Zealand. He joined the RAF and went on to claim 27 kills.

Ioannis ‘John’ Plagis was born and brought up in Rhodesia of Greek descent. Not holding British nationality he joined the Royal Air Force as a Greek citizen and went on to end with

16 confirmed kills.

Maurice Balasse and Yvan du Monceau de Bergendal were both from Belgium. They joined the RAF and both became aces with eight kills each.

Russell Bannock of the Royal Canadian Air Force ended as Canada's top ace with 28 kills.

Marcel Albert of France had 23 kills. He had the distinction of flying for both the Royal Air Force and the Soviet Air Force.

America's top fighter ace was Richard I. Bong. As a member of the United States Army Air Force (USAAF) he claimed 40 kills.

No other war has seen as many fighter aces as World War II. A number of pilots from China, Russia and the United States became aces during the Korean War.

Wang Hai of the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) claimed nine kills, while Captain Joseph C. McConnell of the United States Air Force (USAF) was credited with 16 kills.

Major Nikolai Sutyagin of the Soviet Union was the top ace of the Korean War with 22 kills.

A total of 24 pilots became aces during the Vietnam War. Five were American and 19 were from North Vietnam.

Nguyễn Văn Cốc (9 kills) was the top North Vietnamese ace, while Capt. Charles B. “Chuck” DeBellevue (6 kills) was the top American ace.



# Messerschmitt Bf 109

*It was one of the most advanced fighters when it first appeared and would go on to become the most successful fighter of World War II. It was credited with shooting down more than 20,000 Allied and Soviet aircraft.*

The Messerschmitt Bf 109 is a German World War II fighter aircraft that was, along with the Focke-Wulf Fw 190, the backbone of the Luftwaffe's fighter force.

The Bf 109 first saw operational service in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War and was still in service at the end of World War II in 1945.

It was one of the most advanced fighters when it first appeared, with an all-metal monocoque construction, a closed canopy, and retractable landing gear. It was powered by a liquid-cooled, inverted-V12 aero engine.

It was called the Me 109 by Allied aircrew and some German aces, even though this was not the official German designation.

It was designed by Willy Messerschmitt and Robert Lusser who worked at Bayerische Flugzeugwerke during the early to mid-1930s.

It was conceived as an interceptor, although later models were developed to fulfil multiple tasks, serving as bomber escort, fighter-bomber, day-, night-, all-weather fighter, ground-attack aircraft, and aerial Reconnaissance aircraft.

It was supplied to several states during World War II and served with several countries

for many years after the war. The Bf 109 is the most produced fighter aircraft in history, with a total of 34,248 airframes produced from 1936 to April 1945.

Some of the Bf 109 production took place in Nazi concentration camps through slave labour.

The Bf 109 was flown by the three top-scoring fighter aces of all time, who claimed 928 victories among them while flying with Jagdgeschwader 52, mainly on the Eastern Front.

The highest-scoring, Erich Hartmann, was credited with 352 victories. The aircraft was also flown by Hans-Joachim Marseille, the highest-scoring

ace in the North African campaign who shot down 158 enemy aircraft (in about a third of the time).

It was also flown by many aces from other countries fighting with Germany, notably the Finn Ilmari Juuttilainen, the highest-scoring non-German ace.

Pilots from Italy, Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, and Hungary also flew the Bf 109.

Through constant development, the Bf 109 remained competitive with the latest Allied fighter aircraft until the end of the war.

## Design and development

During 1933, the *Technisches Amt* (C-Amt), the technical department of the *Reichsluftfahrtministerium* (RLM) ("Reich Aviation Ministry"), concluded a series of research projects

into the future of air combat. The result of the studies was four broad outlines for future aircraft:

- *Rüstungsflugzeug I* for a multi-seat medium bomber
- *Rüstungsflugzeug II* for a tactical bomber
- *Rüstungsflugzeug III* for a single-seat fighter
- *Rüstungsflugzeug IV* for a two-seat heavy fighter

*Rüstungsflugzeug III* was intended to be a short range interceptor, replacing the Arado Ar 64 and Heinkel He 51 biplanes then in service.

In late March 1933, the RLM published the tactical require-

metres was to be reached in no more than 17 minutes, and the fighter was to have an operational ceiling of 10,000 metres.

Power was to be provided by the new Junkers Jumo 210 engine of about 522 kW (710 PS; 700 hp).

It was to be armed with either a single 20 mm MG C/30 engine-mounted cannon firing through the propeller hub as a Motorkanone, or two synchronized, engine cowl-mounted 7.92 mm MG 17 machine guns, or one lightweight engine-mounted 20 mm MG FF cannon with two 7.92 mm MG 17s.

The MG C/30 was an airborne

erschmitt and RLM director Erhard Milch; however, recent research by Willy Radinger and Walter Shick indicates that this may not have been the case, as all three competing companies - Arado, Heinkel and BFW - received the development contract for the L.A. 1432/33 requirements at the same time in February 1934.

A fourth company, Focke-Wulf, received a copy of the development contract only in September 1934.

The powerplant was to be the new Junkers Jumo 210, but the proviso was made that it would be interchangeable with the more powerful, but less developed Daimler-Benz DB 600 powerplant.

Each was asked to deliver three prototypes for head-to-head testing in late 1934.

## Prototypes

Design work on Messerschmitt Project Number P.1034 began in March 1934, just three weeks after the development contract was awarded.

The basic mock-up was completed by May, and a more detailed design mock-up was ready by January 1935. The RLM designated the design as type "Bf 109," the next available from a block of numbers assigned to BFW.

In 1935, the first Jumo engines became available, so V2 was completed in October using the 449 kW (610 PS; 602 hp) Jumo 210A engine.

V3 followed, the first to be mounted with guns, but it did not fly until May 1936 due to a delay in procuring another Jumo 210 engine.

adaptation of the 2 cm FlaK 30 anti-aircraft gun, which fired very powerful "Long Solothurn" ammunition, but was very heavy and had a low rate of fire. It was also specified that the wing loading should be kept below 100 kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

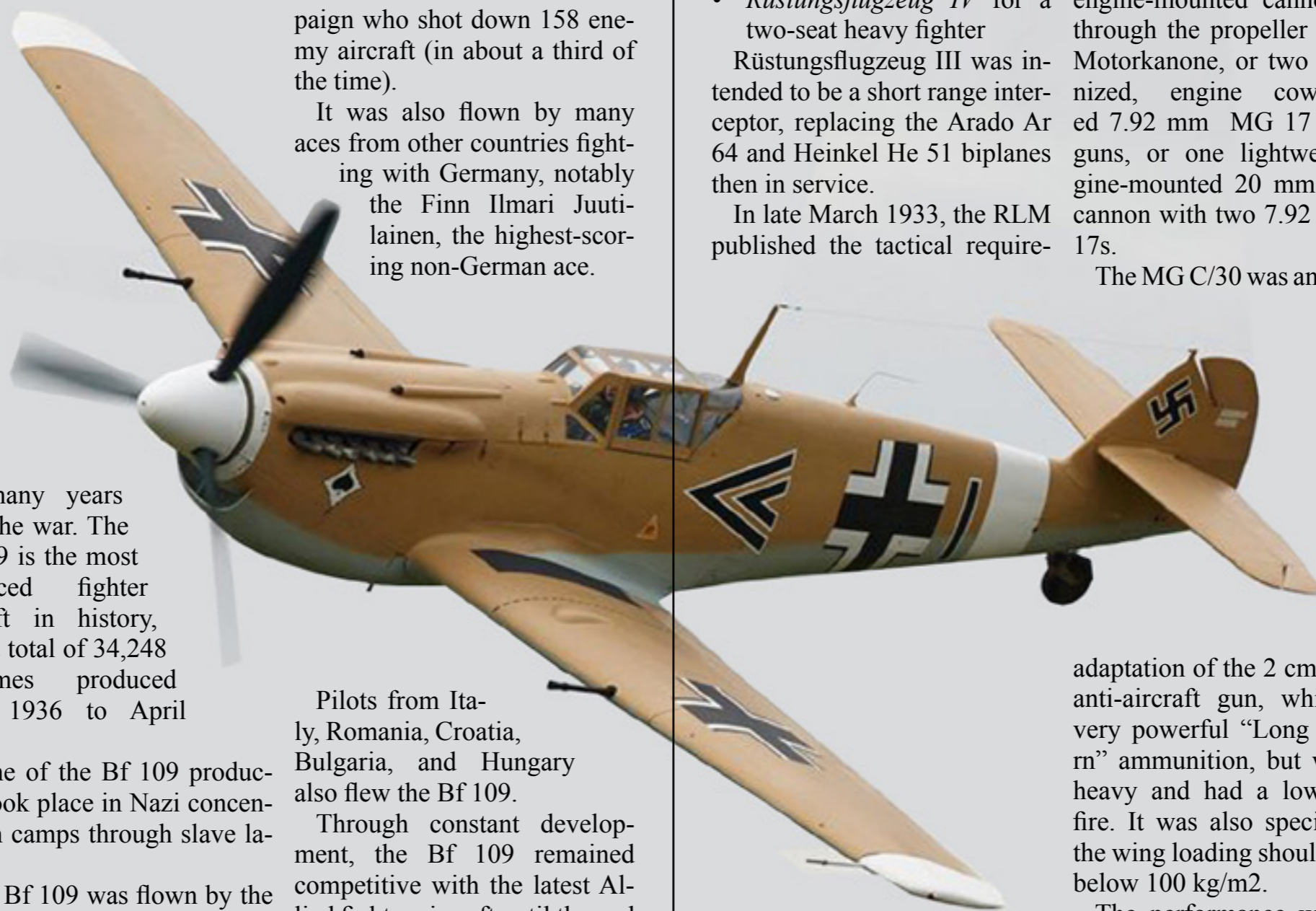
The performance was to be evaluated based on the fighter's level speed, rate of climb, and manoeuvrability, in that order.

It has been suggested that *Bayerische Flugzeugwerke* (BFW) was originally not invited to participate in the competition due to personal animosity between Willy Mess-

ments for a single-seat fighter in the document L.A. 1432/33.

The projected fighter needed to have a top speed of 400 km/h at 6,000 metres, to be maintained for 20 minutes, while having a total flight duration of 90 minutes.

The critical altitude of 6,000





## Design features

As with the earlier Bf 108, the new design was based on Messerschmitt's "lightweight construction" principle, which aimed to minimise the number of separate parts in the aircraft.

Examples of this could be found in the use of two large, complex brackets which were fitted to the firewall. These brackets incorporated the lower engine mounts and landing gear pivot point into one unit.

A large forging attached to the firewall housed the main spar pick-up points and carried most of the wing loads. Contemporary design practice was usually to have these main load-bearing structures mounted on different parts of the airframe, with the loads being distributed through the structure via a series of strong-points.

By concentrating the loads in the firewall, the structure of the Bf 109 could be made relatively light and uncomplicated.

An advantage of this design was that the main landing gear, which retracted through an 85-degree angle, was attached to the fuselage, making it possible to completely remove the wings for servicing without additional equipment to support the fuselage.

It also allowed simplification of the wing structure, since it did not have to bear the loads imposed during takeoff or landing. The one major drawback of this landing gear arrangement was its narrow wheel track, making the aircraft unstable while on the ground. To increase stability, the legs were splayed outward somewhat, creating another problem in



**BATTLE OF BRITAIN:** The Bf 109 played a crucial role during the Battle of Britain. It's main role was to engage RAF fighters and to protect German bombers.

that the loads imposed during take off and landing were transferred up through the legs at an angle.

The small rudder of the Bf 109 was relatively ineffective at controlling the strong swing created by the powerful slipstream of the propeller during the early portion of the take off roll, and this sideways drift created disproportionate loads on the wheel opposite to the swing.

If the forces imposed were large enough, the pivot point broke and the landing gear leg would collapse outward into its bay. Experienced pilots reported that the swing was easy to control, but some of the less-experienced pilots lost fighters on take off.

Because of the large ground angle caused by the long legs, forward visibility while on the ground was very poor, a problem exacerbated by the sideways-opening canopy.

This meant that pilots had to taxi in a sinuous fashion which

also imposed stresses on the splayed undercarriage legs.

Ground accidents were a problem with inexperienced pilots, especially during the later stages of the war when pilots received less training before being sent to operational units.

At least 10% of all Bf 109s were lost in take off and landing accidents, 1,500 of which occurred between 1939 and 1941.

The installation of a fixed "tall" tailwheel on some of the late G-10s and -14s and the K-series helped alleviate the problem to a large extent.

From the inception of the design, priority was given to easy access to the powerplant, fuselage weapons and other systems while the aircraft was operating from forward airfields.

To this end, the entire engine cowling was made up of large, easily removable panels which were secured by large toggle latches.

A large panel under the wing centre section could be removed

to gain access to the L-shaped main fuel tank, which was sited partly under the cockpit floor and partly behind the rear cockpit bulkhead. Other, smaller panels gave easy access to the cooling system and electrical equipment.

The engine was held in two large, forged, Elektron magnesium alloy Y-shaped legs, one per side straddling the engine block, which were cantilevered from the firewall.

Each of the legs was secured by two quick-release screw fittings on the firewall. All of the main pipe connections were colour-coded and grouped in one place, where possible, and electrical equipment plugged into junction boxes mounted on the firewall.

The entire powerplant could be removed or replaced as a unit in a matter of minutes, a potential step to the eventual adoption of the unitized-powerplant Krafft engine mounting concept used by many German combat aircraft designs, later in the war years.

Another example of the Bf 109's advanced design was the use of a single, I-beam main spar in the wing, positioned more aft than usual (to give enough room for the retracted wheel), thus forming a stiff D-shaped torsion box.

