



Military Despatches

July 2017

Stranger than fiction

Facts, figures and trivia about World War II

One man's war

For Lt Hiroo Onoda the war didn't end in 1945

Head-to-Head

We examine some of the iconic tanks of World War II

Forged in Battle

The legendary AK-47

Strike from above

One of the most devastating offensives in the history of warfare

For the military enthusiast

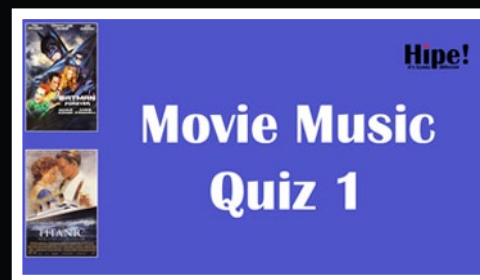


Click on any video below to view



Hipe's Wouter de Goede interviews former 28's gang boss David Williams.

How much do you know about movie theme songs? Take our quiz and find out.



Part of Hipe's "On the couch" series, this is an interview with one of author Herman Charles Bosman's most famous characters, Oom Schalk Lourens.



A taxi driver was shot dead in an ongoing war between rival taxi organisations.



The old South African Defence Force used a mixture of English, Afrikaans, slang and techno-speak that few outside the military could hope to understand. Some of the terms were humorous, some were clever, while others were downright crude.



Hipe spent time in Hanover Park, an area plagued with gang violence, to view first-hand how Project Ceasefire is dealing with the situation.

Hipe TV brings you videos ranging from actuality to humour and everything in between. Interviews, mini-documentaries and much more.

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World War II - facts, figures & trivia

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They said it

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Dad's Army

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One man's war

World War II ended on August 14, 1945. Yet not for Second Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda. He would continue to fight the war for another 29 years.

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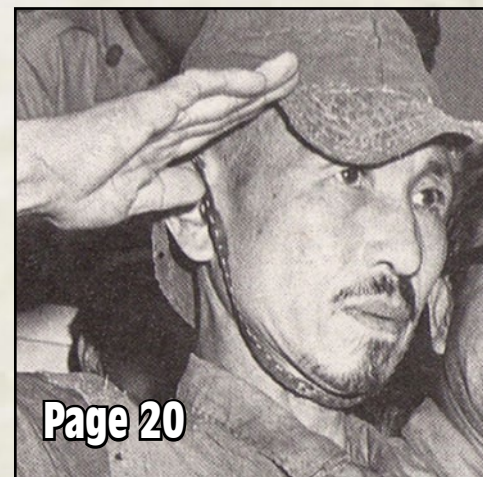
Karl Dönitz

Senior submarine officer in the Kriegsmarine, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, the man that replaced Adolf Hitler as fuhrer of Germany - Karl Dönitz was all this and more.

Cover Photograph

The American Los Angeles class nuclear submarine USS San Juan is escorted around Cape Point by two South African Navy submarines. They are heading towards the SA Navy base at Simon's Town. SAS Queen Modjadji I (front), USS San Juan (centre) and SAS Charlotte Maxeke (back).

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This is something I've been threatening to do for a number of years - a military magazine.

Ten years ago I started Hipe Magazine, an online digital magazine that comes out on the first of each month. It was originally started while I was lecturing journalism and I wanted to use it as a platform for young writers, a place where they could be published.

It's grown a lot since then and so has the readership. Yet I've always been keen on the idea of doing a monthly military magazine. I spent a number of years as a soldier and an even longer time as a conflict journalist. I also have a passion for history, especially military history.

Compiling a magazine like this is not as easy as it sounds. What exactly was the content going to be? Many historians and enthusiasts will concentrate on a particular aspect of military history. Some may concentrate on a specific era or time period such as warfare in the 20th century. Others may look at a particular war such as the Vietnam War or the American Civil War. Some may concentrate on a topic such as modern fighter aircraft or submarines.

If I had to concentrate on a particular topic it would probably be wars fought in Africa, especially the South African Border War.

Yet I wanted to do something as broad as possible. I wanted to cover a broad range of military history and military subjects as possible.

To this end the magazine looks at general articles relevant to the military - from any era. There are also specific regular sections such as Head-to-Head which will compare units or weapons from a specific conflict. Famous figures in military history will look at a famous, or infamous, person in military history. Forged in battle will cover weapons, equipment or units. Battlefield will look at a battle or campaign from history. There will also be a monthly movie review, a book review, and a game review. And yes, there are some brilliant military simulation games out there. Finally there will be an article on the lighter side of the military.

I trust you will enjoy this as much as we've enjoyed putting it together.

Matt

Hipe! media

PUBLISHER

Hipe Media

EDITOR

Matt Tennyson

CONTRIBUTORS

Raymond Fletcher, Ryan Murphy, Matt O'Brien, Matt Tennyson.

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Hipe!

P.O. Box 31216, Tokai, 7966
South Africa.

email

editor@hipe.co.za

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Forged in Battle

The AK-47

Each month "Forged in Battle" looks at weapons, equipment or units that have been tried and tested on the battlefield. This month we look at the legendary AK-47.



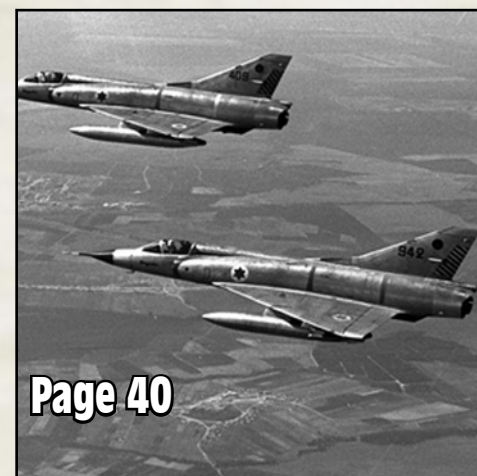
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Battlefield

Air Strike - The Six Day War

On 5 June 1967 the Israelis launched one of the most devastating offensives in the history of warfare.



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Firearm Identification

We show you a firearm, you tell us what it is.

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Movie Review - Enemy at the Gates

This film revolves around the Battle of Stalingrad and in particular about Russian sniper Vasily Zaytsev.

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Book Review

This month we look at two books. *Cuito Cuanavale: Frontline Accounts by Soviet Soldiers* and *Echoes of an African War* by Chas Lotter.



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Game Review - Company of Heroes 2

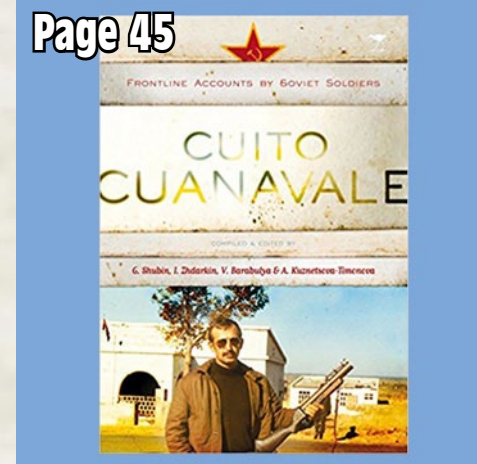
This real time strategy game lets you fight as the Russians, Germans, Americans or British during World War II.

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The Lighter Side

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.



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World War II - facts, figures & trivia

A few facts, figures and trivia about World War II. It's sad to think that there are not a lot of people still around that fought in that conflict.

Every year on November 11 we remember those that made the ultimate sacrifice during the two World Wars and other wars.

Yet just how much do we really know about those conflicts? Hopefully this article will give you a slightly better knowledge of World War II.

Largest armed forces of World War II

1. USSR - 12,500,000
2. USA - 12,364,000
3. Germany - 10,000,000
4. Japan - 6,095,000
5. France - 5,700,000
6. UK - 4,683,000
7. Italy - 4,500,000
8. China - 3,800,000
9. India - 2,150,000
10. Poland - 1,000,000

Allowing for deaths and casualties, the total forces mobilised during the course of the war is, of course, greater than the peak strength figures: that of the USSR, for example, has been put as high as 20 000 000, the USA 16,354,000, Germany 17,900,000, Japan 9,100,000 and the UK 5,896,000.

Smallest armed forces of World War II

1. Costa Rica - 400
2. Liberia - 1,000
3. El Salvador - 3,000, Honduras - 3,000, Nicaragua - 3,000
6. Haiti - 3,500
7. Dominican Rep. - 4,000
8. Guatemala - 5,000
9. Bolivia - 8,000, Paraguay - 8,000, Uruguay - 8,000

The smallest European armed forces was that of Denmark, with a maximum strength of 15 000, just 13 of whom were killed during the one-day German invasion on 9 April 1940.

Several South American countries did not declare war until the closing stages, in order to become eligible to join the fledgling United Nations.