Most aircraft of the era used two spars, near the front and rear edges of the wings, but the D-box was much stiffer torsionally, and eliminated the need for the rear spar.

The wing profile was the NACA 2R1 14.2 at the root and NACA 2R1 11.35 at the tip, with a thickness to chord ratio

of 14.2% at the root and 11.35% at the tip.

Another major difference from competing designs was the higher wing-loading. While the R-IV contract called for a wing-loading of less than 100 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, Messerschmitt felt this was unreasonable.

With a low wing-loading and the engines available, a fighter would end up being slower than the bombers it was tasked with catching.

A fighter was designed primarily for high-speed flight. A smaller wing area was optimal for achieving high speed, but low-speed flight would suffer, as the smaller wing would require more airflow to generate enough lift to maintain flight.

To compensate for this, the Bf 109 included advanced high-lift devices on the wings, including automatically opening leading edge slats, and fairly large camber-changing flaps on the trailing edge.

The slats increased the lift of the wing considerably when deployed, greatly improving the horizontal manoeuvrability of the aircraft, as several Luftwaffe veterans, such as Erwin Leykauf, attest.

Messerschmitt also included ailerons that "drooped" when the flaps were lowered (F series and later the lower radiator flap operated as part of the flap system), thereby increasing the effective flap area. When deployed, these devices effectively increased the wings' coefficient of lift.

Fighters with liquid-cooled engines were vulnerable to hits in the cooling system. For this reason, on later Bf 109 F, G and

K models, the two coolant radiators were equipped with a cut-off system. If one radiator leaked, it was possible to fly on the second or to fly for at least five minutes with both closed.

## Armament

Reflecting Messerschmitt's belief in low-weight, low-drag, simple monoplanes, the armament was placed in the fuselage. This kept the wings very thin and light.

Two synchronized machine guns were mounted in the cowling, firing over the top of the engine and through the propeller arc. An alternative arrangement was also designed, consisting of a single auto-cannon firing through a blast tube between the cylinder banks of the engine, known as a Motorkanone mount in German.

This was also the choice of armament layout on some contemporary monoplane fighters, such as the French Dewoitine D.520, or the American Bell P-39 Airacobra, and dated back to World War I's small run of SPAD S.XII moteur-canon, 37 mm cannon-armed fighters in France.

When it was discovered in 1937 that the RAF was planning eight-gun batteries for its new Hawker Hurricane and Supermarine Spitfire fighters, it was decided that the Bf 109 should be more heavily armed.

The problem was that the only place available to mount additional guns was in the wings. Only one spot was available in each wing, between the wheel well and slats, with room for only one gun, either a 7.92 mm MG 17 machine gun, or a



20 mm MG FF or MG FF/M cannon.

The first version of the Bf 109 to have wing guns was the C-1, which had one MG 17 in each wing. To avoid redesigning the wing to accommodate large ammunition boxes and access hatches, an unusual ammunition feed was devised whereby a continuous belt holding 500 rounds was fed along chutes out to the wing tip, around a roller, and then back along the wing, forward and beneath the gun breech, to the wing root, where it coursed around another roller and back to the weapon.

The gun barrel was placed in a long, large-diameter tube located between the spar and the leading edge. The tube channelled cooling air around the barrel and breech, exhausting from a slot at the rear of the wing. The installation was so cramped that parts of the MG 17's breech mechanism extended into an opening created in the flap structure.

The much longer and heavier MG FF had to be mounted farther along the wing in an outer bay. A large hole was cut through the spar allowing the cannon to be fitted with the ammunition feed forward of the spar, while the breech block projected rearward through the spar.

A 60-round ammunition drum was placed in a space closer to the wing root causing a bulge in the underside. A small hatch was incorporated in the bulge to allow access for changing the drum. The entire weapon could be removed for servicing by removing a leading edge panel.

From the 109F-series on-



**MODEL:** A scale model of a Bf 109, a popular aircraft with model enthusiasts.

wards, guns were no longer carried inside the wings. Instead, the Bf 109F had a 20 mm gun firing through the propeller shaft.

The change was disliked by leading fighter pilots such as Adolf Galland and Walter Oesau, but others such as Werner Mölders considered the single nose-mounted gun to compensate well for the loss of the two wing guns.

Galland had his Bf 109F-2 field-modified with a 20 mm MG FF/M auto-cannon, the “/M” suffix indicating the capability of firing thin-walled 20mm mine shells, installed internally in each wing.

In place of internal wing armament, additional firepower was provided through a pair of 20 mm MG 151/20 cannons installed in conformal gun pods under the wings.

The conformal gun pods, exclusive of ammunition, weighed 135 kg and 135 to 145 rounds were provided per gun. The total weight, including ammunition, was 215 kg.

Installation of the under-wing gun pods was a simple task that could be quickly performed by

the unit's armourers, and the gun pods imposed a reduction of speed of only 8 km/h.

By comparison, the installed weight of a similar armament of two 20 mm MG 151/20 cannon inside the wings of the Fw 190A-4/U8 was 130 kg, without ammunition.

Although the additional armament increased the fighter's potency as a bomber destroyer, it had an adverse effect on the handling qualities, reducing its performance in fighter-versus-fighter combat and accentuating the tendency of the fighter to swing pendulum-fashion in flight.

Some of the projected 109K-series models, such as the K-6, were designed to carry 30 mm MK 108 cannons in the wings.

### Operational history

The first Bf 109As served in the Spanish Civil War. By September 1939, the Bf 109 had become the main fighter of the Luftwaffe, replacing the bi-plane fighters, and was instrumental in gaining air superiority for the Wehrmacht during the early stages of the war.

During the Battle of Britain, it was pressed into the role of escort fighter, a role for which it was not originally designed, and it was widely employed as a fighter-bomber, as well as a photo-reconnaissance platform.

Despite mixed results over Britain, with the introduction of the improved Bf 109F in early 1941, the type again proved to be an effective fighter during the Invasion of Yugoslavia (where it was used by both sides), the Battle of Crete, Operation Barbarossa (the invasion of the USSR) and the Siege of Malta.

In 1942, it began to be partially replaced in Western Europe by a new German fighter, the Focke-Wulf Fw 190, but it continued to serve in a multitude of roles on the Eastern Front and in the Defense of the Reich, as well as in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations and with Erwin Rommel's Afrikakorps.

It was also supplied to several of Germany's allies, including Italy, Finland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovakia.

More aerial kills were made with the Bf 109 than any other aircraft of World War II. Many of the aerial victories were accomplished against poorly trained and badly organized Soviet forces in 1941 during Operation Barbarossa.

The Soviets lost 21,200 aircraft at this time, about half to combat. If shot down, the Luftwaffe pilots might land or parachute to friendly territory and return to fight again.

Later in the war, when Allied victories began to bring the fight closer, and then in German territory, bombing raids sup-

plied plenty of targets for the Luftwaffe. This unique combination of events — until a major change in American fighter tactics occurred very early in 1944, that steadily gave the Allies daylight air supremacy over the Reich — led to the highest-ever individual pilot victory scores.

One hundred and five Bf 109 pilots were each credited with the destruction of 100 or more enemy aircraft. Thirteen of these men scored more than 200 kills, while two scored more than 300.

Altogether, this group of pilots was credited with a total of nearly 15,000 kills. Though no official “ace” status existed in the Luftwaffe - the term *Experte* (expert) was used for an experienced pilot irrespective of his number of kills - using the Allied definition of pilots who scored five or more kills, more than 2,500 Luftwaffe fighter pilots were considered aces in World War II. Against the Soviets, Finnish-flown Bf 109Gs claimed a victory ratio of 25:1.

Bf 109s remained in foreign service for many years after World War II. The Swiss used their Bf 109Gs well into the 1950s. The Finnish Air Force did not retire their Bf 109Gs until March 1954.

Romania used its Bf 109s until 1955. The Spanish Hispanos flew even longer. Some were still in service in the late 1960s.

They appeared in films (notably Battle of Britain) playing the role of Bf 109Es. Some Hispano airframes were sold to museums, which rebuilt them as Bf 109s.

## Bf 109G-6

### General characteristics

- Crew: 1
- Length: 8.95 metres
- Wingspan: 9.925 metres
- Height: 2.6 metres
- Empty weight: 2,247 kg
- Gross weight: 3,148 kg
- Powerplant: 1 × Daimler-Benz DB 605A-1 V-12 inverted liquid-cooled piston engine

### Performance

- Maximum speed: 520 km/h at sea level
- Cruise speed: 590 km/h at 6,000 metres
- Range: 880–1,144 km
- Combat range: 440–572 km
- Ferry range: 1,144–1,994 km (1,144 without and 1,994 with droptank)
- Service ceiling: 12,000 metres
- Rate of climb: 20.1 m/s

### Armament

#### Guns:

- 2 × 13 mm synchronized MG 131 machine guns with 300 rpg; 1 × 20 mm MG 151/20 cannon as centreline Motorkanone with 200 rpg or 1 × 30 mm MK 108 cannon as centreline Motorkanone with 65 rpg (G-6/U4 variant); 2 × 20 mm MG 151/20 underwing cannon pods with 135 rpg
- Rockets: 2 × 21 cm Wfr. Gr. 21 rockets
- Bombs: 1 × 250 kg bomb or 4 × 50 kg bombs or 1 × 300-litre drop tank



*In May 1940 Nazi Germany launched a massive blitzkrieg against Western Europe. They overran Belgium, the Netherlands and France in only a matter of weeks. Britain stood alone and with the Germans preparing for an invasion, the Battle of Britain was about to start.*

**O**n 10 May 1940, after the Phoney War, the Battle of France began in earnest. In a matter of weeks Belgium and the Netherlands has been overrun and France was set to fall as well.

The remnants of the British and French armies were trapped on the beaches at Dunkirk.

The Germans halted their advance on Dunkirk in what became known as the "Halt Order". Contrary to popular belief, it was not Adolf Hitler that gave the order.

Generalfeldmarschall (Field Marshals) 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. The order was sanctioned by Hitler on 24 May.

It gave the Allies time to evacuate more than 330,000 Allied troops from Dunkirk between 26 May and 4 June 1940.

On 4 June 1940 British Prime Minister Winston Churchill made one of his famous speeches.

"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields, and in the streets. We shall never surrender."

On 18 June 1940 Hitler told Herman Goering, "The war is finished. I'll come to an understanding with England."

On the same day Winston Churchill made a broadcast to the British people. "What General Weygand called the Battle of France is over. The Battle of Britain is about to begin."

Hitler hoped that the British government would seek a peace agreement. If, however, all other options failed he considered an invasion as a last resort.

It was given the code name *Unternehmen Seelöwe* (Operation Sea Lion) and was planned for September 1940.

As a precondition for an invasion Hitler specified that he wanted both air and naval superiority. *Luftwaffe* (Air Force) commander Herman Goering assured Hitler that he would easily sweep the Royal Air Force (RAF) from the skies in just a few days.

Earlier, on 16 May 1940, Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding, Commander-in-Chief of the RAF Fighter Command, had sent a historic and vital letter to the Air Council.

The Air Council wanted Dowding to commit most of his fighter squadrons to the Battle of France. He was adamant that the majority of the squadrons should be held back to defend Britain.

Part of his letter stated, "It should be made clear to the Allied Commanders on the Continent that not a single aeroplane from Fighter Command beyond the limit will be sent across the Channel, no matter how desperate the situation may become."

On 10 July 1940 the Germans launched a surprise air raid against a British shipping convoy in the English Channel. Many consider this strike to be Phase One of the Battle of Britain.

On 19 July 1940 Herman Goering was promoted to *Reichsmarschall* of Germany. On the same day Hitler addressed the *Reichstag*.



**THE PROTAGONISTS:** Four of the main aircraft that took part in the Battle of Britain. From top - British Spitfire, German Messerschmitt Bf 109, British Hawker Hurricane, German Heinkel he 111.

"I feel it to be my duty before my own conscience to appeal once more to reason and common sense in Great Britain. I consider myself in a position to make this appeal since I am not a vanquished foe begging favours, but the victor, speaking in the name of reason. I can see no reason why this war must go on."

Lord Halifax rejected Hitler's peace terms on 22 July 1940. French foreign minister Paul Baudouin said, "If the Germans do not master England this autumn, they will have lost the war."

On 31 July 1940 Hitler said, "The air war will start now and will determine our ultimate relative strength."

The following day Hitler's Directive 17 for the combat of air and sea warfare against England was issued.

Between 8 and 23 August 1940 Phase Two of the Battle of Britain takes place. British radar stations and RAF airfields come under attack.

While the Luftwaffe enjoyed an edge in total aircraft during the early stages of the battle, the RAF had a secret weapon in the form of Radio Direction Finding, better known as radar.

Shortly after the technology was developed in the 1930s, the British built a ring of radar stations along their coastline. These "Chain Home" stations were still primitive - a civilian Observer Corps was required to spot low-flying aircraft - but they nevertheless became a crucial part of Britain's strategy.

By pinging approaching



Sailor Malan developed a set of simple rules for fighter pilots, to be disseminated throughout RAF Fighter Command, which eventually could be found tacked to the wall of most airbases:

### TEN OF MY RULES FOR AIR FIGHTING

- Wait until you see the whites of his eyes. Fire short bursts of one to two seconds only when your sights are definitely "ON".
- Whilst shooting think of nothing else, brace the whole of your body: have both hands on the stick: concentrate on your ring sight.
- Always keep a sharp lookout. "Keep your finger out".
- Height gives you the initiative.
- Always turn and face the attack.
- Make your decisions promptly. It is better to act quickly even though your tactics are not the best.
- Never fly straight and level for more than 30 seconds in the combat area.
- When diving to attack always leave a proportion of your formation above to act as a top guard.
- INITIATIVE, AGGRESSION, AIR DISCIPLINE, and TEAMWORK are words that MEAN something in Air Fighting.
- Go in quickly – Punch hard – Get out!