Great strategy. "You say the war is ending tomorrow. Who's losing? Okay, let's declare war on them. Let's start printing victory medals for our brave troops."

Greatest military losses of World War II

1. USSR - 13,600,000
2. Germany - 3,300,000
3. China - 1,324,516
4. Japan - 1,140,429
5. British Empire - 357,116
6. Romania - 350,000
7. Poland - 320,000
8. Yugoslavia - 305,000
9. USA - 292,131
10. Italy - 279,800

The actual numbers killed in World War II have been the subject of intense argument for the past 70 years.

The immense level of the military casualty rate of the USSR, in particular, is hard to comprehend. Most authorities now reckon that of the 30 million Soviets who bore arms, there were 13.6 million military deaths.

This includes a battlefield death toll of approximately 7.8 million, plus up to 2.5 million who died later of wounds received in battle and disease and,

of the 5.8 million who were taken prisoner, as many as 3.3 million who died in captivity.

It should also be borne in mind that these were military losses: to these should be added many untold millions of civilian war deaths, while recent estimates have suggested an additional figure of up to 25 million civilian deaths as a result of Stalinist purges, which began just before the outbreak of war.

Greatest civilian losses of World War II

1. China - 8,000,000
2. USSR - 6,500,000
3. Poland - 5,300,000
4. Germany - 2,350,000
5. Yugoslavia - 1,500,000
6. France - 470,000
7. Greece - 415,000
8. Japan - 393,400
9. Romania - 340,000
10. Hungary - 300,000

During World War II, many deaths among civilians, especially in China and the USSR, resulted from famine and internal purges. In fact Stalin killed more of his own people than the Germans did.

Worst military ship losses of World War II

1. Wilhelm Gustloff (Germany) - 7,800 lives lost
2. Goya (Germany) - 6,202
3. Cap Arcona (Germany) - 6,000
4. Junyo Maru (Japan) - 5,620
5. Toyama Maru (Japan) - 5,400
6. Arcona (Germany) - 5,000
7. Lancastria (Great Britain) - 3,050

8. Steuben (Germany) - 3,000
9. Thielbeck (Germany) - 2,750
10. Yamato (Japan) - 2,498

While many ship losses resulted from sea battles, some of the highest death tolls were caused by the bombing or torpedoing of vessels carrying refugees and other civilians.

The German liner Wilhelm Gustloff, laden with civilian refugees and wounded German soldiers and sailors, was torpedoed off the coast of Poland by a Soviet submarine, S-13, on 30 January 1945. Although imprecise, some sources even suggest a figure as high as 9,400, the probable death toll being some five times as great as that of the Titanic.

Top British and Commonwealth Air Aces of World War II

1. Sqd Ldr Marmaduke Thomas St John Prattle (South African) - 40+
2. Gp Captain James Edgar 'Johnny' Johnson (British) - 33.91
3. Wing Cdr Brendan 'Paddy' Finucane (Irish) - 32
4. Flt Lt George Frederick Beurling (Canadian) - 31.33
5. Wing Cdr John Randall Daniel Braham (British) - 29
6. Gp Capt Adolf Gysbert 'Sailor' Malan (South Africa) - 28.66
7. Wing Cdr Clive Robert Caldwell (Australian) - 28.5
8. Sqd Ldr James Harry 'Ginger' Lacey (British) - 28
9. Sqd Ldr Neville Frederick Duke (British) - 27.83
10. Wing Cdr Colin F. Gray (New Zealander) - 27.7

Uniquely to Western air forces in World War II, kills that are expressed as fractions refer

to those that were shared with others, the number of fighters involved and the extent of each pilot's participation determining the proportion allocated to him.

Ivan Kozhedub was the top Soviet ace with 62 kills and Richard I. Bong was the top American with 40 kills.

Tetsuzo Iwamoto of the Japanese Imperial Air Force was the top Japanese ace with 87 kills.

A total of 104 German Luftwaffe (Air Force) pilots claimed over 100 kills. The top German ace, and top ace of the war, was Erich "Bubi" Hartmann with a remarkable 352, most of them over the Eastern Front.

World War II Trivia

- The first German serviceman killed in the war was killed by the Japanese (China, 1937).
- The first American serviceman killed was killed by the Russians (Finland 1940).
- At the time of Pearl Harbor, the top US Navy command was called CINCUS (pronounced "sink us"), the shoulder patch of the US Army's 45th Infantry division was the swastika, and Hitler's private train was named "Amerika". All three were soon changed for PR purposes.
- It was a common practice on fighter planes to load every fifth round with a tracer round to aid in aiming. That was a mistake. The tracers had different ballistics so (at long range) if your tracers were hitting the target, 80% of your rounds were missing. Worse yet, the tracers instantly told your enemy he was under fire and from which direction. Worst of all



TOP GUN: German Luftwaffe ace Erich Hartmann was the top ace of World War II with 352 kills.

was the practice of loading a string of tracers at the end of the belt to tell you that you were out of ammo. That was definitely not something you wanted to tell the enemy. Units that stopped using tracers saw their success rate nearly double and their loss rate go down.

- German Me-264 bombers were capable of bombing New York City but it wasn't worth the effort.
- The Russians destroyed over 500 German aircraft by ramming them in midair (they also sometimes cleared minefields by marching over them). "It takes a brave man not to be a hero in the Red Army". - Joseph Stalin.
- When the US Army landed in North Africa, among the equipment brought ashore were three complete Coca Cola bottling plants.
- Among the first "Germans" captured at Normandy were several Koreans. They had been forced to fight for the Japanese Army until they were captured by the Russians and forced to fight



HIGH PRICE TO PAY: Only 20% of the males born in the Soviet Union in 1923 survived the war.

for the Russian Army until they were captured by the Germans and forced to fight for the German Army until they were captured by the US Army.

- Most members of the Waffen SS were not German.
- The only nation that Germany declared war on was the USA.
- Nuclear physicist Niels Bohr was rescued in the nick of time from German occupied Denmark. While Danish resistance fighters provided covering fire he ran out the back door of his home stopping momentarily to grab a beer bottle full of precious "heavy water". He finally reached England still clutching the bottle, which contained beer. Perhaps some German drank the heavy water.
- One of the American light cruisers anchored at Pearl Harbour during the Japanese attack of December 1941 was the Phoenix. The Phoenix survived the attack virtually unscathed, however,

more than 40 years later she was torpedoed and sunk by the British submarine Conqueror in the South Atlantic. The Phoenix, at the time of her demise, was of course known then as the General Belgrano.

- Although many people refer to the Allied D-Day landings in Normandy as "Operation Overlord", the operation was actually called "Operation Neptune". The landings were originally known as Overlord, but in September 1943 the codename was changed to Neptune, and Overlord from then on was used to refer to the general Allied strategy in northwestern Europe.
- Despite what you might see in the movies, the regular German Army (Wehrmacht) did not usually use the Nazi salute. Only after the July 1944 attempt on Hitler's life were they forced to use the Nazi salute as standard.
- German sailors brought a black and white patched cat on board the battleship Bis-

marck. His job was to catch mice. A few hours after the Bismarck had been torpedoed and sunk the cat was found clutching driftwood. He was taken aboard the British destroyer HMS Cossack and given the name Sam. Later that year the HMS Cossack was also torpedoed and sunk. Once again the cat survived and was given the nickname Unsinkable Sam. He was transferred to the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal which, less than a month later, was also torpedoed and sunk. Once more Sam was found clinging to a floating plank, apparently "angry but quite unharmed". Sam was eventually retired later that year to a domestic home in Belfast, where he lived until dying of natural causes in 1955.

- Two weeks after Adolf Hitler's suicide, Allied and Axis forces fought together in the only record of such an event happening during the six year war. The battle took place at Castle Itter in Austria, where several high profile prisoners were being detained, such as former French presidents, prime ministers and even sports celebrities. 14 American soldiers teamed up with around 20 German Wehrmacht troops to defend the castle from an onslaught by an SS squadron. They held out until help arrived in the form of the American 103rd Infantry Division.
- The youngest person to serve in the US Military during World War II was Calvin Graham. He was only 12 years old. He lied about his age and was later wounded in action and awarded the Purple Heart medal (age 14) before they

discovered his real age.

- Total casualties for World War II were between 50 and 70 million people, 80% of who came from only four countries — Russia, China, Germany, and Poland. Over 50% of the casualties were civilians, with the majority of those being women and children.
- Prior to the Allied invasion of Sicily they came up with a number of deception plans to convince the Germans that the landings would take place elsewhere. One of these plans was named Operation Mincemeat. It involved releasing the body of a person dressed as a Royal Marine Major off the coast of Spain. The body contained documents revealing that the Allies were planning on invading Greece. The Spanish returned the body, and the documents, to the British Embassy. But not before they were copied by the Germans. The Germans fell for the deception hook, line and sinker. The person that dreamt up the plan was a British Naval Intelligence officer by the name of Ian Fleming. Yes, the same man that would later bring us James Bond.
- In 1935, British engineer Robert Watson-Watt was working on a "death ray" that would destroy enemy aircraft using radio waves. His "death ray" instead evolved into radar—or "radio detection and ranging."
- During World War II a Dutch minesweeper evaded the Japanese for eight days disguised as an island. The crew covered the decks in cut trees and painted exposed surfaces to look like rocks. They moved only at night and anchored

closed to shore by day, eventually escaping to Australia.