**SCRAMBLE:** Royal Air Force (RAF) pilots scramble to intercept an incoming Luftwaffe bombing raid. The ability of radar gave the British the ability to track incoming German aircraft. This meant that the RAF did not have to waste fuel patrolling the skies. This gave them more time in the air for combat, a luxury German fighters did not have.

Luftwaffe raiders with radio waves, the RAF could pin down their location and scramble fighters to intercept them, thereby robbing the Germans of the element of surprise.

Nazi leaders never appreciated the importance of British radar, and their failure to degrade it allowed the RAF to consistently remain a step ahead of the Luftwaffe.

*Adlertag* (Eagle Day), on 13 August 1940, was the first day of *Unternehmen Adlerangriff* (Operation Eagle Attack). The aim of the operation was the destruction of RAF Fighter Command and give the Germans air superiority.

The German attacks on 13 August inflicted significant damage and casualties on the ground, but, marred by poor intelligence and communication, they did not make a significant impression on Fighter

Command's ability to defend British air space.

Goering had promised Hitler that *Adlertag* and *Adlerangriff* would achieve the desired results within days, or at worst weeks. The Germans total strength exceeded 2,520 serviceable planes. RAF Fighter Command could only must 749 fighters.

The RAF squadrons included many foreign pilots. Of the more than 2,900 RAF pilots who served in the Battle of Britain, only around 2,350 were British. The rest were natives of Commonwealth territories such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, as well as expatriates from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium and other countries under Nazi occupation. The Eagle Squadrons were three fighter squadrons of the Royal Air Force, formed with vol-

unteer pilots from the United States.

The Polish No. 303 fighter squadron downed 126 German planes during the battle - more than any Allied unit - and one of the RAF's top scoring aces was Josef Frantisek, a Czech aviator who single-handedly claimed 17 aerial victories.

Adolph Gysbert Malan, better known as Sailor Malan, was a South African fighter pilot who led No. 74 Squadron based at RAF Biggin Hill. Under his leadership No. 74 Squadron became one of the RAF's most accomplished squadrons. Malan scored 27 kills, seven shared destroyed, three probably destroyed and 16 damaged. Malan developed a simple set of rules for fighter pilots (see insert).

On 15 August 1940 Goering called off attacks on radar sites in view of the fact that not one of those attacked had been put out of action.

Phase Three of the Battle of Britain took place between 24 August and 6 September 1940.

As well as attacking radar stations and RAF airfields, the Luftwaffe had been bombing British ports and their defences as part of Operation Sea Lion.

On 24 August 1940 a bomber dropped bombs, believed to be accidentally, on central London instead of the docks. Nine people were killed.

Winston Churchill was outraged and ordered an immediate retaliation. On 25-26 August a force of over 70 bombers from RAF Bomber Command set off for Berlin, which was just within range.

Their targets were armament factories in the north of the city and Tempelhof Airport.

Due to ferocious German anti-aircraft fire the bombers had to fly too high and the bombs consequently landed on fields, woods and some residential areas. Damage was slight and no-one was killed.

It was, however, a huge embarrassment to Goering. Earlier, in a speech to the Luftwaffe, he had stated, "No enemy bomber can reach the Ruhr. If one reaches the Ruhr, my name is not Goering. You may call me Meyer."

Hitler was not just embarrassed, he was furious. In a speech at the Sportpalast in Berlin on 4 September, he announced, "If the British Air Force drops two, three or four thousand kilos of bombs, then we will drop 150,000, 180,000, 230,000, 300,000 or 400,000 kilos, or more, in one night. If they declare that they will attack our cities on a large scale, we will erase theirs!"

Ignoring the progress the Luftwaffe was making in attacking RAF air bases, he demanded they shift their focus toward "erasing" British cities from the map.

The bombing campaign now known as the Blitz began on 7 September 1940 with a raid on London, and dozens more attacks followed over the next several weeks. Phase four of the battle, the Blitz, begins.

While the bombings took a sobering toll on British civilians, they also temporarily relieved pressure on the RAF, allowing it to repair its crippled airfields and refresh its pilots.

The respite proved critical.

On 14 September 1940 Hitler postponed Operation Sea Lion for three days. The Luftwaffe launched a massive air attack on 15 September in an effort to score a knock-out blow against the RAF. The Luftwaffe suffered their heaviest losses of the battle. First reports indicated that 175 German planes had been shot down. The day has now become celebrated as Battle of Britain Day.

On 17 September 1940 Operation Sea Lion was postponed indefinitely. From 1 to 31 October 1940 the final phase of the Battle of Britain takes place. The Germans carry out high altitude bombing by day and night. On 12 October Operation Sea Lion is called off until the following Spring.

King George VI appoints Air Chief Marshal Dowding a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Bath on 30 September 1940.

From 31 October 1940 night attacks on cities continued until May 1941. The daylight attacks did not. The Battle of Britain was over.

On the 20th August 1940 British Prime Minister made his famous speech regarding the Battle of Britain.

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few".



# DOORKICKERS

*The assault team stands ready to storm the building. But with **Matt O'Brien** as part of the assault team the hostages should be afraid. Very afraid.*

Some games have incredible graphics and large open worlds. Doorkickers is not one of those games.

In fact the graphics are reminiscent of games from the early 1980s. It's a 2D top down view with graphics that are nothing to write home about. But bugger me sideways if Doorkickers is not both fun and challenging.

It's not a new game either. It was released for Windows on PC back in 2014. But, as I said, it's well worth playing.

Door Kickers allows the player to create a squad of up to ten playable characters, each of which can be customized with classes, weapons, armour, utilities, and gear. Every class has a unique variety of weapons, each of which caters to particular situations and play styles. As the team completes missions they will level up, both as a squad and individually.

After each mission you will earn stars and doctrine points. The doctrine points can be allocated to improve the squad with abilities and perks. The stars are used to unlock new weapons and equipment.

Your squad can be allocated as one of five different classes. They are Pointman, Assaulter, Breacher, Stealth, and Shield. Each member of the squad can be equipped with either a pri-

mary or secondary weapon, or both. All classes can also be equipped with armour and have a utility pouch that can carry two items. Lastly they can carry support gear.

Items that you can choose for the utility pouch include flashbang and stinger grenades, breaching charge, lock-pick machine, and Tazer.

Support gear includes a spy camera, dynamic hammer, bolt cutter, and breaching kit.

Pointmen have no primary weapons and are equipped with only a sidearm. They do, however, have the highest mobility.

The assault class can choose between submachine guns and rifles, and breachers have shotguns.

The Stealth class allows players to silently dispatch enemies with suppressed weaponry, and the Shield is equipped with a riot shield and a sidearm, with no other gear.

There are seven different types of missions: Eliminating all hostile forces, Rescuing hostages, Stopping executions, Retrieving evidence, Defusing bombs, Arresting suspects, Rescuing and escorting a primary VIP to safety.

The eliminate hostile forces mission is straight forward. Assault the place and take out all Tangos (terrorists). Rescuing

hostages is a bit more difficult. Not only do you have to take out the tangos, you also have to ensure that no hostages are harmed.

Stopping executions is similar to rescuing hostages. This time, however, the tangos will execute a hostage within a certain amount of time. You have to complete the mission before the time runs out.

Retrieving evidence is also known as the 'Dope Raid'. The aim is to retrieve at least one piece of evidence, arrest any unarmed criminals not killed in the crossfire, and eliminate all armed combatants.

In defusing bombs, the terrorists have placed a bomb somewhere on the map, usually hidden. You have a certain amount of time to find it and defuse it.

Arresting suspects involves arresting an unarmed suspect, normally guarded by henchmen.

The last mission type involves rescuing a VIP and escorting them to safety.

There are single player missions which are great to get the hang of the game and also to earn stars and doctrine points.

Besides the official single player missions, you can also generate random missions.

The campaign involves completing a number of missions.



The campaigns are: A hard day's work, Drug bust, The cell, Terror at sea, Suits and masks, and iTerror Strike.

The difference between single player and campaigns is that when one of your squad is killed in the campaign, they are permanently removed from your roster and you can't use them for the rest of the campaign.

You can also go on-line and play any mission or campaign in co-op mode with a friend.

The best thing is that the Steam Workshop for Doorkickers means that they are thousands of mods out there.

You can download maps, missions, campaigns and different types of weapons and equipment.

At the start of each scenario you have certain places where you can place your squad. This can consist of between one to ten members of the squad.

You can then pause the game and plan your route and orders. Once this is done you un-

pause and they will carry out your orders.

This is where planning and strategy is vital. If, for example, you have to assault a building with eight rooms and you have only two squad members to do it, who do you choose?

For something like that I would normally use a pointman and an assaulter. Sometimes I will get the pointman to use his spy camera to check under the door so I can see if anyone is in the room, and how many there are.

If you just get him to kick the door in and burst into the room, it's fine if there is only one tango in the room. The pointman will drop him quickly.

If however you burst into the room with a pointman and there are four or five tangos in the room, he's in serious trouble. He only has a pistol and some of them may be armed with submachine guns.

In this case it's better to breach the door, throw in a flashbang

and then let the assaulter and pointman enter the room at the same time.

Doorkickers is a great game and it will run on most computers.

There is also Doorkickers 2 which I will review in the next edition of the magazine.



Publisher - Killhouse Games

Genre - Real Time Strategy

Score - 8/10

Price - R43.80 (on Steam)





Movie Review

# Casualties of War

Released: 1989  
 Running time: 113 minutes  
 Directed by: Brian De Palma

**C**asualties of War is a 1989 American war drama film directed by Brian De Palma, with a screenplay by David Rabe. It is based on the real-life events of the incident on Hill 192 in 1966 during the Vietnam War.

An article written by Daniel Lang for The New Yorker in 1969 and a subsequent book were the movie's primary sources.

The story is presented as a flashback of Max Eriksson (Michael J. Fox), a Vietnam veteran.

While on a night patrol Eriksson's platoon is attacked by the Viet Cong. While guarding the flank the ground under Eriksson collapses. The top half of a VC tunnel has given way and Eriksson's body is trapped halfway in the hole.

Unbeknown to him, a VC armed with a knife is crawling towards the struggling Eriksson. Just then his squad leader, Sergeant Tony Meserve (Sean Penn) appears and pulls Eriksson out of the hole.

Eventually the platoon retreats out of the jungle back to their base.

While taking a break outside a river village in the Central Highlands the squad is relaxing and joking.

Meserve is talking to his best friend, Specialist 4 "Brownie" Brown (Erik King). They are both "short timers" with just over a month left to serve in Vietnam.

There is another ambush and

Brown is killed. His death has a major impact on Meserve. The platoon is sent back to their base. Private First Class Antonio Diaz (John Leguizamo) arrives as the replacement radio operator.

Meserve is told that early the next morning he will be leading a five-man reconnaissance team on a mission to observe a section of river that the Viet Cong are believed to be using to ferry supplies.

When they set off the next morning Meserve informs his squad that they will be making a short detour. He says that they are going to take some "R&R" with them.

They enter a small village and he kidnaps Than Thi Oanh (Thuy Thu Le), a young Vietnamese girl.

Eriksson is not happy about it, and neither is the new replacement, Diaz. They realise that Meserve is planning on raping the girl.

After a trek through the mountains the squad arrives near a railroad bridge overlooking a Viet Cong river supply depot.

They set up a temporary base in an old abandoned hooch. Meserve, along with Corporal Clark and PFC Hatcher rape the girl. Diaz is pressurised into raping her as well. Eriksson refuses and it leads to a confrontation with Meserve.

Meserve has Diaz order close air support for an assault on the

depot and then orders Diaz to kill Than with a knife. Before Diaz can kill her, Eriksson fires his rifle into the air, exposing them to the nearby Viet Cong.

The girl tries to escape and Eriksson tries to save her but is stopped by Meserve, who knocks Eriksson down with the butt of his gun. Eriksson watches helplessly as the entire squad shoots Than numerous times until she falls off of the bridge.

Eriksson wakes up in hospital and reports the incident to his company commander who wants to bury the matter.

Eriksson is transferred to another unit. While getting drunk in a local bar Eriksson meets an Army chaplain and tells him the story. Then the investigation begins.



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# The Elite

**T**he Rhodesian Special Air Service, one of the most formidable fighting forces in the world, operated almost exclusively across the borders during the long bitter bush war, undertaking deep-penetration missions against insurgents being harboured inside neighbouring Mozambique and Zambia.

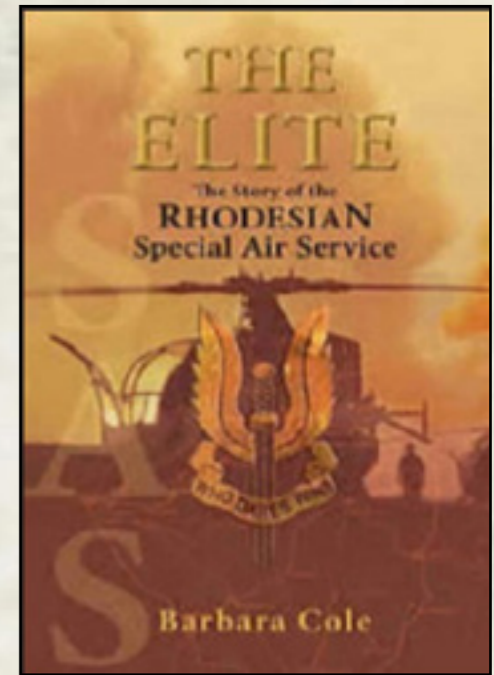
There were missions into Botswana too, and at one stage, SAS men were operating without benefit of passports in all three neighbouring territories at the same time.

The writer takes the reader from the early days in the Western Desert to the formation of the Rhodesian SAS for service in Malaya, then back to Africa where the action spans the days of the Federation, the UDI era

and finally the decolonization of Rhodesia by the British in 1980.

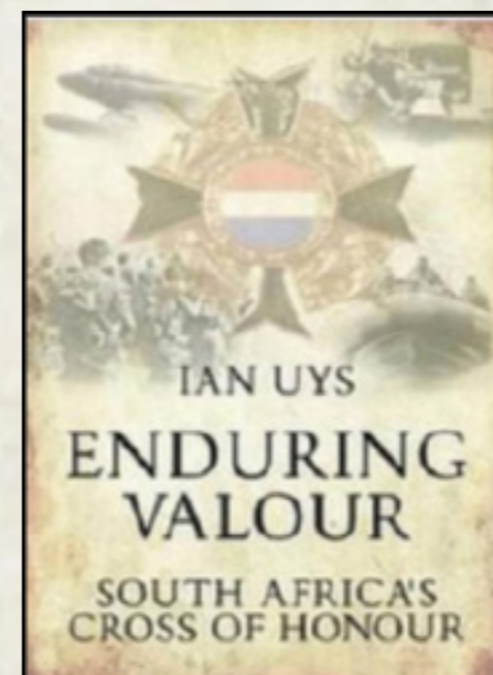
This is the first book to detail the secret exploits of this elite regiment and it has been based on rare first-hand interviews with operators themselves. Some of their exploits may seem far-fetched, even impossible, but then, truth is often stranger than fiction. It is a history of high adventure and daring, courage and humanism, be it driving through the streets of a neighbouring capital, knocking out trains, bridges and installation or swooping out of the morning skies then, with the ability to hit hard and fast, attacking and taking their leave, the devastation complete, the mission accomplished.

This edition - originally published in the mid-1980s and long

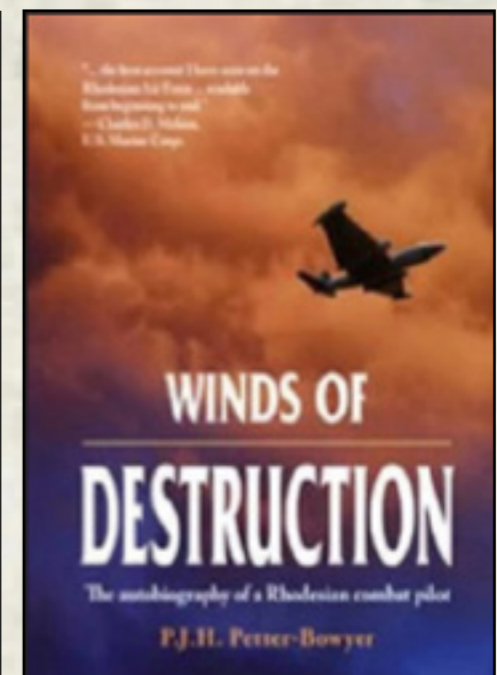


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Some of the significant military events that happened in October. Highlighted in blue are the names of those members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that lost their lives during the month of October.

### 1 October

- **1756** - Battle of Lobositz: Prussians defeat the Austrians.
- **1880**- John Philip Sousa becomes director of the Marine Corps Band.
- **1918** - British and Arab forces liberate Damascus from the Turks.
- **1936** - Francisco Franco named leader of Spanish Nationalists.
- **1938** - Hitler's troops occupied the Sudetenland portion of Czechoslovakia. In an effort to avoid war, the leaders of Britain and France had agreed to cede the German-speaking area to Hitler, who later broke the agreement and occupied all of Czechoslovakia.
- **1941** - The Royal New Zealand Navy is established.
- **1942** - Maiden flight of the Bell P-59 Airacomet, the first US jet fighter.
- **1943** - Allied forces liberate Naples.
- **1946** - Twelve Nazi leaders were sentenced to death at the International War Crimes Tribunal in Nuremberg, Germany.
- **1952** - The British colonial government in Kenya enact emergency measures to combat the growing threat from the Mau Mau.
- **1955** - The USS 'Forrestal' (CVA-59), the first super-carrier, is commissioned. It serves until 1993.
- **1957** - B-52 bombers begin full-time flying alert in case of USSR attack, which continues until the early 1990s.
- **1958** - Captain A.P. Barnard from 1 Locating Battery, South African Artillery was killed in a private motor vehicle accident between Johannesburg and Potchefstroom. He had been authorised to travel to Potchefstroom using his private transport to attend an official training course. He was 29.
- **1974** - Staff Sergeant Willem Jacobus Burger from D Squadron, 2 Special Service Battalion was accidentally shot dead by own forces in an ambush 7 miles East of Katima Mulilo at Hippo Island, Eastern Caprivi. He was 29.
- **1976** - France confirms that it is selling two new combat submarines to South Africa, to help SA to protect the oil route round the Cape in the face of Soviet naval escalation in the Indian Ocean.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Edmond Jaime Leon Guillaume from the South African Medical Corps Headquarters Unit died after taking an overdose of pills while stationed in Grootfontein. He was 20.
- **1983** - Rifleman Quinton Clive Oosthuizen from 203 Battalion SWATF was killed

in a military vehicle accident in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.

- **1983** - Rifleman Samuel Wilhelm van Rooyen from Infantry School was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident near Cape Town on the 29 September 1983 and succumbed to his injuries in the Tygerberg Hospital on 1 October 1983. He was 18.
- **1987** - Transkei Defense Force topples Transkei Bantustan leader George Matanzima, but denies coup.
- **1992** - The USS 'Saratoga' (CV-60) accidentally fires missiles at a Turkish destroyer in the Aegean. Five people are killed.

### 2 October

- **1187** - Saladin captures Jerusalem, ending 88 years of Christian rule.
- **1851** - Marechal de France, Ferdinand Foch, is born.
- **1895** - Colonel Ruth Cheney Streeter, USMC, first director of the USMC Women's Reserve is born.
- **1912** - Captain Eric Charles Twelves Wilson, Somaliland Camel Corps, is born on this day. He was awarded a VC "Posthumously" but was later discovered to be a prisoner of war.
- **1935** - Mussolini's Italian troops invaded Abyssinia, beginning an occupation

lasting until 1941.

- **1941** - Operation Typhoon: Germans initiate an offensive to take Moscow.
- **1942** - Rabaul: U.S. air raid damages Japanese light cruiser 'Yubari' and other shipping.
- **1943** - Japanese sub 'Ro-103' sinks USS 'Henley' (DD-391) off Finschhafen, New Guinea.
- **1944** - Polish "Warsaw Uprising" suppressed by the Nazis.
- **1984** - Rifleman M. Kamwanga from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 22.
- **1988** - Large Turkish force raids Kurdish areas of Iraq.
- **1990** - James Elvin Nicholas Cruise was killed instantly and two others injured when he opened a parcel bomb that had been delivered to the computer company in Durban where he worked. It was known that the company worked with Trade Unions and other anti-apartheid organisations.
- **1992** - Gunner Marlon Patrick Dammert from 14 Artillery Regiment was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Nietverdiend after one of the tyres burst, causing the driver to lose control. He was 20.
- **1993** - Captain Charles Sergei Keith Rudnick from 85 Combat Flying School was killed when his Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I (Fal-

con 5) crashed during an air show display at Lanseria. He was 34.

- **1995** - Muziwendoda Mdluli of the National Intelligence Agency is found shot dead in his car in Silverton, Pretoria. He was investigating the possible involvement of fellow-agents in the failed Comoros Islands coup.

### 3 October

- **1882** - German field marshal Gunther von Kluge is born on this day.
- **1899** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War the British War Office informs the White colonies that they can contribute volunteers, preferably infantry.
- **1904** - Indigenous races in German South-West Africa rise against German troops.
- **1904** - France and Spain sign a treaty to divide Morocco.
- **1910** - Adolph Gysbert (Sailor) Malan, SA fighter pilot during WWII and later national president of the Torch Commando, is born in Wellington.
- **1921** - The Unknown Soldier sails from France aboard USS 'Olympia'.
- **1928** - Accidental sinking of the French submarine 'Ondine', 42 die.
- **1952** - Britain explodes its first atom bomb on the Montebello Islands, Australia.

• **1955** - Soviet battleship 'Novorossiisk' (ex-Italian 'Giulio Cesare') mined in the Baltic, many die.

• **1977** - Rifleman Michiel Daniel Johannes Mentz from the 2nd Battalion Regiment Bloemspruit was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line in Northern Owamboland. He was 31.

• **1977** - Signaler Michael David Bosch from the South African Corps of Signals was killed in a military vehicle accident near Pretoria. He was 18.

• **1977** - Rifleman Gary John Fisher from the Army Ordnance Corps died from an accidental gunshot wound to the head, apparently self-inflicted while he was stationed at Messina. He was 21.

• **1979** - Captain (Navigator) Johannes Jacobus Strydom from 24 Squadron SAAF, attached to 5 Squadron Rhodesian Air Force, was Killed in Action together with his



Sailor Malan



Rhodesian Air Force Pilot, Air Lieutenant Kevin Peinke when their Rhodesian Air Force Canberra was shot down by enemy Anti-Aircraft Fire while attacking enemy targets near Chimoio in Mocambique during Operation Miracle. He was 28.

- **1984** - Trooper I. Unkongo from 202 Battalion SWATF was killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1985** - 21st Space Shuttle Mission: 'Atlantis' makes the first all-military space flight.
- **1986** - Soviet Yankee-class sub sinks off North Carolina, three die.
- **1987** - Sub Lieutenant Gavin John Sholto Douglas from the Strikecraft SAS P.W. Botha was killed during the 1987 floods in Natal. He was 22.
- **1987** - Lieutenant Adriaan Hodgson Hind from "C" Squadron 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was Killed in Action during Ops Modular when his Ratel 90 was hit by a 100mm round fired from a Russian T-55 tank. He was 19.
- **1987** - General Magnus Malan acknowledges that South Africa has troops in Angola.
- **1989** - Panamanian Defense Force attempts a coup against Manuel Noriega.
- **1990** - After 45 years of Cold War division, East and West Germany were reunited as the Federal Republic

of Germany.

- **1993** - At least twelve US army soldiers are killed in Mogadishu, the Somali capital, in a fifteen-hour battle with supporters of Somali warlord General Mohamed Farah Aidid. The incident becomes known as 'Black Hawk Down' after two US Black Hawk helicopters were shot down.

#### 4 October

- **1836** - Pieter Arnoldus (Piet) Cronjé, politician, military leader and general during Second Anglo-Boer War, is born in Colesberg.
- **1903** - Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Nazi criminal, who was executed 1946, was born on this day.
- **1939** - Last Polish troops surrender to the Germans.
- **1940** - Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini meet at Brenner Pass in the Alps, where the Nazi leader seeks Italy's help in fighting the British.
- **1943** - The Island of Corsica became the first French territory in Europe freed from Nazi control as Free French troops liberated the city of Bastia.
- **1944** - Aircraft off USS 'Ranger' (CV-4) raid German bases in Norway, sink or damage eight ships.
- **1950** - The UN consents to a US-backed invasion of North Korea. A squadron of the SA Air Force formed part of the United Nations forces.

- **1977** - Lieutenant John Melville Purdon from 11 Squadron was Reported Missing after his Cessna 185A failed to return from a routine low level cross-country training flight. The aircraft wreck was later located at Rysmiersbult near Potchefstroom and his body was successfully recovered. He was 22.
- **1983** - Rifleman Jan Ignatius Rigaard from Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident approximately 50km from Murraysburg while traveling on the Richmond to Beaufort West road. He was 20.
- **1992** - The Mozambique government and RENAMO rebel leaders sign an historic peace accord, and a ceasefire to end the sixteen-year civil war in the southeast African state.
- **1993** - Russian tank-soldiers loyal to President Boris Yeltsin shelled the Russian White House, crushing a hard-line Communist rebellion. Yeltsin then fired Vice-president Alexander Rutskoi and jailed other opposition leaders.
- **2013** - Vietnamese general and politician Võ Nguyên Giáp died on this day at the age of 102.

#### 5 October

- **1816** - Shawnee Indian Chief Tecumseh was defeated and killed during the War of 1812. Regarded as one of

the greatest American Indians, he was a powerful orator who defended his people against white settlement. When the War of 1812 broke out, he joined the British as a brigadier general and was killed at the Battle of the Thames in Ontario.

- **1863** - Torpedoboat CSS 'David' damages USS 'New Ironsides' with a spar torpedo off Charleston.
- **1899** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War Western Australia offers military assistance to Britain.
- **1943** - US aircraft & ships raid Japanese positions on Wake Is, leading to the execution of American civilians held prisoner.
- **1966** - The South African Military History Society is formed.
- **1969** - Cuban defector flies an MiG-17 undetected to Homestead Air Force Base in America.
- **1971** - The Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster, announces at the National Party Congress incidences on the border of Zambia and the Caprivi Strip. He reminds the Congress of his previous warnings that South Africa will not tolerate the incursion of communist trained terrorists into South African territory and that they will be pursued to the land from where they came.
- **1973** - Trooper Daniel Petrus Boshoff from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed when his Eland 90 Ar-

moured Car overturned during military training exercises at the General De Wet Training Range. He was 18.