- American pilot Owen J. Baggett became legendary as the only person to shoot down a Japanese aircraft with a .45 calibre M1911 pistol. Baggett had bailed out of his aircraft and was parachuting when a Japanese aircraft headed straight at him. He fired three shots with his pistol and one of them hit the Japanese pilot in the head, killing him instantly.
- We've all heard the stories about how ruthless German U-boats would surface and machine gun survivors of ships they had torpedoed. Yet until late 1942, it was common for German U-boats to provide torpedoed survivors with food, water, and the direction of the nearest landmass. This ended when a

U-boat towing lifeboats and flying the Red Cross flag was attacked by a US bomber.

- During WWII the Allies discovered that the Germans were using the Leaning Tower of Pisa as an observation post. A U.S Army Sergeant that was sent to the tower to confirm the presence of German troops was impressed by its beauty and decided to not order an artillery strike on it.
- During the Invasion of Normandy, Scottish Bagpiper, Bill Millin, contrary to British Command, in the thick of battle, marched up and down the beach playing his Pipes. When his unit captured German snipers, they asked why Millin wasn't shot. They said they didn't shoot him because he was clearly insane.
- In the Western desert the German Luftwaffe built a fake airfield near



Commander Ian Fleming

one of their heavily camouflaged airfields. This was so that the Royal Air Force would be tricked into bombing it. The buildings, vehicles and aircraft at the airfield were all made of wood. Shortly after it was completed the RAF attacked the airfield, dropping wooden bombs on it. About half an hour later the real airfield was attacked. This time with real bombs.

- The idea that eating carrots helps you see in the dark was a lie invented by the British Royal Air Force in WWII, in order to explain how British

Hiroshima that killed 78,000 people instantly but by the end of 1945 the death total had reached 140,000.

- While on the subject of Hiroshima you have to take pity on the elderly Japanese man that managed to survive the bombing of Hiroshima. He decided that it was pointless to stay on in the ruined city and that he would go and stay with a relative in another city. He took a train and arrived in Nagasaki shortly before it was struck by the second atomic bomb. Remarkably he survived the second explo-

1941 Von Werra took off in Bf 109F-4 on a practice flight. He suffered engine failure and crashed into the sea north of Vlissingen and was killed. His body was never found.

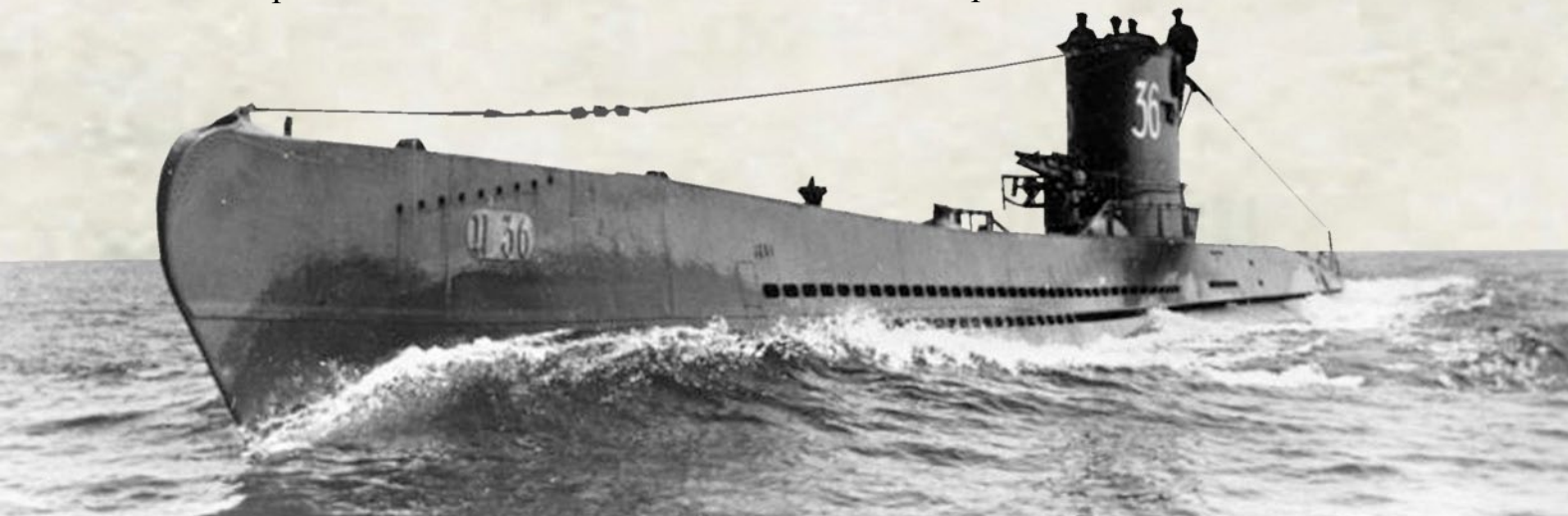
- Japanese military leader Tojo Hideki was put on trial as a war criminal at the end of World War II. While in prison he attempted suicide. It took the Americans a great deal of time, effort and money to resuscitate him and get him back to health. After which they hanged him.
- The last prisoner of war from

Stanisława Leszczyńska delivered 3,000 babies at the Auschwitz concentration camp during the Holocaust in occupied Poland.

- In World War II, British soldiers got a ration of three sheets of toilet paper a day. Americans troops got 22.
- Four of every five German soldiers killed in the war died on the Eastern Front.
- Only one out of every four men serving on U-boats survived.
- The Siege of Stalingrad resulted in more Russian deaths (military and civilian) than the US and Britain sustained (combined) in all of World War II.
- Adolf Hitler's nephew, William Hitler, served in the US Navy during World War II.
- To avoid using the German sounding name 'hamburger' during World War II, Americans used the name 'Liberty Steak.'
- Most kamikaze died in vain. Only one in nine kamikaze pilots hit their targets during WWII.
- Queen Elizabeth II served as a mechanic and driver during WWII.
- During World War II, German prisoners of war in Canada were treated so nicely that they didn't want to leave Canada when released after the war ended.
- The first bomb dropped on Berlin by the Allies killed the only elephant in the Berlin Zoo.
- Max Heiliger was the fictitious name the SS used to establish a bank account in which they deposited money, gold, and jewels taken from European Jews.
- The longest battle of WWII



PACKING A PUNCH: The most powerful artillery gun created by any nation and used in WWII was named Karl by its designer General Karl Becker. Used mostly against the Russians, the huge gun could shoot a 2.5 ton shell over three miles. The shells were almost 61 cm wide and could go through three metres of concrete.



HIGH ATTRITION RATE: Only one out of every four men serving on U-boats survived the war.

air raids were so successful in the dark without tipping the Germans off on the existence of radar.

- 25 Russian soldiers under the command of Yakov Pavlov defended a building during the Battle of Stalingrad so well that it never fell. Vasily Chuikov, general of the Soviet forces in Stalingrad, later joked that the Germans lost more men trying to take "Pavlov's house" than they did taking Paris.
- The American pilot who dropped the first atomic bomb died aged 92 – with no regrets. He said he never lost a single night's sleep. Pilot Paul Tibbets dropped the bomb on

sion as well.

- Joan Pujol Garcia was a Spaniard that worked for German intelligence as an agent. He was, however, a double agent and was actually working for the British. Ironically he was the only person to be awarded both the Iron Cross from the Germans and an MBE from the British.
- Franz Von Werra, a German POW who was transferred to Canada to deter his multiple escapes and recaptures, escaped again in less than a month, traveling through the US, Mexico, Brazil, Spain and Italy to become the only Western held POW to return to combat. On 25 October

World War II to be repatriated was a Hungarian soldier who was taken prisoner by the Red Army in 1944, then discovered living in a Russian psychiatric hospital in 2000.

- In WWII a woman-only Soviet bomber regiment were nicknamed the "Night Witches" by German soldiers. For a successful bombing run, the Witches would cut the engine of their archaic and noisy aircraft. Gliding in, they would release their bombs before the enemy even knew they were there.
- Over 100,000 Allied bomber crewmen were killed over Europe.
- Polish Catholic midwife

was the Battle of the Atlantic, which lasted from 1939-1945.