- **1976** - Corporal Marius Pieter De Swardt from the 1st Battalion Regiment De La Rey was accidentally killed after being struck by a bullet during a shooting incident at Grootfontein. He was 26.
- **1977** - Rifleman Brian Alan Ross from the Rand Light Infantry was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion at a waterhole near Etale Base in Northern Owambo-land. He was 21.
- **1986** - Former U.S. Marine Eugene Hasenfus was captured by Nicaraguan Sandinistas after a plane carrying arms for the Nicaraguan rebels (Contras) was shot down over Nicaragua.
- **1986** - The London Times reports Israel is stocking nuclear arms.

#### 6 October

- **1935** - Italian troops capture Adua, Abyssinia.
- **1939** - Hitler announces he had no intention of making war on Britain and France.
- **1940** - During World War II in Europe, German troops invaded Romania to take seize strategic oil fields.
- **1943** - Himmler demands acceleration of the "Final Solution".

- **1944** - The 6th SA Armoured Division, having reached the watershed of Castiglione dei Pepoli in Italy, pushes forward to take Monte Vigese and Monte Sanco during World War II.
- **1944** - Soviet troops enter Hungary and Czechoslovakia.
- **1949** - "Tokyo Rose" (Iva Toguri d'Aquino) was sentenced in San Francisco to 10 years imprisonment and fined \$10,000 for treason. She had broadcast music and Japanese propaganda to American troops in the Pacific during World War II. She was pardoned by President Gerald Ford in 1977.
- **1951** - Stalin announces Russia has the atom bomb.
- **1973** - The Egyptians and Syrians launch surprise attacks on Israel on Yom Kippur day, catching Israel almost totally by surprise.
- **1978** - Rifleman Anton Wicht Cloete from 11 Commando Regiment was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Etale Base. He was 18.



**Boris Yeltsin**



- **1981** - Egyptian President Anwar Sadat is shot to death by extremists while reviewing a military parade, eleven years and one day after his inauguration. At least eight other people are also killed in the attack.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Petrus Johannes Jakobus De Wee from the South African Cape Corps accidentally drowned. His body was eventually located and recovered on 8 October 1982. He was 20.
- **1986** - Major Benjamin Terblanche from 51 Battalion was critically wounded by shrapnel in a friendly fire Mortar Bomb incident at Ruacana on 05 October 1986. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria but succumbed to his wounds on 06 October 1986. He was 30.
- **1994** - South African National Defence Force soldiers go on strike.
- **1916** - Gefreiter Adolf Hitler is wounded on the inner left thigh by a shell fragment during the Battle of the Somme.
- **1923** - Irma Grese, the 'Witch of Belsen', was born on this day.
- **1935** - League of Nations declares Italy the aggressor in Ethiopia.
- **1940** - During World War II in Europe, German troops invaded Romania to take seize strategic oil fields.
- **1943** - U.S. carriers and cruisers raid Wake Island.
- **1956** - Israeli foreign minister Golda Meir says the UN failure to resolve the Suez Crisis means they must take military action.
- **1971** - SWAPO claims it was not responsible for placing landmines in the Caprivi Strip and that the guerrillas were not operating from Zambia, but from inside Namibia.
- **1976** - Candidate Officer Charles Robert Dickens from the School of Armour was killed when his Eland 90 Armoured Car overturned while travelling on the road between the De Brug Training Area and Bloemfontein. He was 18.
- **1985** - Palestinian terrorists seized the Italian passenger ship Achille Lauro carrying about 440 persons, threatening to blow it up if Israel did not free 50 Palestinian prisoners. Leon Klinghoffer, an elderly wheelchair-bound American, was murdered.

### 7 October

- **1854** - Gen. Christiaan Rudolph de Wet, chief commandant of the Free State forces during Second Anglo-Boer War, is born on the farm Leeuwkop, near Smithfield, Orange Free State.
- **1899** - Tension continues between the British and the Boers in South Africa, and the British Army is ordered to mobilise.
- **1899** - Sir Redvers Buller is appointed Commander-in-Chief in South Africa.

- **1990** - Gulf War: Israel begins handing out gas masks to its citizens.
- **2001** - US invades Afghanistan.
- **2003** - At least one-fifth of South Africa's military is infected with the virus that causes AIDS, and Defence Minister Mosiuoa Lekota states that 'the South African National Defence Force is no longer accepting HIV positive people into their ranks'.

### 8 October

- **1890** - American fighter pilot Ace Eddie Rickenbacker was born in Columbus, Ohio on this day. He commanded the first U.S. aero unit to take part in World War I and was credited with 26 victories, becoming America's leading Ace. He was awarded the Medal of Honour.
- **1895** - Argentine soldier, putschist, president Juan Peron was born on this day.
- **1912** - Montenegro declares war on Turkey, initiating the First Balkan War.
- **1916** - The German 'U-53' sinks five ships off Nantucket.
- **1918** - During World War I in the Argonne Forest in France, U.S. Sergeant Alvin C. York single-handedly took out a German machine-gun battalion, killing over a dozen and capturing 132. He was later awarded the Medal of Honour and the French Croix de Guerre.
- **1967** - Ernesto "Che"

- **1980** - Rifleman Gert Johannes Alwyn Barnard from 4 SAI attached to 37 Battalion suffered severe heat exhaustion and was to be medically evacuated at night from Ruacana. He was loaded aboard a Kudu aircraft flown by Lieutenant Mel Pienaar after the aircraft had been refueled. Shortly after take-off, the aircraft suffered total engine failure and crashed. He was fatally injured and died 30 minutes later. He was 20.
- **1982** - Captain William Robert McIntosh from 4 Reconnaissance Regiment was accidentally killed when his parachute failed to open during a practice jump at Langebaan. He was 30.
- **1983** - Rifeman Klaas Hausiku from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 21.
- **1987** - Gunner Anthony Wayne de Villiers of 4 SAI attached "Q" Battery was accidentally killed during Ops Modular in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1987** - Trooper Frederick de Jager from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was Killed in Action during Ops Modular. He was 19.
- **1988** - Rifleman Moleko Ivan Khumoeng from 21 Battalion was killed after being accidentally struck by a Buffel Troop Carrier

Guevara, 39, professional revolutionary, is executed.

- **1998** - Taliban forces from Afghanistan raid Iranian border posts.

### 9 October

- **1899** - Francis William Reitz, former president of the OFS and now Secretary of State in the ZAR, hands the ultimatum, which result in the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Boer War, to Sir William Conyngham Greene, the British Agent in Pretoria.
- **1899** - Sir George White, who arrived in Cape Town on 3 October and in Durban on 7 October, proceeds to Ladysmith, where he takes command over the British forces in Natal.
- **1914** - General Salomon Gerhardus (Manie) Maritz rebels against General Smuts' order to invade German South-West Africa, goes over to enemy side and hands over as prisoners to the Germans those of his men who remained loyal to the SA government.
- **1914** - Germans capture Antwerp, as Belgians & British withdraw.
- **1915** - Belgrade surrenders to Austro-German forces.
- **1942** - Guadalcanal: Marines encircle Japanese 4th Inf Regt.
- **1950** - United Nations (UN) forces, led by the First Cav-

alry Division, cross the 38th parallel in South Korea and begin attacking northward towards the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. A division of the SA Air Force participated in this war.

- **1962** - Algerian-Moroccan border fighting, 130 die.
- **1963** - French air force gets nuclear weapons.
- **1968** - Defence Minister PW Botha announces that a missile base for experimental tests and launchings is to be established on the Zululand coast about 150 miles north of Durban.
- **1974** - Oskar Schindler dies at the age of 66.
- **1978** - Sub-Lieutenant Christo Bosman from the South African Navy Minesweeper SAS Walvisbaai was Reported Missing approximately 7 nautical miles West of Walvis Bay while the vessel was carrying out minesweeping operations up the West Coast. It appears that his foot became entangled in a cable that was holding a marker buoy and



**Irma Grese**



he was dragged overboard. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 24.

- **1978** - Gunner Andre Johan van der Bergh from 14 Artillery Regiment died in the Katima Mulilo Sickbay after contracting pneumonia. He was 20.
- **1982** - Applications for parole by the thirty-four mercenaries involved in the Seychelles attempted coup are refused. Most are due to be released in January 1983.
- **1985** - General Constand Viljoen, Chief of South Africa's Armed Forces admits on television that the military, without government authority, has flaunted the Nkomati Accord by supporting RENAMO.
- **1985** - The hijackers of the Achille Lauro cruise liner surrender after the ship arrives in Port Said, Egypt.
- **1987** - Two members of 53 Battalion, one of them an Ops Medic attached to the Unit, were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned North of Ogongo. They were: Rifleman John Ferreira (19). Rifleman Johannes Andries Le Roux (18).
- **1990** - Saddam Hussein threatens to hit Israel with a new missile.
- **1993** - Somali warlord General Mohammed Farah Aidid offers a cease-fire with US and UN forces in Somalia.

### 10 October

- **1896** - An attack by Rhodesian Colonial forces on the major stronghold during the Mashona Rebellion, Mashayombe's kraal, ends inconclusive. Though the kraal was destroyed and the rebels scattered, they came together again later.
- **1918** - British Gen. Sir Edmund Allenby enters Jerusalem, on foot.
- **1926** - Opening of SA War Memorial at Delville Wood.
- **1954** - Ho Chi Minh entered Hanoi, Vietnam, after the withdrawal of French troops, in accordance with armistice terms ending the seven-year struggle between Communist Vietnamese and the French.
- **1976** - Rifleman Richard Charles Palmer from the Natal Carbineers was accidentally killed after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds when a rifle grenade exploded prematurely after being fired. He was 25.
- **1976** - Corporal Jan Hendrik van Brandis from 2 SAI accidentally drowned during a river crossing while on patrol near Rundu. He was 19.
- **1980** - Lieutenant Steven Volkersz from 2 Squadron was reported missing when his Atlas MB326KM Impala Mk II was shot down by a shoulder-launched Soviet SA-7 Grail Surface-to-Air Missile some 20km South West of Mupa. He has no known grave. He was 23.
- **1980** - Rifleman Anthony

Hayton from the Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the National Road approximately 20km from Durban. He was 18.

- **1985** - US jet fighters force an Egyptian airliner carrying hijackers of cruise ship Achille Lauro to land in Italy, where the hijackers are arrested.
- **1988** - Rifleman Maphakela George Molokomme from 116 Battalion was killed instantly at the 116 Battalion Training area at Messina after being struck by lightning while sheltering under a tree during a thunderstorm. He was 27.
- **1998** - Rebels use a missile to shoot down a jetliner carrying forty civilians in eastern Congo, claiming it was ferrying government troops to the besieged town of Kindu.
- **2012** - Basil L. Plumley, Command Sgt Maj, US Army, veteran of three wars and five combat jumps, hero of the Ia Drang Valley, dies at the age of 92.

### 11 October

- **1899** - The Anglo-Boer War, the war between the British Empire and the two Boer republics, the Transvaal and Orange Free State, breaks out.
- **1939** - Albert Einstein warned President Franklin D. Roosevelt that his theories could lead to Nazi Germany's development of an atomic bomb. Einstein suggested the U.S. develop its

own bomb. This resulted in the top secret "Manhattan Project."

**1944** - Japan announces it will "fight to the last man, woman, child, weapon, and piece of equipment."

**1945** - Chinese civil war begins: Chiang Kai-Shek vs. Mao Tse-Tung.

**1971** - Lewis "Chesty" Puller, iconic US Marine with five awards of the Navy Cross, plus a DSC, dies on this day at the age of 73.

**1982** - At the 1 SAI Mechanised Leadership Wing at Oshivello, soldiers were undergoing familiarisation training on foreign weapons used by insurgents. During one of these lectures, a soldier accidentally detonated a Soviet hand grenade killing five members. They were: Candidate Officer Casper Willem Johannes Geustyn (20). Candidate Officer Paul Stephanus Venter (19). Lance Corporal Alan Rodger Jones (18). Lance Corporal Jacobus Theodorus Meyer (19). Lance Corporal Edgar Sydney Wessels (19).

**1983** - Private Werner Eugene Kriel from SAMS attached to No.1 Military Hospital was killed in a military vehicle accident at Potgietersrus. He was 20.

**1988** - Former United States army analyst Thomas Dolce pleads guilty before a US court to supplying a wide range of defence secrets to South Africa between 1979 and 1983.

**1989** - Lance Corporal Hermanus Swanepoel van der Merwe from 93 Ammunition Depot was critically injured in a mili-

tary vehicle accident on 25 September 1989 16km outside Jan Kempdorp while carrying out Military Police duties. He died from his injuries at the Universitas Hospital in Bloemfontein on 11 October 1989. He was 20.

**1991** - Lance Corporal David John Boyd from Group 36 was killed in a military vehicle accident at Ladybrand. He was 19

### 12 October

- **1851** - The Irish 69th Regiment is accepted into the New York State Militia.
- **1860** - British & French troops capture Peking.
- **1870** - American Civil War General Robert E Lee dies at the age of 63.
- **1899** - The first shots of the Second Anglo-Boer War are fired at Kraaipan, about 50 kilometres south of Mafeking, where General De la Rey attacks the armoured train, Mosquito. Lieutenant Nesbit and thirty-four soldiers surrender the next morning.
- **1914** - First Battle of Ypres begins.
- **1914** - Off Easter Island, Graf von Spee concentrates the largest German naval squadron ever seen outside the North or Baltic Seas; two armoured cruisers, seven protected cruisers, and three colliers.
- **1942** - US aircraft sink two Japanese destroyers near

Guadalcanal.