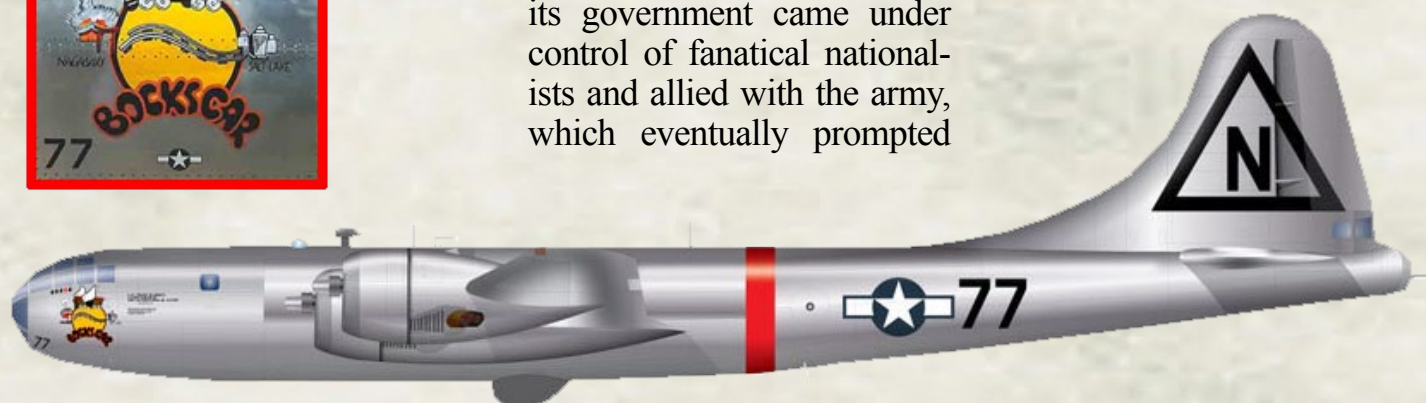
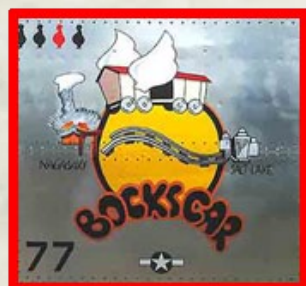
- Approximately 600,000 Jews served in the United States armed forces during WWII. More than 35,000 were killed, wounded, captured, or missing. Approximately 8,000 died in combat. However, only two Jewish soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor in WWII.
- The Battle of the Bulge is the largest and deadliest battle for U.S. troops to date, with more than 80,000 American casualties.
- During WWII, the Japanese launched 9,000 "wind ship weapons" of paper and rubberized-silk balloons that carried incendiary and anti-personnel bombs to the U.S. More than 1,000 balloons hit their targets and they reached as far east as Michigan. The only deaths resulting from a balloon bomb were six Americans (including five children and a pregnant woman) on a

picnic in Oregon.

- The Japanese Kamikaze ("divine wind") tactic was suggested on October 19, 1944, by Vice-Admiral Onishi in an attempt to balance the technological advantage of invading American forces. Though the numbers are disputed, approximately 2,800 kamikaze pilots died. They sunk 34 U.S. ships, damaged 368, killed 4,900 sailors, and wounded 4,800.
- Many historians believe that the Battle at Stalingrad (1942-1943) is not only arguably the bloodiest battle in history (800,000-1,600,000 casualties), but also the turning point of WWII in Europe.
- From 1940-1945, the U.S. defense budget increased from \$1.9 billion to \$59.8 billion.
- The Air Force was part of the Army in WWII and didn't become a separate branch of the military until after the war.
- German U-boats sunk 2,000 Allied ships at a cost of 781

U-boats destroyed.

- The Germans used the first jet fighters in World War II, among them the Messerschmitt ME-262. However, they were developed too late to change the course of the war.
- At the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, there were 96 ships anchored. During the attack, 18 were sunk or seriously damaged, including eight battleships. There were



BOCK'S CAR: The Enola Gay became well known for dropping the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, but few people know the name of the B-29 that bombed Nagasaki. It was Bock's Car, named after the plane's usual commander, Frederick Bock.

- 2,402 American men killed and 1,280 injured. Three hundred and fifty aircraft were destroyed or damaged.
- The Nazis pirated the Harvard "fight song" to compose their Sieg Heil march.
- Several famous actors were decorated during WWII. For example, Henry Fonda won a Bronze Star in the Pacific, Walter Matthau was awarded six battle stars while serving on a B-17, and David Niven was awarded the U.S. Legion of Merit. Christopher Lee was a pilot in the Royal Air Force and also won a number of awards.
- John Wayne (Marion Robert Morrison) starred in 14

- WWII movies; however, due to a football injury, he never actually served in the war.
- On January 31, 1945, Private Eddie Slovik was shot for desertion, the first American executed for the crime since the Civil War and the only one to suffer this punishment during WWII.
- Although Japan fought on the side of Britain, France, and the U.S. during WWI, it felt cheated by its failure to gain much territory when the peace treaty was composed. Additionally, in the 1920s, its government came under control of fanatical nationalists and allied with the army, which eventually prompted

- Japan to side with Germany.
- The most decorated unit ever in U.S. history is the 442nd regimental Combat Team, whose motto was "Go for Broke." It consisted of Japanese-American volunteers. Together they won 4,667 major medals, awards, and citations, including 560 Silver Stars (28 of which had oak-leaf clusters), 4,000 Bronze Stars, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, and one Medal of Honor, plus 54 other decorations. It also held the distinction of never having a case of desertion.
- Norvell Gillespie, the garden editor of Better Homes and Gardens, designed the cam-

- ouflage print for U.S. service uniforms in WWII.
- The greatest tank battle in history occurred between the Germans and Russians at the Kursk salient in Russia from July 4-22, 1943. More than 3,600 tanks were involved.
- The largest Japanese spy ring during WWII was not in the U.S. but in Mexico, where it spied on the U.S. Atlantic Fleet.
- Prisoners of war in Russian camps experienced an 85% mortality rate.
- Germany had a total of 3,363

- generals during the war while the U.S. had just over 1,500.
- If it became necessary to drop a third atom bomb on Japan, the city that would have been the target was Tokyo.
- In the 1928 elections, less than 3% of Germans voted for the Nazi party. In 1938, Hitler was Time magazine's man of the year.
- Large, inflatable barrage balloons were used to protect major towns and cities in Britain from air raids. The balloons were launched before a raid and trailed a network of steel cables beneath them. Bombers had to fly high to avoid becoming tangled in the cables, thus reducing their accuracy.



STALIN ORGAN: On July 14, 1941, the Soviets introduced a new weapon, the Katyusha, which could fire 320 rockets in 25 seconds. More than 50 years later, the Katyusha remains an effective weapon.

- Because the Norway leader Vidkun Quisling (1887-1945) actively collaborated with Germany after its occupation, his name has entered the Norwegian language as a word for "traitor."
- Japan and Russia never formally ended hostilities after WWII. Plans for them to sign an official peace treaty in 2000 failed because Japan wanted Russia to return four offshore islands it had taken after the war.
- Author Ian Fleming based his character "007" on the Yugoslavian-born spy Dusko Popov (1912-1980). Popov spoke at least five languages and came up with his own formula for invisible ink. He was the first spy to use microdots, or photos shrunk down to the size of dots. He obtained information that the Japanese were planning an air strike on Pearl Harbor, but the FBI did not act on his warning. Popov later lived in the U.S. in a penthouse and created a reputation as a playboy. He wrote an account of his
- wartime activities in his novel *Spy, Counterspy* (1974).
- From 1942, U.S. Marines in the Pacific used the Navajo language as their secret code. The language didn't have the vocabulary for existing WWII technology, so existing words had to be given new meanings. For example, the word for "hummingbird" (da-he-ti-hi) became code for fighter plane. Around 400 Navajo Indians (Code Talkers) were trained to use the code, and the Japanese never cracked it.
- During an attack on an Italian position in North Africa the South African Infantry launched a bayonet charge. One of the attacking South Africans fell into a shell hole, hitting his head and rendering him unconscious. When he regained consciousness a minute or two later he found six Italians sitting in the hole with him. They had their hands in the air and were waiting to surrender to him.
- The Victoria Cross was awarded 182 times to 181 recipients during World War

II. 85 of them were awarded posthumously. Captain Charles Upham, a New Zealander, was the only person during World War II to be awarded the VC twice. Five South Africans were awarded the VC during World War II. George Gristock was a company sergeant major with the Royal Norfolk Regiment. John Nettleton was a squadron leader with the Royal Air Force (RAF). Gerhard Norton served with the Hampshire Regiment. Quentin Smythe was a sergeant with the Royal Natal Carabineers. And Edwin Swales was a member of the South African Air Force and later of the elite RAF Pathfinder Force. Both Gristock and Swales won the award posthumously.

- The most important medical advance that saved soldiers' lives during WWII was the blood transfusion.

I trust you found this interesting.

They said it

People say some weird and wonderful things about war and during wars.

Here is but a small collection of some of the best and worst quotes made by or about the military.

"In the long run luck is given only to the efficient."

Helmuth von Moltke, founder, German Imperial Army

"The concentration of troops can be done fast and easy, on paper."

Field Marshal Radomir Putnik

"On the Tobruk front a large force of Italians attacked one enemy cyclist, causing him to dismount. After heavy and prolonged fighting they were able to puncture his tires. The front wheel was destroyed, while destruction of the rear wheel must also be considered probable. The handle bars are in our hands, but possession of the frame is still contested."

German satire of an Italian war communiqué, reportedly captured by British troops in Libya

The best tank terrain is that without anti-tank weapons.

Russian Military Doctrine

"Superior firepower is an invaluable tool when entering negotiations."

General George S. Patton

"The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and the means can never be considered in isolation from their purposes."

Karl von Clausewitz, 19th Century Prussian General

"...an imperfect plan implemented immediately and violently will always succeed better than a perfect plan."

Gen. George S. Patton

When in doubt, empty your magazine.

Murphy's Rules of Combat Operations

All warfare is based on deception.

Sun Tzu

"Nothing concentrates the military mind so much as the discovery that you have walked into an ambush."

Thomas Pakenham

"Humanize war? You might as talk about humanizing hell!"

British Admiral Jacky Fisher

"In my experience, the most useful command that can ever be given by a junior officer is 'Carry on Sergeant'"

Andrew Moffatt-Vallance, 2nd Lieutenant.

"Sergeant Majors are terrifying forces of nature. They really run the Army, although they let the officers pretend that they have something to do with it. Very tolerant ones will even

call 2nd Lieutenants "sir" on occasion."

Douglas E. Berry

"Victory in war does not depend entirely on numbers or courage; only skill and discipline will ensure it."

Flavius Vegetius, AD 378

"The quality of the kite (aircraft) matters little. Success depends upon the man who sits in it."

Baron Manfred Von Richthofen, the famed Red Baron

"Most armies are in fact run by their sergeants - the officers are there just to give things a bit of tone and prevent warfare becoming a mere lower-class brawl."

Terry Pratchett

"SNAFU, SOMFU & FUBAR...The three sons of Murphy..."

Anon

"I'm not worried about the bullet with my name on it. I'm worried about the million that say 'to whom it may concern.'"

Anon

His troops would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity.

Anon

"I would rather have a German division in front of me than a French one behind me."

General George S. Patton

Intelligence is the world's second-oldest profession. It differs from the oldest profession in that it is more immoral and more commonly practiced by amateurs.

Anon

Faith and purity are inadequate substitutes for Kevlar and good cover.

Anon

"What are officer good for? Locating machine gun posts by leaping up and shouting 'Charge!' of course. They're also useful as diversions for snipers, and as cheap entertainment for sergeants. The odd rare and exceptional specimen is sometimes even useful for leading troops and formulating battle plans."

Rupert Boleyn

The pen is mightier than the sword but the bayonet gets the point across.

Anon

"Asking fighter pilots anything is pretty useless... it's either classified, or they lie like thieves."

Doug Berry

"We figured out that getting shot at really wasn't that bad. It was the getting shot part that sucked."

US Army Staff Sgt. Jamie Viiafane on being wounded

What part of "This side towards enemy" did you not understand?

Anon

"A bad peace is even worse than war."

Tacitus

Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate. The bombs always hit the ground.

Anon

"People sometimes ask me, how I can bring myself to jump from a perfectly good airplane? I tell them every airplane I've ever jumped from belonged to the United Air Force, so that's not a consideration."

Christopher Thrash

"One of the serious problems in planning against American doctrine is that the Americans do not read their manuals nor do they feel any obligations to follow their doctrine."

From a Russian military document

"To lead uninstructed people to war is to throw them away."

Confucius 480 B.C.

"The reason that the American army does so well in wartime is that war is chaos and the American army practices chaos on a daily basis."

German General Officer

"The Marines I have seen around the world have the cleanest bodies, the filthiest minds, the highest morale, and the lowest morals of any group of animals I have ever seen. Thank God for the United States Marine Corps."

Eleanor Roosevelt, 1945

"For those who have fought for it, freedom has a flavour the protected will never know."

Unknown

"We make war that we may live in peace."

Aristotle 325 B.C.



General George S. Patton

"In war there is no second prize for the runner-up."

General Omar Bradley 1950

"May God have mercy on my enemies, because I won't."

General George S. Patton

"We're paratroopers. We're supposed to be surrounded."

Lt. Richard "Dick" Winters, Easy Company, Battle of the Bulge

"The essence of war is violence. Moderation in war is imbecility."

Admiral Sir John A. Fisher

"Killing the enemy's courage is as vital as killing his troops."

Carl von Clausewitz

"I fear all I have done is awakened a sleeping giant and filled him with a terrible resolve."

Admiral Yamamoto after the bombing of Pearl Harbour

"The difference between a republic and an empire is the loyalty of one's army"

Julius Caesar



Admiral Yamamoto

"Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake."
Napoleon Bonaparte

"Do you know what a soldier is...? He's the chap who makes it possible for civilized folk to despise war."

*Allan Massie,
Scottish journalist/novelist*

"The worst enemy of the British Armed Forces is the British politician."

Leslie Bates

"You win battles by knowing the enemy's timing, and using a timing which the enemy does not expect."

Miyamoto Musashi

"The gates of Auschwitz were not opened with peace talks. Holland was not liberated by peacekeepers and fascism was not defeated with a deft pen."

Rick Mercer

"The patriot volunteer, fighting for country and his rights, makes the most reliable soldier on earth."

Stonewall Jackson

"The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable."

*Sun Tzu,
The Art of War*

A veteran is someone, who at one point in their life, wrote a blank check payable to the United States of America for an amount up to, and including, their life. That is beyond honour, and there are way too many people in this country who no longer remember that fact.

Anon

"In times of peace, prepare for war. In times of war, prepare for peace."

*Sun Tzu,
The Art of War*

"I don't know what effect these men will have upon the enemy, but, by God, they terrify me."

The Duke of Wellington

"We sleep safely at night because rough men stand ready to visit violence on those who would harm us."

Winston Churchill

"Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons."

Douglas MacArthur

"My centre is giving way, my right is in retreat, situation excellent. I attack."

Ferdinand Foch

"Out of every one hundred men, ten shouldn't even be

there, eighty are just targets, nine are the real fighters, and we are lucky to have them, for they make the battle. Ah, but the one, one is a warrior, and he will bring the others back."

Heracitus

"Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die"

Alfred Tennyson

"Lead me, follow me, or get the hell out of my way."

General George S. Patton

"The day the soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help them or concluded that you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership."

Colin Powell

"The military don't start wars. Politicians start wars."

William C. Westmoreland

"Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes."

*William Prescott
Battle of Bunker Hill*

"I hear a lot of crap about what a glorious thing it is to die for your country. It isn't glorious - it's stupid! You don't go into battle to die for your country. You go into battle to make the other bastard die for his country."

General George S. Patton

"Because I am hard, you will not like me. But the more you hate me, the more you will learn. I am hard, but I am fair! There is no racial bigotry here! ... Here you are all equally worthless! And my orders are to weed out all non-hackers who

do not pack the gear to serve in my beloved Corps! Do you maggots understand that?"

*Gunnery Sergeant Harman
Full Metal Jacket*

"It doesn't take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who goes into battle."

*General H. Norman
Schwarzkopf*

"In a man-to-man fight, the winner is he who has one more round in his magazine."

Erwin Rommel

"Aim towards enemy."

*Instructions on
U.S. rocket launcher*

"War is too important to be left to the generals"

Georges Clémenceau

"War makes extremely heavy demands on the soldier's strength and nerves. For this reason, make heavy demands on your men in peacetime exercises."

*Field Marshall
Erwin Rommel*

"It is well that war is so terrible, else we should grow too fond of it."

General Robert E. Lee

"In every battle there comes a time when both sides consider themselves beaten; then he who continues the attack wins."

General Ulysses S. Grant

"In the absence of orders, go find something and kill it."

*Field Marshall
Erwin Rommel*

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a



Field Marshall Erwin Rommel

man's character, give him power."

Abraham Lincoln

"I must study politics and war, that my sons may have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy...in order to give their children the right to study painting, poetry, and music."

John Adams

"The Nation that makes a great distinction between its scholars and its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools."

Thucydides

"Tell them of us and say, For their tomorrow, We gave our today."

The Kohima Epitaph

"War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight,

nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself."

John Stuart Mills

"It is easier to find men who will volunteer to die, than to find those who are willing to endure pain with patience."

Julius Caesar

"The most important thing I learned is that soldiers watch what their leaders do. You can give them classes and lecture them forever, but it is your personal example they will follow."