- **1943** - Fifth Air Force begins a series of air raids on Rabaul.
- **1944** - German army withdraws from Athens.
- **1963** - Air Corporal Hermanus Pieter Bodenstein from the School of Technical Training died from head injuries sustained in a private motor vehicle accident 8km from Middelburg on the Hendrina Road. He was 25.
- **1972** - Race riot aboard the USS 'Kitty Hawk' (CV 63), results in 46 injured.
- **1975** - Trooper David Barand Le Roux from 1 SSB was Killed in Action when his Eland 90 Armoured Car detonated a landmine near Luiana in Southern Angola during Operation Karen 2 that was launched to clear SWAPO/PLAN bases in South-Eastern Angola prior to the launch of Operation Savannah. He was 20.
- **1984** - Unsuccessful IRA attempt to assassinate PM Margaret Thatcher. Five people are killed.



**Constand Viljoen**



- **2000** - Islamist suicide boat attack on the USS 'Cole' (DDG-67) at Aden. 17 people are killed and 40 wounded.

### 13 October

- **1307** - Simultaneous arrest of all Knights Templar in France - the original "Friday the Thirteenth".
- **1775** - The United States Navy was born after the Second Continental Congress authorized the acquisition of a fleet of ships.
- **1914** - Pro-German Boer insurrection in South Africa.
- **1918** - Gefreiter Adolf Hitler is temporarily blinded in a mustard gas attack near Ypres.
- **1943** - Italy declared war on its former Axis partner Germany after the downfall of Mussolini and collapse of his Fascist government.
- **1944** - Red Army liberates Riga from the Germans.
- **1973** - Rifleman Michael Wulfsohn from the Cape Town Highlanders was accidentally killed when he fell off the back of a moving Bedford Troop Carrier just north of Ondangwa. He was 19.
- **1982** - Private D.S. Bedenhann from the Technical Service Corps died from an R1 Rifle gunshot wound apparently self-inflicted while he was on weekend pass. It is believed he was suffering serious depression at the time of the incident and no foul play was suspected. He

was 19.

- **1983** - Special Warrant Officer Immanuel Hendjala 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 36.
- **1983** - Private Johannes Mattheus Strauss from the Technical Service Corps was found dead. It is suspected that he may have taken his own life. No foul play was suspected as at the time of his death, nobody had been in the area where his body was found. He was 18.
- **1985** - Corporal Johan Schoeman from 5 SAI was Killed in Action after he was ambushed and stabbed to death by persons unknown while on foot patrol in Kwazakele Township during unrest in the area. He was 19.
- **1987** - First operational use of dolphins by the US Navy, in the Persian Gulf.
- **1988** - Rifleman John Rex from the 2nd Battalion South African Cape Corps died at the Rooiberg Training Area when he accidentally stepped on an unexploded 40mm "Snotneus" High Explosive Grenade. He was 20.
- **1988** - Special Constable Thomas Kastodiu 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** - Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha warns Unita leader Jonas Savimbi in Angola that South Africa will withdraw support for Unita if he decides to resume the Angolan civil war.

### 14 October

- **1066** - The Norman Conquest began with the Battle of Hastings in which King Harold II of England, the last of the Saxon kings, was defeated and killed by William of Normandy's troops.
- **1882** - Irish revolutionary Eamon De Valera was born on this day.
- **1890** - Dwight D. Eisenhower, US Army Five-star general and Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II, was born on this day. He would go on to become President of America.
- **1899** - Start of the siege of Mafeking under Col. Robert Baden-Powell by the Boer forces.
- **1933** - Nazi Germany announced its withdrawal from the League of Nations and stated it would take no further part in the Geneva Disarmament Conference.
- **1941** - US Navy Admiral Husband Kimmel warns of possible surprise attack on Pearl Harbour.
- **1943** - Attempted mass escape from Sobibor Concentration Camp.
- **1943** - US Army Air Force

bombs Schweinfurt.

- **1944** - German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, famous German commander of German forces in North Africa, suspected of complicity in the 20 July plot against Hitler, is visited at home by two of Hitler's staff and given the choice of public trial or suicide by poison. He chooses suicide and dies on this day.
- **1947** - U.S. Air Force Captain Chuck Yeager became the first man to break the sound barrier, flying in a rocket-powered research aircraft.
- **1970** - Commandant Johannes Frederick "Doons" van Heerden from 24 Squadron was killed when his Hawker Siddeley Buccaneer S-50 crashed on the weapons range West of Bloemfontein while carrying out a low level "retarded bomb" sortie. He was 34.
- **1977** - Lieutenant Phillipus Lodewyk Le Roux from the Delmas Commando was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 48.

### 15 October

- **1815** - Napoleon Bonaparte arrived on the Island of St. Helena beginning a British-imposed exile following his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo.
- **1899** - The siege of Kimberley starts.
- **1914** - Montenegro declares

war on Bulgaria.

- **1917** - World War I spy Mata Hari was executed by a French firing squad at Vincennes Barracks, outside Paris.
- **1917** - USS 'Cassin' (DD-43) torpedoed by German 'U-61' off Ireland.
- **1942** - Japanese aircraft off 'Zuikaku' sink the USS 'Meredith' (DD 434) off San Cristobal.
- **1943** - British Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham is appointed First Sea Lord of the Admiralty and Chief of the Naval Staff.
- **1945** - Pierre Laval, the former premier of Vichy France, was executed for collaborating with Nazi Germany during World War II.
- **1946** - Nazi leader Hermann Goering committed suicide by swallowing poison in his Nuremberg prison cell just hours before his scheduled hanging for war crimes.
- **1978** - Corporal James Barnard Phillander from the South African Cape Corps was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.

- **1981** - Two members from 4 SAI were killed in an accidental hand grenade explosion in Northern Owamboland. They were: Rifleman Thomas Johannes Ferreira

(20). Rifleman Martin Johannes Lodewyk Kruger van Niekerk (19).

- **1981** - Three members from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment were Reported Missing while carrying out an operation against the Harare-Beira railway line near Doeroi in Mocambique, some 300 miles from the South African border. It would appear that there was a premature detonation while they were laying their demolition charges that killed them instantly. The casualties were: Lieutenant Alan Gingles (28). Rifleman B. Michael (24). Rifleman F. Tombo (25).
- **1982** - Rifleman Piet Bhayana from 111 Battalion accidentally drowned during a river crossing while on patrol in the Kruger National Park. He was 21.
- **1982** - Corporal Servaas de Kock from 1 Parachute Battalion was accidentally killed while on weekend pass when his private vehicle was involved in a collision with an extra heavy articulate vehicle. He was 20.
- **1981** - Two US surveillance planes arrive over Egyptian airspace to demonstrate

**Chuck Yeager**





increased US support for Egyptian and Sudanese security against any hostile moves by Libya.

- **1987** - Thomas Sankara, head of the Military Council of the Revolution in Burkina Faso, is assassinated in a military coup and replaced by Captain Blaise Compaoré.
- **1989** - Lance Corporal Joseph Montslo Moletsane from 115 Battalion was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned during a patrol in Mamelodi. He was 25.
- **1997** - Rebels, backed by foreign troops, enter Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo, ending President Pascal Lissouba's four-month struggle to remain in power.
- **2002** - The Sudanese government signs a temporary cease-fire with Sudan's main rebel group, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), so that peace talks could resume. The agreement calls for both sides to avoid impeding international relief efforts for civilians affected by the nineteen-year-old civil war.

### 16 October

- **1853** - The Crimean War began after the Turkish Ottoman Empire declared war on Russia, Britain, France and portions of Italy allied with the Turks against Russia. It became the first war observed up close by newspaper reporters and

photographers. One of the battles was immortalized in Tennyson's poem, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. Amid poor sanitary conditions, disease killed many wounded French and British troops. British nurse Florence Nightingale then pioneered modern-style sanitation methods, saving many lives.

- **1899** - Boer Gen. P.A. Cronje shells Mafeking, causing only one casualty. After the bombardment, Silas Molemo, a spokesman for the Barolong tribe, visits magistrate Bell, informing him: "Never mind this, we will stick with you and see it through."
- **1900** - Republican forces under Gen. J.B.M. Hertzog attack Jagersfontein and release all prisoners in the gaol before they retire.
- **1916** - T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) arrives in Cairo with a British fact-finding mission whose purpose is to recommend ways of supporting the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire.
- **1916** - Oswald Boelcke, German air ace with 40 victories, is killed in action at the age of 25.
- **1926** - Chinese troop ship sinks in the Yangtze. 1,200 die.
- **1939** - First German air raid on the British Isles in WW II, against naval installations at Rosyth, as the RAF downs one attacker.

- **1940** - First black American promoted to general: Benjamin Oliver Davis, Sr.
- **1940** - Nazis establish the Warsaw Ghetto.
- **1946** - Ten former Nazi leaders were hanged by the Allies following their conviction for war crimes at Nuremberg, Germany.
- **1962** - Missile Crisis: JFK learns of Soviet missiles in Cuba.
- **1963** - Lieutenant Henry Andre' Botha from 17 Squadron was killed when his Alouette III Helicopter crashed near Dullstroom in heavy fog while on a flight from Pilgrimsrest to Pretoria. He was 20.
- **1964** - China detonated its first nuclear bomb at the Lop Nor test site in Sinkiang.
- **1969** - Two members from 24 Squadron were Reported Missing when their Hawker Siddeley Buccaneer S-51 disappeared over the sea 30km east of the Tugela River Mouth while carrying out night exercises. The crew were: Major Stephanus Sebastiaan Odendaal (31). Major Peter Webb (28).
- **1973** - Rifleman Raymond Fourie from 4 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Ventersdorp to Randfontein Road. He was 19.
- **1981** - Rifleman Alfredo Samba from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 32.

- **1981** - Israeli general and former Minister of Defence Moshe Dayan died at the age of 66.
- **1982** - Rifleman Barend Jacobus Christoffel Strydom from 7 SAI accidentally drowned at Phalaborwa. He was 19.
- **1986** - Captain Fred Turner from 32 Battalion was killed in private motor vehicle accident at Paternoster. He was 25.
- **1986** - Two members from the Sasolburg Commando were killed in a military vehicle accident at Deneysville while returning from a military funeral. They were: Commandant Wallace Goosen (56). Captain Christiaan Johannes Cloete (34).
- **1987** - Three members from 4 Artillery Regiment were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Mariental while trying to avoid a head-on collision with a civilian delivery vehicle. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant George Michael Howard (20). Lance Bombardier Peter Mansfield (19). Gunner Sean Rene Biet (20).
- **1988** - Rifleman Nicolaas Johannes Wolmarans from the Bethal Commando was killed when he was struck down by a civilian vehicle while carrying out road block duty on the Delmas / Kriel Road. He was 32.
- **1988** - 2nd Lieutenant Riaan Frans Janse van Vuuren from Sector 20 Headquar-

ters Unit SWATF was killed in a Private Motor Vehicle Accident while on leave. He was 19.

- **1990** - US forces in the Persian Gulf reach 200,000.
- **1992** - The Goldstone Commission reports the finding of a secret operational centre run by Military Intelligence and seizes plans to destabilise the ANC.
- **2005** - William Allan, last Australian combat veteran of WW I, dies at the age of 106.

### 17 October

- **1777** - During the American Revolutionary War, British General John Burgoyne and his entire army of 5,700 men surrendered to American General Horatio Gates after the Battle of Saratoga, the first big American victory.
- **1781** - British General Lord Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown.
- **1917** - First British air raid over Germany.
- **1933** - Albert Einstein arrives in the United States as a refugee from Nazi Germany.
- **1944** - The Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval battle in history, took place off the Philippine Islands, during World War II in the Pacific. The battle involved 216 U.S. warships and 64 Japanese ships and resulted in the

destruction of the Japanese Navy including the Japanese Battleship Musashi, one of the largest ever built.

- **1948** - Thirty-one SA pilots participate in the air-lift to provide food and fuel to West Berlin. The operation continued for seven months.
- **1973** - Egyptian and Israeli forces clash in the Sinai desert in fierce fights.
- **1977** - West German commandos storm a hijacked Lufthansa jetliner in Mogadishu, Somalia, freeing all 86 hostages. Three Palestinian hijackers are killed.
- **1977** - Corporal Karel Christiaan Strydom from the Klein Karoo Commando was accidentally killed in a shooting incident at Nkurenkuru near Rundu. He was 33.
- **1977** - Sapper Johannes Hercules Viljoen from 2 Field Engineer Regiment was killed after being struck by a bullet resulting from the accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle near Kwando. He was 19.
- **1981** - Lieutenant F.T.

**Moshe Dayan**





- Edeling from 102 Battalion SWATF accidentally drowned at Epupa Falls during operations in Southern Angola. He was 23.
- **1982** - Corporal Adam Johannes Barends from the South African Cape Corps was killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the Grabouw to Botrivier road. He was 24.
  - **1983** - Rifleman Tian van Jaarsveld from 8 SAI was a member of a patrol that was in the process of checking their kit just outside the base at Okalongo prior to heading out on a patrol. It was during this process that a RPG-7 anti-tank rocket carried by another soldier was accidentally discharged and he was critically wounded. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he sadly succumbed to his wounds later in the day. He was 19.
  - **1983** - SA forces attack an apartment block in Maputo, Mozambique, close to President Samora Machel's suburban residence, injuring five people. The SA Defence Force says the building housed offices from which the ANC was planning a series of attacks in South Africa.
  - **1984** - Special Constable Elifas Ipinge from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN

- insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 28.
- **1985** - Attempted military coup in Guinea-Bissau.
  - **1992** - In Angola's first multi-party election, the MPLA wins 53.74% of the vote for the 233-seat parliament, and Unita 34.10%. Unita accuses the MPLA of rigging the election results, withdraws its troops from the joint army and threatens to return to civil war.