General Colin Powell

"When you become a leader you give up the right to think about yourself."

Gerald Brooks

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

John Quincy Adams

Dad's Army

Would you have qualified to become a member of Dad's Army?

One of my favourite television series is Dad's Army. It's a sitcom that ran for nine seasons and revolves around the men of the fictitious Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard Unit.

The Home Guard consisted of local volunteers otherwise ineligible for military service, either because of age (hence the nickname "Dad's Army") or by being in professions exempt from conscription.

The unit is led by Captain Mainwaring, the pompous, if essentially brave and unerringly patriotic local bank manager, Mainwaring appointed himself leader of his town's contingent of Local Defence Volunteers.

His second-in-command is Sergeant Arthur Wilson, a diffident, upper-class bank employee who is very laid back.

Lance Corporal Jack Jones, the local butcher, is the oldest member of the platoon and saw action in the Boer War. One of his most heard expressions is "Don't panic", normally said while he is panicking.

Other members of the platoon include Private Fraser (a dour Scotsman who is the local undertaker), Private Walker (who runs the local black market), Private Godfrey (the platoon's medic. Although a conscientious objector during World War I he served as a medic and won the Military Medal for bravery), and Private Pike (the youngest of the platoon, who Mainwaring refers to as "You stupid boy.")).

Anyone that served in the mil-

itary will find the series funny, mainly because you will recognise characters that you came across.

While the series is a scream, the real Dad's Army was not that funny. In Britain in 1940 the people were worried about a German invasion from the sea and from the air. They started to arm themselves with shotguns and any weapons they could lay their hands on.

The government decided it would be better to organise them into a proper army. In 1939 Winston Churchill had wanted a Home Guard formed - when he became Prime Minister in May 1940 he got it. Churchill had hoped for 500,000. He got 250,000 on the first day and 1,500,000 by June. They were first known as the Local Defence Volunteers - the LDV.

At first these untrained men were a bit of a joke. They weren't given proper weapons, they just armed themselves with anything that could kill. One boy said: "We were set to defend a factory with broom handles. I pinched a knife from my mum's kitchen and tied it to the top."

One 14 year old boy took along a boy and arrow. That would have worried some German tank commander if the Germans really had invaded. Others took along a nice heavy golf club.

The government said Home Guard soldiers had to be aged between 17 and 65. But boys as young as 14 joined.

Some old soldiers from the First World War and before lied

about their age and they were eighty years old. No wonder they were given the nickname 'Dad's Army'.

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

Horrible Home Guard Facts

1. Home Guard soldiers were worried about how to spot a German. They were warned that enemy paratroopers might be disguised as a nun, a vicar or even a woman carrying a baby. The dumbest idea for uncovering a spy was to shout "Heil Hitler!" and no German would be able to stop himself from raising his arm, clicking his heels and replying, "Heil Hitler."
2. Home Guards were in more danger from their own weapons than from the enemy who never arrived. They were given sticky bombs - a bit like explosive toffee apples on a stick. The idea was that they would run up to an enemy tank and slap the bomb onto the side. But many tried to throw the bombs, the sticks came loose and the bombs fell at their feet. 768 Home Guard members managed to kill themselves in this manner and nearly 6,000 were injured.
3. And their families were not safe either. More than one of them managed to shoot either their wife or one of their



DAD'S ARMY: From left to right - Sergeant Wilson, Private Pike, Private Fraser, Lance Corporal Jones, Chief Air Raid Warden Hodges, Captain Mainwaring, Private Godfrey and Private Walker.

- children while cleaning their rifles at home.
6. School children weren't safe. Alan Chadwick enjoyed going down to the local aircraft factory to watch new planes being tested. As Alan cycled near the fence a Home Guard ordered him to stop. When he didn't the Home Guard fired a shot into the road. It bounced up and hit Alan in the back and killed him. Why hadn't Alan stopped? Because he was deaf.
7. Some Home Guard soldiers saw themselves as a wartime police force. They set up road blocks to stop and question everyone who came that way. One man complained that he was stopped twenty times on an eight mile journey.
8. A government inspector was measuring a field one day when local villagers accused him of being a German spy. An old farm worker tried to protect the inspector and was shot and killed by a panicking Home Guard member. The inspector tried to show his identity papers but he was also shot. During the Second World War 50 innocent Brits died at the hands of the Home Guard.
9. It was probably even worse being a member of the German Home Guard, the Volkssturm. Karl Weiglein, a 59 year old farmer called up to serve, complained when the local bridge was blown up. "The people who did this are idiots and ought to be hanged." But it was Karl that was hanged. His commander, the local school teacher, heard what he had said. Karl was hanged from his own pear tree outside his own front door while his wife watched from the window. The body was left hanging for three days as an example to anyone else who wanted to complain.

One Man's War

World War II ended on August 14, 1945. Yet not for Second Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda. He would continue to fight the war for another 29 years.



On August 14, 1945, Japan surrendered, bringing World War II to an end. Two weeks earlier an atomic bomb had been exploded over Hiroshima, destroying three-quarters of the city and killing nearly 80 000 people. Four days later, on August 10, a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

The war had been long and costly and soldiers of all nations just wanted to return home and be with their families.

Yet all over the Pacific, on tiny remote islands, pockets of Japanese soldiers fought on, unaware that the war had ended.

One of these soldiers was 23 year old second lieutenant Hiroo Onoda. In 1944 he had been sent to Lubang Island, about 130 km south of the Philippines capital of Manila.

His orders were to carry out guerrilla warfare and conduct intelligence duties. He was told to carry on fighting even if his unit was destroyed. And young Lt Onoda did just that. He carried on fighting World War II for the next 29 years.

After the war's end, leaflets were dropped by plane announcing Japan's surrender. They were signed by Onoda's chief of staff. The lieutenant picked up several of them, but dismissed them as American propaganda.

Over the years the world changed drastically. The Iron Curtain split Europe in two. Man walked on the moon. Japan

once again grew prosperous, now a staunch ally of its former enemy, the United States.

But Onoda continued with his lonely war, carefully conserving his dwindling ammunition. He lived on bananas and coconuts, with the occasional snared jungle birds or stolen cow as a welcome luxury.

During his first few years in the jungle, Onoda was in touch with other isolated Japanese guerrillas. But, one by one, his comrades 'surrendered' or died, some of them by committing suicide. Finally, he was alone - one man surrounded by illusory enemies whom he attempted to shoot on sight.

He kept switching hideouts to avoid detection, sniping at islanders, stealing cattle, burning crops. Police and search parties sent from Japan to try to make him surrender were met with bullets.

Onoda made sandals from woven straw and bits of old tyres held together with string and wooden pegs. When his clothes rotted, he patched them with tent canvas, using a piece of wire as a needle and plant fibre as thread. He built shelters of branches, bamboo, vines and leaves, but never dared stay for too long in one place.

Hunger was a permanent part of his life, and he was plagued by giant tropical ants, bees, centipedes, scorpions and snakes. To make fire he rubbed together two pieces of split bamboo prepared with a mixture of coconut

fibre and gunpowder from old bullets.

Friends, relatives and old comrades visited the island to tell him that the war was over, and often he saw them and heard them calling to him through loudspeakers.

From his high ground he could see twinkling lights of the towns below. And he spotted luxury liners ablaze with lights out to sea. But he never once doubted that the war was still going on.

On February 20, 1974, Onoda met a Japanese man, Norio Suzuki, who was traveling around the world, looking for "Lieutenant Onoda, a panda, and the Abominable Snowman, in that order". Suzuki found Onoda after four days of searching. Onoda described this moment in a 2010 interview: "This hippie boy Suzuki came to the island to listen to the feelings of a Jap-

anese soldier. Suzuki asked me why I would not come out

Onoda and Suzuki became friends, but Onoda still refused to surrender, saying that he was waiting for orders from a superior officer. Suzuki returned to Japan with photographs of himself and Onoda as proof of their encounter, and the Japanese government located Onoda's commanding officer, Major Yoshimi Taniguchi, who had since become a bookseller.

He flew to Lubang where on March 9, 1974, he finally met with Onoda.

As soon as the tattered figure recognised Taniguchi, he snapped to attention and shouted: "Lieutenant Onoda reporting for duty, sir!"

Taniguchi fulfilled the promise made in 1944, "Whatever happens, we'll come back for you," by issuing him the following orders:

1. In accordance with the Imperial command, the Fourteenth Area Army has ceased all combat activity.
2. In accordance with military Headquarters Command No. A-2003, the Special Squadron of Staff's Headquarters is relieved of all military duties.
3. Units and individuals under the command of Special Squadron are to cease military activities and operations immediately and place themselves under the command of the nearest superior officer. When no officer can be found, they are to communicate with the American or Philippine forces and follow their directives.

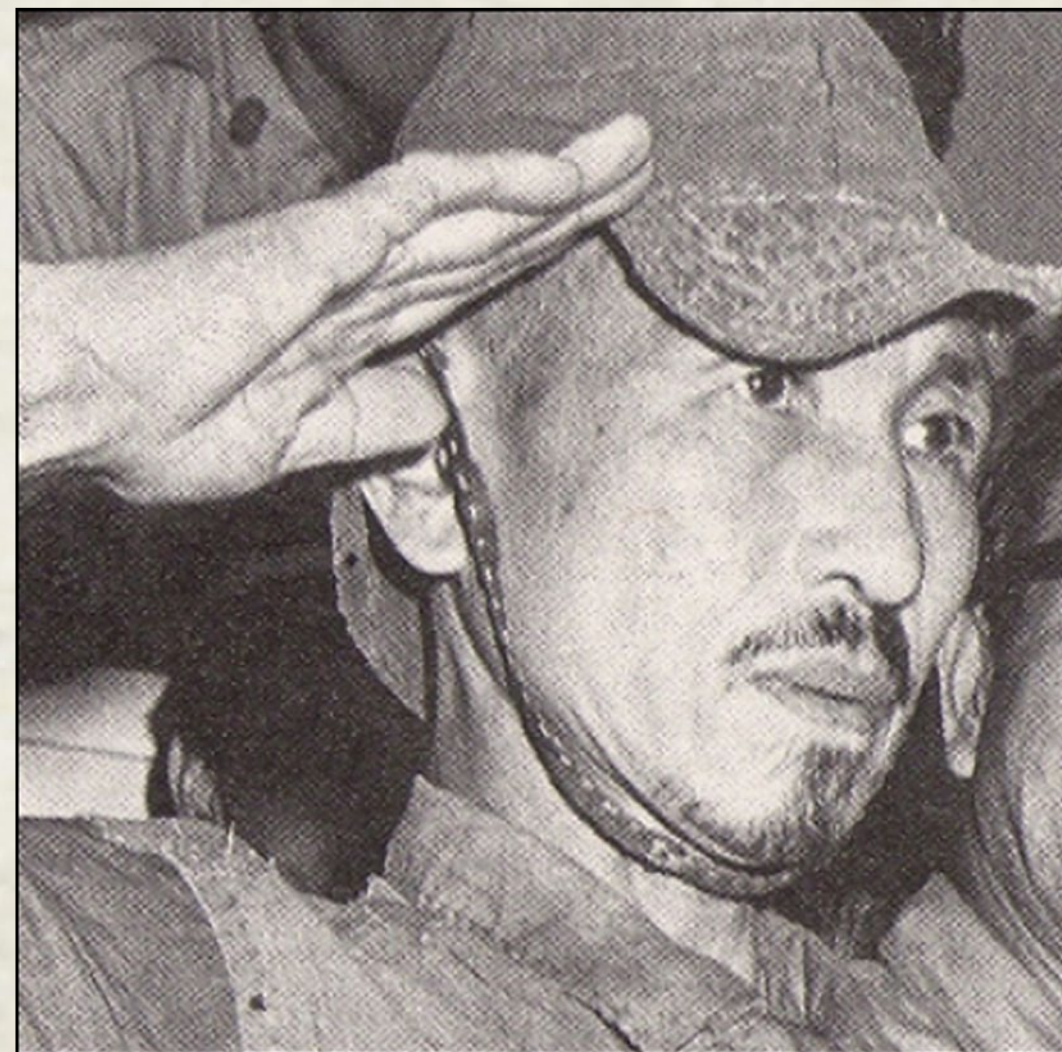
So, at 15h00 on March 10, 1974, Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda at last stopped fighting World War II. It was his 52nd birthday.

Onoda was pardoned for his misdeeds in the Philippines by President Marcos. He went home and saw again his aged parents, who showed him the tombstone they had ordered for him at a time when they believed he had died in the jungle.

Onoda was greeted as a hero, and became famous around the world. But he could not stand the adulation. The man who had fought on alone for Japan decided to emigrate to Brazil.

After half a lifetime of war, he just wanted to find some peace.

Hiroo Onoda died of heart failure in Tokyo on 16 January, 2014.



Tanks of World War II

First used during the Battle of the Somme in September 1916 the tank has become a mainstay of modern ground forces and a key part of combined arms combat.

The tank has become a versatile and often deadly weapon system platform. They usually mount a large-calibre cannon in a rotating gun turret and this is supplemented by mounted machine guns or other weapons.

All of this is combined with heavy vehicle armour that pro-

vides protection for the crew, the vehicle's weapons and its propulsion system. Steel armour plate was the earliest type of armour but later developments would see Chobham armour and reactive armour being used.

The use of tracks rather than wheels allows the tank to move over rugged terrain. Tanks are used in both the offensive and defensive roles.

During World War I tanks were classified as being either

male or female. A male tank was armed with both cannon and machine guns while a female tank carried only machine guns.

During World War II tanks were classified as light, medium or heavy. This was based on both their armour and weapon system.

In this article we will take a closer look at some of the tanks used by the British, German, Russian, Japanese and Americans during World War II.

British Tanks

While Britain relied on its navy to defend its interests, it also had modern and effective aircraft and a small army. Its armored forces were not at all numerically equal to France or Nazi Germany.

Early British tanks were armed with the Ordnance QF (Quick Firing) 2-pounder (40 mm) gun. This was not very effective against Axis armour and the British later upgraded to a 6-pounder (57 mm) gun and the highly effective 17-pounder (76.2 mm) gun.

Cruiser Mk II (A10)

The Cruiser was classified as a heavy tank and saw service from 1940-1941.

It weighed 14.3 tonnes, had a length of 5.56 m, a width of 2.54 m and a height of 2.64 m.

It carried a crew of five - Commander, loader, gunner, driver and hull MG gunner.

Its armour ranged between 6 and 30 mm and it was armed with a OQF 2-pounder gun with 100 rounds of ammunition. There were also two Vickers machine guns which were later replaced by the BESA machine gun with 4,050 rounds.

The Cruiser was powered by

a AEC Type A179 6-Cylinder Petrol 150 hp engine and had an operational range of 160 km when travelling via road.

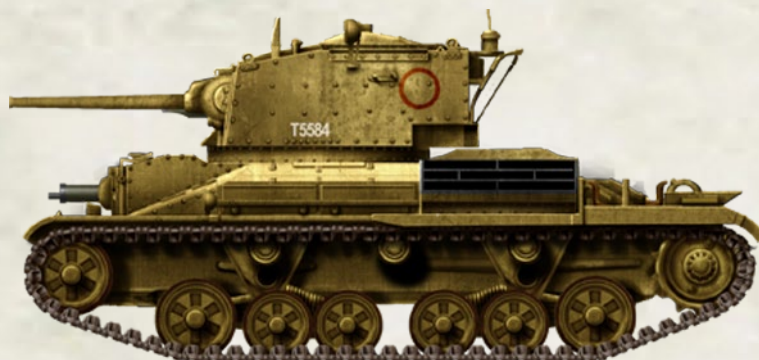
It could reach a top speed of 26 km/h on the road and 13 km/h off-road.

A number of Mark IIs were sent to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in the early stages of World War II.

The cross country performance

was poor but they were used with reasonable success in North Africa.

Over 90% of Mark IIs were lost due to mechanical failure as opposed to enemy actions. Mainly because of their tendency to lose tracks.



Cruiser Mk V Crusader

The Crusader was classified as a cruiser or heavy tank and it saw service between 1941-1945.

It made an important contribution to the British victories in North Africa.

It weighed 20 tonnes, had a length of 5.97 m, a width of 2.77m, and a height of 2.24 m.



It carried a crew of five - Commander, loader, gunner, driver and hull MG gunner.

It had a maximum of 51 mm of armour and was armed with a OQF 2-pounder gun with 110 rounds of ammunition. This was later upgraded to a OQF 6-pounder with 65 rounds. It also had one or two BESA machine guns with 4,950 rounds.

The Crusader was powered by a Nuffield Liberty 27-litre

V-12 petrol engine and had an operational range of 322 km on road and 235 km off road.

It could reach a top speed of 42 km/h on road and 24 km/h off road.

As a result of several factors the Crusader suffered from serious reliability problems in the desert.

Tanks arriving in North Africa were missing essential tools and service manuals needed to maintain operation. A lack of spare parts meant that tanks returning to base workshops were serviced with parts recovered from other tanks.

Cruiser, Mk VIII, Cromwell (A27M)

The Cromwell was a heavy tank that first saw action in the Battle of Normandy in 1944. It remained in service from 1944 until 1955.

It weighed 28 tonnes, had a length of 6.35 m, a width of 2.908 m, and a height of 2.49 m.

It carried a crew of five - Commander, gunner, loader/radio operator, driver, front gunner.

It had a maximum armour of 100 mm and was armed with the QF 75 mm gun with 64 rounds. It also carried two 7.92 mm BESA machine guns with 4,950 rounds.