### 18 October

- **1912** - Italo-Turkish War ends.
- **1941** - Russian spy Richard Sorge arrested in Tokyo.
- **1945** - The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial began with indictments against 24 former Nazi leaders including Hermann Göring and Albert Speer. The trial lasted 10 months, with delivery of the judgment completed on October 1, 1946. Twelve Nazis were sentenced to death by hanging, three to life imprisonment, four to lesser prison terms, and three were acquitted.
- **1946** - The Special Service Battalion of the Defence Force of the Union of South Africa is dissolved, and gymnasiums for the army, air force and navy established.
- **1968** - Lieutenant John Andrew Zimmerman from Central Flying School Duntottar was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed near Devon while on a routine

- training flight. He was 21.
- **1978** - Rhodesian forces launch a raid against ZIPRA guerrillas in a wide area around Chimoio, Mozambique.
  - **1980** - Sergeant Jonathan Sykes from the Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the National Road near Ladysmith. He was 30.
  - **1984** - Rifleman Domingos Antonio from 32 Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Buffalo. He was 24.
  - **1986** - Special Constable Simon Daniel 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 29.
  - **2001** - Four Osama bin Laden followers convicted in the 1998 bombings of two US embassies in Africa are sentenced in New York to life without parole.

### 19 October

- **1812** - Napoleon begins his retreat from Moscow.
- **1915** - Russia and Italy declare war on Bulgaria.
- **1925** - The War of the Dog: A stray dog initiates a ten day border incident between Greece & Bulgaria.
- **1950** - UN forces enter Pyongyang, capital of North Korea.
- **1951** - British troops seize

- Suez canal zone in a swift dawn raid.
- **1952** - Airman Caspar Willem Petrus Nel from Air Force Station Congella suffered fractured vertebrae when he was dumped by a large wave while playing in the sea during March 1952. He was re-admitted to the Sanitarium Hospital in Durban on 15 Oct 1952 after complications had set in but he unfortunately died following surgery. He was 20.
  - **1954** - Britain and Egypt sign Suez Canal agreement. British will withdraw troops over next twenty months.
  - **1986** - President Samora Machel of Mozambique is killed in an air crash in eastern South Africa shortly after 21:00. Thirty-four people die in the disaster.
  - **1987** - British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher criticises the ANC, calling it "a terrorist organisation".
  - **1987** - US warships destroy Iranian oil platforms in Persian Gulf.

### 20 October

- **1899** - British forces dislodge the Boers at Talana Hill in Natal.
- **1944** - During World War II in the Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur set foot on Philippine soil for the first time since his escape in 1942, fulfilling his promise, "I shall return."
- **1944** - US First Army secures Aachen.
- **1952** - Emergency pro-

- claimed in Kenya due to Mau Mau rebellion.
- **1977** - Three crew members of 15 Squadron "A" Flight and one passenger from the SAAF 250 Air Defence Artillery Group (250 ADAG) were killed when their Super Frelon Helicopter 303 crashed in the mountains on the farm "Leyden" at Sheepmoor near the border of Mocambique and Swaziland while flying in dense fog and mist. The casualties were: Commandant Gert Hermanus Jacobus Strydom van Rooyen (35). Captain Don Bezuidenhout (31). 2nd Lieutenant Dawid Petrus Burger (21). Sergeant Willem Adriaan Jacobus van der Merwe (33).
  - **1979** - Rifleman Deon Botha from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident at Mariental. He was 20.
  - **1979** - Sapper Gerhardt Wagener from the South African Engineer Corps was killed after being accidentally run over by a military vehicle at Bossiespruit. He was 19.
  - **1980** - Major John Kendrick Murphy from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment (former member of the Rhodesian SAS and Selous Scouts) was killed when his parachute failed during a practice training jump at Westonaria. He was 37.

- **1980** - Two members of 32 Battalion were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Buffalo. They were: Lance Corporal Alfred Jose Mindo (34). Rifleman Jaquin Francisco (24).
- **1981** - Corporal Peter Andrew Chapman from 8 SAI was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a boosted landmine in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1983** - Rifleman Joao Augusto from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Linus Shashipapo. He was 19.
- **1983** - Private Johan Beyers Human from the South African Medical Corps was killed instantly when his private motor vehicle overturned near Bloemhof. He was attached to the Army Battle School at the time and was travelling from Lohatla to Pretoria on leave pass when the accident occurred. He was 20.

**Samora Machel**





- **1986** - Rifleman Christiaan Marthinus Arnoldus Adam Venter from Regiment Oos Rand was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Ellisras. He was 20.
- **1987** - Trooper Herman Ziemkendorf from 2 Special Service Battalion was killed when his Eland 90 armoured car overturned at Siftersnek near Zeerust during training exercises in the area. He was 19.
- **1989** - Lance Corporal Pieter Johannes Klue from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the old Warmbaths Road near the Wonderboom Military Base. He was 19.

**21 October**

- **1805** - The Battle of Trafalgar took place between the British Royal Navy and the combined French and Spanish fleets. The victorious British ended the threat of Napoleon's invasion of England. British naval hero Admiral Horatio Nelson was mortally wounded aboard his ship Victory.
- **1899** - The Boer forces are defeated by the British at the Battle of Elandslaagte.
- **1914** - Battle of Warsaw: Germans defeat the Russians.
- **1942** - Eight American and British officers land from a submarine on an Algerian beach to take measure of Vichy French to the Operation Torch landings.
- **1952** - Jomo Kenyatta is arrested in Kenya when the

- British forces defeat the Mau-Mau.
- **1960** - HMS 'Dreadnought' is launched, Britain's 1st nuclear submarine.
- **1967** - The Egyptian navy sinks the Israeli destroyer Eilat off Sinai, killing forty people.
- **1982** - Corporal Donald Craig Clerk from 1 Special Service Battalion Died from a gunshot wound resulting from an accidental discharge of the fellow soldiers rifle while based at Oshakati. He was 20.
- **1983** - Four members of 5 Reconnaissance Regiment were Reported Missing after being captured during the night of 20/21 October 1983 while carrying out pseudo operations against enemy forces during Operation Slyk. It is presumed that they were subsequently executed by their captors. They have no known grave and remain unaccounted for. The four casualties were: Corporal D. Dula (27). Corporal R. Mhlinga (29). Rifleman Frans Mkoshi (26). Rifleman Manuel Shikondau (33).
- **1996** - The UN reports that over 200,000 Hutu refugees are fleeing into the hills to escape the conflict between the Zaire military and Tutsi .
- **2003** - Veteran French war journalist Jean Helene is shot dead in cold blood in Abidjan in the Ivory Coast by a police officer.

**22 October**

- **1847** - Gen. Jacobus Her-

- cules (Koos) de la Rey, also known as 'The Lion of Western Transvaal' because of his brave leadership during the Anglo-Boer War, is born on the farm Doornfontein in the Winburg district, Orange Free State.
- **1859** - Spain declares war on the Moors in Morocco.
- **1944** - Japanese naval forces converge on Leyte.
- **1954** - West Germany joins NATO.
- **1962** - President John F. Kennedy appeared on television to inform Americans of the existence of Russian missiles in Cuba. The President demanded their removal and announced a naval quarantine" of Cuba. Six days later, the Russians announced they would remove the weapons. In return, the U.S. later removed missiles from Turkey.
- **1968** - SA signs treaty with Greece concerning the graves of members of the armed forces of the Commonwealth in Greek territory.
- **1986** - Corporal Pieter Johannes Jacobus Meisenheimer from the Army Gymnasium was killed when the Bedford Water Tanker he was driving, overturned at Heidelberg. He was 20.

**23 October**

- **1642** - Edgehill, first battle of the English Civil War.
- **1901** - General Redvers Buller is dismissed as officer in command of the British forces, probably because of his defeat in the Battle of Spioen-

- kop in 1900.
- **1942** - The Second Battle of El Alamein, in which many SA soldiers took part, commences with a thousand-gun barrage. The opening attack by the British Eighth Army starts at 9:30pm. Montgomery eventually defeated Rommel. On 4 November 1942, the British finally broke through the German defences.
- **1942** - Guadalcanal: Battle of Edson's Ridge - Japanese assault broken.
- **1970** - Five members from Quartermaster General (QMG) in Voortrekkerhoogte were accidentally killed in a private station wagon vehicle when it was involved in a head-on collision with a truck between Sasolburg and Parys while they were travelling home to the Eastern Cape on a Weekend Pass. The casualties were: Rifleman Friederich David Warren Bloomberg (18). Rifleman John Merwyn Albert Payne (18). Rifleman Andrew John Hough (19). Rifleman Leonardus Hendrik Botha (19). Rifleman Roderick George Duncan (18).
- **1978** - Private Coenraad Hendrik Basson from 6 Ordnance Base Depot died in the Tygerberg Hospital from injuries received in a military vehicle accident at SAS Wingfield. He was 20
- **1981** - Corporal Werner Oberholzer from 2 Special Service Battalion was accidentally killed when his Eland Armoured Car overturned during a training exercise at

- Zeerust. He was 20.
- **1983** - Rifleman N. Riem from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion. He was 22.
- **1983** - Terrorists drove a truck loaded with TNT into the U.S. and French headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon, exploding it and killing 241 U.S. Marines and 58 French paratroopers.

**24 October**

- **1899** - The Battle of Rietfontein, near Dundee, Natal, takes place, with the British falling back to Ladysmith.
- **1943** - Japanese destroyer 'Mochizuki' is sunk by Marine aircraft southwest of Rabaul.
- **1945** - Vidkun Quisling, 58, Norwegian politician, executed, leaving us a new word for "traitor".
- **1973** - Yom Kippur War ends with Israeli troops 100 km from Cairo and 40 km from Damascus. Several other dates are given for this event, e.g. 22, 26 or 28 October, depending which phase of the peace process is considered most decisive.
- **1976** - Rifleman Ignatius Philippus Coetzee, acting as the Patrol medic for an Infantry Patrol was Killed in Action near Eenhana. He was 18.
- **1983** - Corporal Pedro Giovanni Torre from 7 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop

- Carrier overturned at Lataba Ranch near Phalaborwa. He was 20.
- **1986** - Sergeant Gerhardus Hendrik van der Westhuizen from the South African Corps of Military Police was killed when his military motorcycle was struck by a truck while overtaking about 8km from Lindley. He fell under the wheels of the truck. He was 35.
- **1994** - For the first time in 25 years, British troops were absent from the streets of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, following cease-fires by Irish Republican Army (IRA) and pro-British forces.
- **1998** - A gas explosion devastates the officers' club of the SA National Defence Force, a national monument, in Wynberg, Cape Town.

**25 October**

- **1854** - During the Crimean War, the Charge of the Light Brigade occurred as Lord Cardigan led the British cavalry against the Russians at Balaclava. Of 673 British



**John F. Kennedy**



cavalrymen taking part in the charge, 272 were killed. The Charge was later immortalized in the poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson.

- **1943** - Japanese open the Burma railroad ("The Bridge on the River Kwai").
- **1955** - Austria reassumed its sovereignty with the departure of the last Allied forces. The country had been occupied by the Nazis from 1938-45. After World War II, it was divided into four occupation zones by the U.S., Russia, Britain and France.
- **1956** - Egypt, Jordan and Syria form a united military command.
- **1975** - Rifleman Christian Lambert Kruger from Infantry School was accidentally killed when his private motor vehicle was involved in a head on collision with another motor vehicle near Kroonstad while traveling home on a weekend pass. He was 19.
- **1976** - Rifleman Jan Hendrik Malan from 11 Commando Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents near Eenhana in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1980** - Rifleman Paulo Almeida from 32 Battalion died from injuries accidentally sustained in a military vehicle accident at Buffalo.. He was 23.
- **1980** - Corporal Christopher Bruce Catto from 5 SAI was accidentally shot dead when he and his Section set up an ambush near Etale Base. He

was 20.

- **1983** - Operation Just Cause: US and West Indian forces invade Grenada.

### 26 October

- **1922** - Lt Cdr Godfrey Chevalier makes first underway US carrier landing, on 'Langley' (CV-1).
- **1973** - Signaler Petrus Johannes Pienaar from 2 Signal Regiment collapsed and died from heat exhaustion during Basic Training. He was 18.
- **1977** - Two members of Regiment De Wet were killed when they accidentally detonated a Claymore Directional Fragmentation Anti-Personnel Mine near Elundu. The casualties were: Rifleman Antonie Michael Jacobz (27). Rifleman Lodewicus Johannes Oberholzer (22).
- **1983** - Airman Wernich Haupt from 250 Air Defence Artillery Group, South African Air Force suffered critical head injuries when he accidentally fell off the back of a moving Land Rover. He died from his injuries in 1 Military Hospital later the same day. He was 18.
- **1985** - Rifleman David Bowers from the South African Cape Corps was killed when struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle while at the Touwsrivier Training Area. He was 20.
- **1987** - Private Charles Matthew Dirkse from 5 Maintenance Unit died in Oshakati Hospital from heart failure

resulting from a blood clot in the lung. He was 29.

- **1990** - Private Dirk Cornelius Pieterse from 31 Field Workshop Squadron died in 1 Military Hospital after being critically injured in a military vehicle accident 35km from Vryburg. He was 25.
- **1997** - Angola promises to withdraw its troops from Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of Congo, where they helped rebels oust elected President Pascal Lissouba.

### 27 October

- **1941** - Nazis establish a gypsy ghetto in Belgrade.
- **1942** - Battle of the Santa Cruz Is: USS 'Hornet' (CV-8) sinks.
- **1948** - Negev: Israel recaptures Nizzanim from the Egyptians.
- **1973** - UN peacekeeping forces arrive in Cairo to attempt to set up a lasting cease-fire between Israeli and Arab forces.
- **1977** - Rifleman Joao Victor from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces near Numuidi in Southern Angola during Operation Kropduif. He was 28.
- **1978** - Ugandan troops invade Tanzania, occupying the Kagera salient.

### 28 October

- **1918** - In the waning days of World War I, mutiny broke out in the German fleet at Kiel. Ships in port ran up the

red flag of revolution. The uprising spread to Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck, resulting in a general strike in Berlin which brought the government of Kaiser Wilhelm to a halt.

- **1933** - General Constand Laubscher Viljoen, former head of the SADF and leader of the Vryheidsfront, is born in Standerton, Eastern Transvaal.
- **1940** - Greece rejects an ultimatum, and Italy declares war and invades from Albania.
- **1940** - 'U-32' sinks RMS 'Empress of Britain', killing hundreds of children being evacuated to Canada; Goebbles claims the British did it.
- **1956** - Israeli troops invade Sinai Peninsula, later to be joined by British and French forces, following Egypt's seizure of the Suez Canal from European control.
- **1962** - The Cuban Missile Crisis ended with the announcement by Soviet Russia's leader Nikita Khrushchev that his Soviet government was halting construction of missile bases in Cuba and would remove the offensive missiles. President Kennedy immediately accepted the offer then lifted the U.S. naval blockade of Cuba.
- **1977** - Six members of 1 and 2 Reconnaissance Regiment were Killed in Action at Onalomo in Southern Angola while attacking Eheke during Operation Kropduif. The

casualties were: Warrant Officer Class II Francois Carl van Zyl PMM MMM (34). Sergeant Michiel Labuschagne Kruger MMM (26). Sergeant Wentzel Christoffel Marx (29). Sergeant Neville Grant Clack (30). Corporal Antonie Badenhorst (25). Lance Corporal Gary William John Walker (20).

- **1977** - Sergeant Bernado Andre Mwonambunga from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds in an enemy mortar bomb explosion during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN forces near Onalumona in Southern Angola during Operation Kropduif. He was 34.
- **1978** - Three young Ops Medics attached to 52 Battalion at Ogongo in Northern Owamboland died when they unselfishly put their lives on the line to ensure the safety of others. These three young heroes were posthumously awarded the Honoris Crux for their unselfish act of self-sacrifice in an attempt to save others in circumstances of extreme danger. They were: Private Burgert van Dyk van Papendorp HC (P) (19). Private Johannes Cornelius Jooste HC (P) (19). Private Frederick Johannes Smith HC (P) (18).
- **1986** - Major Daniel Kotze from the Financial Service

Corps at Defence Headquarters died after suffering a fatal heart attack at his home. He was 46.

- **1987** - Rifleman Aaron Alfred Khumalo from 111 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with MK operatives after they had crossed into South Africa from Swaziland approximately 57km east of Vryheid. He was 25.
- **1991** - President Sese Seko Mobutu orders Belgium to withdraw all its troops from Zaire.
- **1992** - Lance Corporal Jacob Johannes le Roux from Group 36 was killed in a military vehicle accident at Thaba N'Chu. He was 18.
- **1997** - Forces loyal to Zambian president Frederick Chiluba quash a coup by disgruntled military officers, arresting nine men including the captain who said an angel told him to overthrow the government.

### 29 October

- **1618** - Sir Walter Raleigh, English admiral and explorer-



**Mobutu Sese Seko**



er, is beheaded, allegedly for treason, at the age of 66.

- **1897** - Nazi propaganda minister Paul Joseph Goebbels was born in Rheydt, near Dusseldorf, Germany.
- **1914** - Russia declares war on Turkey.
- **1914** - Ottoman Empire enters the war with a naval attack on Russian Black Sea ports.
- **1914** - Serbia declares war on the Ottoman Empire.
- **1941** - Germans massacre 10,000 Jews in Kaunas, Lithuania.
- **1942** - Nazis murder 16,000 Jews, Pinsk, USSR.
- **1956** - Israel invades the Sinai Peninsula and troops push on towards the Suez Canal, just 32 km away. Israeli paratroopers drop into the Sinai to open the Straits of Tiran.
- **1962** - Three members from Central Flying School Duntottar were killed when an AT-6 Harvard that was executing a spin recovery in the General Flying area, was involved in a mid-air collision with another AT-6 Harvard. The casualties were: Air Mechanic Hendrik Jacobus Burger (18). Air Mechanic Jakobus Schabort Bischoff (22). Lieutenant Jan Jacob Christiaan van Zyl (23).
- **1968** - 2nd Lieutenant Charles Frederick Du Toit from 1 Squadron was killed when his Canadair C13L Sabre crashed into rising ground near Bandolierkop while on a routine low lev-

el navigation training flight from AFB Pietersburg. He was 21.

- **1975** - Four members from the SADF, one pilot and three passengers, were accidentally killed when their UNITA supplied Beechcraft Baron known as "Dinky Toy", crashed 6km north of Norton de Matos in Central Angola while carrying out aerial observations for Battle Group Foxbat in the Silva Porta area during Operation Savannah. The casualties were: Colonel Desmond Brian Harmse (46). Major Pieter Benjamin Uys (34). Major Nicholas Jacobus Visser (37). Corporal Neville Roland Beechey (19).
- **1977** - Rifleman Johannes Ferdinand Baum from the East Park Commando accidentally drowned in the Chobe River near Mpalela Island. He was 20.
- **1984** - Rifleman J. Paulus from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 23.
- **1987** - Private Erwin Benade from the Headquarters Unit, Logistics Base Grootfontein, died from a gunshot wound apparently self-inflicted. He was 21.

### 30 October

- **1270** - The Eighth Crusade begins, and accomplishes nothing.
- **1799** - William Balch becomes the US Navy's first

commissioned Chaplain.

- **1899** - "Mournful Monday": the British lose 106 killed, 374 wounded and 1 284 captured in two battles.
- **1899** - General Christiaan de Wet and 300 Boers capture Nicholson's Nek and take 800 British soldiers prisoner.
- **1899** - In the Battle of Modderspruit, Commandant General Piet Joubert causes the British to fall back. He is urged to order a pursuit, but refuses on religious grounds, one of the fatal mistakes during the war.
- **1952** - Troops round up 500 Mau Mau suspects in Kenya.
- **1956** - Israel captures the Egyptian military post at El-Thamad.
- **1956** - France and Britain instruct Egypt and Israel to withdraw from the Suez Canal.
- **1961** - Congolese army begins an offensive against Katangan rebels.
- **1961** - Soviet Union tests a 58 megaton hydrogen bomb.
- **1963** - Morocco and Algeria sign a ceasefire.
- **1978** - Reports of fighting between Ugandan and Tanzanian troops in Uganda.
- **1979** - Rifleman Dirk Cornelius Odendaal from the SADF Dog Training Centre attached to 16 Maintenance Unit was killed at Grootfontein after being struck by a bullet resulting from the accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle while in

the barracks. He was 18.

- **1992** - Heavy fighting breaks out in Luanda, Angola, between the government and Unita. The conflict rages for three days, claiming at least 1,000 lives.

### 31 October

- **1917** - Third Battle of Beer-sheba: Australian, New Zealand, & British mounted troops capture the city from the Turks.
- **1940** - The Battle of Britain concluded. Beginning on July 10, 1940, German bombers and fighters had attacked coastal targets, airfields, London and other cities, as a prelude to a Nazi invasion of England. British pilots in Spitfires and Hurricanes shot down over 1,700 German aircraft while losing 915 fighters. "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few," declared Prime Minister Winston Churchill.
- **1952** - The U.S. detonated its first hydrogen bomb at the Elugelab Atoll in the Eniwetok Proving Grounds in the Pacific Marshall Islands.
- **1956** - Following a twelve-hour ultimatum to Egypt and Israel, British and French forces bombard military airfields near Cairo in the Suez Canal Zone.
- **1968** - During the Vietnam War, President Lyndon Johnson ordered a halt of American bombing of North Vietnam.

- **1980** - Two members from the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg were Reported Missing when their Civilian Piper Cherokee PA28-180, Registration ZS-VVK, disappeared while on a flight from Wonderboom Airport to Graskop. They were: Lance Corporal Gunther Jurgen Dreyer (19). Lance Corporal Andre' Coetzee (19).
- **1987** - A 101 Battalion Battle Group, supported by members of 5 Reconnaissance Regiment together with D Company, 1 Parachute Battalion, attacked SWAPO/PLAN positions at Nindango in Southern Angola. The Operation was known as Ops Firewood. The Battle Group suffered 15 casualties with approximately 67 wounded before contact was finally broken off at nightfall. The Battle Group casualties for this engagement were: Rifleman Hughes Norbert De Rose (21). Rifleman Wayne Valentine Ewels (21). Lance Corporal Raymond Mark Light (21). Corporal Nico Smith Olivier (19). Rifleman Dirk Willem van Rooyen (20). All from D Company, 1 Parachute Battalion. 2nd Lieutenant Dylan Chevalier Cobbold (20) from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment. Captain Andries Hercules Du Bruyn Rademeyer (27). 2nd Lieutenant Deon Botes

(20). Sapper Erasmus Albertus Steyn (19). Rifleman W. Abraham. Rifleman P. Epafu. Rifleman V.Petrus. Rifleman T. Sheepo. Rifleman M. Uusshona. All from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike.

- **1992** - More than 300 people are killed in renewed fighting as Angola slides back into civil war.
- **2006** - The Star reports that poor management of SANDF equipment and the theft of weapons that ended up in rebels' hands are fueling the conflict in Burundi where SA troops had been sent to keep the peace. It says sources confirmed that millions of rands worth of vehicles, guns, ammunition and bombs vanished from the SANDF army base in Burundi over the last four years. The South African department of defence indicated it would be able to comment only later this week "after conducting the proper research," report says.
- **2006** - Former South African Minister of Defence and President PW Botha dies at the age of 90.



**PW Botha**





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# SADF Shoulder Flashes

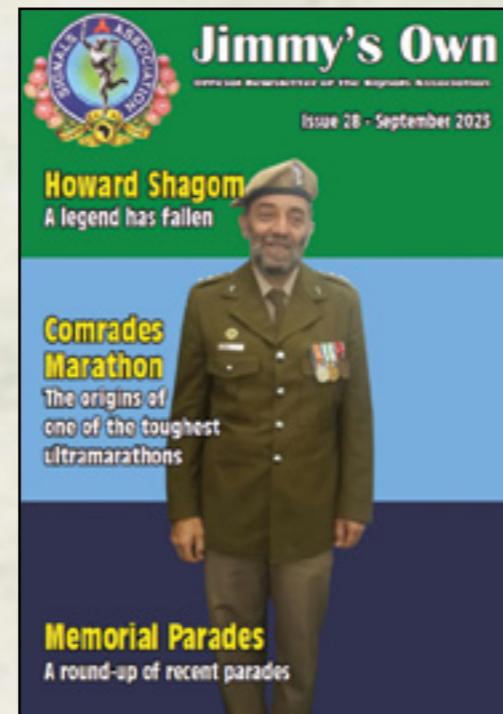
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- 3 1 Signals Regiment
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- 11 WP Command Signals Unit
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- 13 7 Medical Battalion
- 14 2 Field Engineers Regiment
- 15 Technical Services School



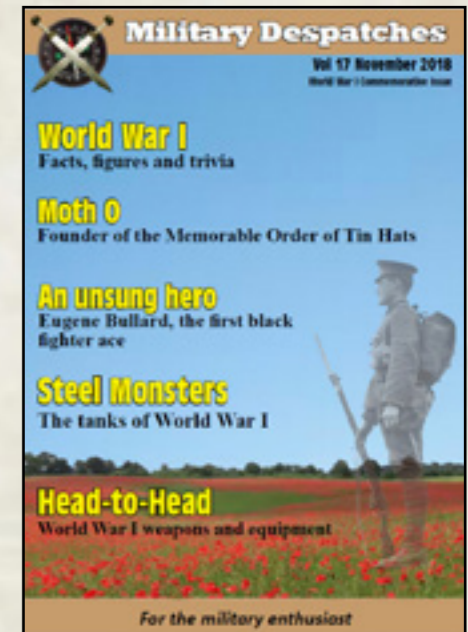
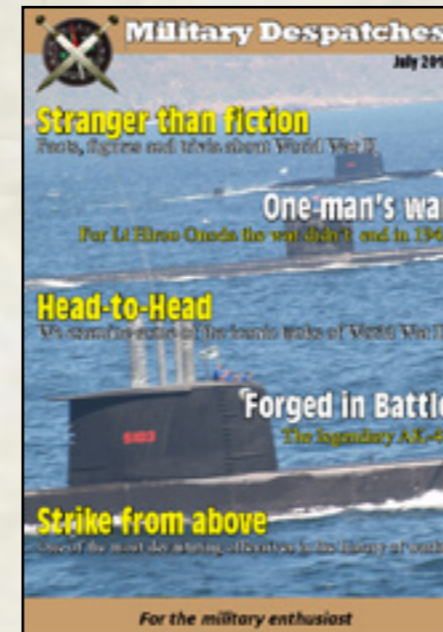
## Useful links

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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