The Cromwell was powered by a Rolls-Royce Meteor V12 petrol engine and had an operational range of 270 km on road and 130 km off road.

It could reach a top speed of 64 km/h on road and nearly 40 km/h off road.

The Cromwell had four advantages - its low profile, its speed, its maneuverability, and its reliability.

The 75 mm cannon had the advantage of being able to fire both AP (armour piercing) and HE (high explosive) rounds. One major disadvantage was that it was unable to knock out heavy German tanks, such as the Tiger tank, from the front - even at point blank range.

The Cromwell saw extensive action with the British Army, forming part of the 6th Airborne

Division, 7th Armoured Division, 11th Armoured Division, Guards Armoured Division, and 1st (Polish) Armoured Division. The tank was also used by the 1st (Czechoslovakian) Independent Armoured Brigade Group as part of the First Canadian Army in Dunkirk.

After the war, the Cromwell remained in British service, and saw service in the Korean War with the 7th Royal Tank Regiment and the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars.



Matilda II

The Infantry Tank Mark II, best known as the Matilda, was the only British tank to serve from the start of the war to its end, although it is particularly associated with the North African Campaign.

It weighed 25 tonnes, had a length of 4.9 m, a width of 2.6 m, and a height of 2.5 m. It carried a crew of 4 - Commander, gunner, loader and driver.

Its armour ranged from 20 to 78 mm and it was armed with a QF 2-pounder gun with 93 rounds. It also had a 7.92 mm BESA machine gun with 2,925 rounds.

It was powered by two 6-cylinder diesel engines and had an operational range of 257 km. It had a top speed of 26 km/h on road and 14 km/h off road.

With its heavy armour, the Matilda II was an excellent infantry support tank, but it suffered due to its limited speed and poor armament.

The Matilda was first used in combat in France in 1940. Due to the thickness of its armour it was largely immune to the guns of the German tanks and anti-tank guns in France.

The Germans found the 88 mm anti-aircraft guns were the only effective counter-measure against the Matilda.

All vehicles surviving the battles around Dunkirk were abandoned when the

BEF evacuated France.

In the war in North Africa the Matilda proved highly effective against Italian and German tanks, although it was vulnerable to the larger calibre and medium calibre anti-tank guns.

As the Germans received new tanks with more powerful guns, as well as more powerful anti-tank guns and ammunition, the Matilda proved less and less effective.



Tank, Infantry, Mk III, Valentine

The Valentine Mk III was a British infantry tank that saw service from 1940 to 1960. It was named the Valentine because the design was presented to the War Office on St. Valentine's Day, 14 February 1940, although some sources say that the design was submitted on Valentine's Day 1938 or 10 February 1938.

It weighed 17 tonnes, was 5.41 m in length, had a width of 2.629 m and a height of 2.273 m. It carried a crew of

four - Commander, gunner, driver and loader.

The armour on the Valentine varied between 8-65 mm. It was armed with the QF 6-pounder (57 mm) gun and a 7.92 mm BESA machine gun.

It was powered by the AEC A190 diesel engine, had an operational range of 140 km on roads and a top speed of 24 km/h on road.

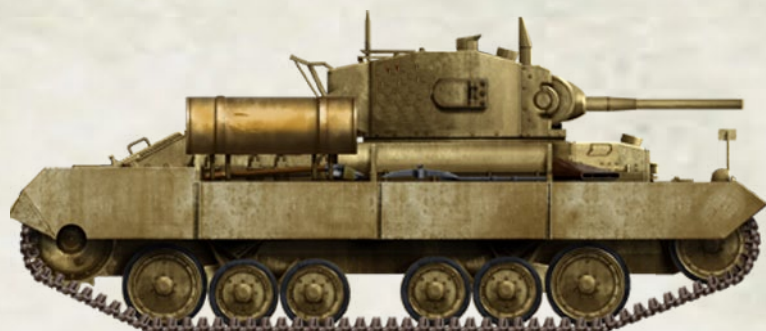
While the Mk III had a four-man crew, earlier versions only had a three-man crew - Commander, gunner and driver. The commander would also have to act as the loader.

Its main

advantage was its low profile. Yet the common complaint was the small interior of the turret and cramped interior.

The Valentine was extensively used in the North African Campaign, earning a reputation as a reliable and well-protected vehicle, which replaced the Matilda Tank.

By 1944, the Valentine had been almost replaced in front-line units of the European theatre by the A22, Infantry Tank Mark IV (Churchill tank) and the US-made Sherman tank. A few were used for special purposes or as command vehicles for units equipped with the Archer self-propelled gun.



Tank, Infantry, Mk IV (A22) Churchill

The Churchill, named after British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, was one of the heaviest Allied tanks of the war. It was best known for its heavy armour and ability to climb steep slopes. It was also used as the basis of many specialist vehicles.

It weighed 40.1 tonnes, had a length of 7.44 m, a width of

3.25 m and a height of 2.49 m. It carried a crew of five - Commander, gunner, loader/radio operator, driver, co-driver/hull gunner.

Armour ranged from 102 mm in front to 76 mm at the rear. It was armed with the QF 6-pounder (57 mm) gun and two 7.92 mm BESA machine guns.

It was powered by a Bedford 12-cylinder, 4 stroke, water-cooled, horizontally opposed, L-head petrol engine. It had an operational range of 90 km and a top speed of 24 km/h.

The Churchill first saw service in 1941 and remained in service until 1952.

The Churchill first saw combat on 19 August 1942, in the Dieppe Raid in France. It also saw limited action in the North African Campaign. In one encounter on 21 April 1943, during the start of the Battle of Longstop Hill a Churchill tank of the 48th Royal Tank Regiment got the better of a German Tiger I heavy tank.



German Tanks

The Germans were the first to appreciate and make full use of armoured warfare. By May 1945 they had built around 90,000 armoured vehicles.

They were the first to use Blitzkrieg (Lightning War), the concept of armoured formations supported by mechanized infantry and artillery to break through an enemy line.

Panzerkampfwagen IV (PzKpfw IV)

Commonly known as the Panzer IV, it was the most widely manufactured German tank of the Second World War, with some 8,500 built. The Panzer IV saw service in all combat theaters involving Germany and was the only German tank to remain in continuous production throughout the war. Upgrades and design modifications, intended to counter new threats, extended its service life.

It weighed 24.6 tonnes, was 5.92 m in length, 2.88 m wide and 2.68 m high. It carried a crew of five - Commander, gunner, loader,

driver, radio operator/bow machine-gunner.

Its armour ranged from 80 mm in front to 20 mm at the rear. It was armed with a 75 mm KwK 40 L/48 main gun with 87 rounds. The side armament consisted of two 7.92 mm MG 34 machine guns with 3,150 rounds.

It was powered by a Maybach HL 120 TRM 12-cylinder gasoline engine and had

an operational range of 200 km. It could reach a top speed of around 38 km/h.

The Panzer IV was the workhorse of the Panzer Corps and saw action on every front where the Germans were involved.



Panzerkampfwagen V Panther

The Panther was a medium tank deployed on both the Eastern and Western Fronts in Europe from mid-1943 to its end in 1945.

The Panther was intended to counter the Soviet T-34 and to replace the Panzer III and Panzer IV. It is considered one of the best tanks of World War II for its excellent firepower and protection; although its reliability was not as impressive.

It weighed 44.1 tonnes had a length of 6.87 m, a width of 3.27 m and a height of 2.99 m. It carried a crew of five - Commander, driver, radio-operator/hull machine gunner, gunner, loader.

It had sloped armour of up to 80 mm. It was armed with a 75 mm KwK 42 L/70 with 79

rounds and two 7.92 mm MG 34 machine guns with 5,100 rounds.

It was powered by a V-12 petrol Maybach HL230 P30 engine and had an operational range of 200 km. It was a fast tank with a top speed of 55 km/h on road.

In open country and at long range the Panther was excellent.

The first production Panther tanks were plagued with mechanical problems. The engine was dangerously prone to overheating. Petrol leaks from the fuel

pump or carburettor, as well as motor oil leaks from gaskets, produced fires in the engine compartment.

During the battle of the Bulge, around 400 Panthers were listed in the units participating in the offensive, while 471 were listed in all for all the Western front. They were not at their advantage in the forest, but once again proved deadly on open ground.



Panzerkampfwagen VI Tiger Ausf. E

The Panzerkampfwagen VI Tiger Ausf. E, often shortened to Tiger, was a heavy German tank. The Tiger I gave the Wehrmacht its first armoured fighting vehicle that mounted the 88 mm KwK 36 gun (not to be confused with the 88 mm Flak 36).

It weighed 57 tonnes, had a length of 6.616 m, a width of 6.56 m, and a height of 3.0 m.

It carried a crew of five - Commander, gunner, loader, driver, assistant driver.

The Tiger's armour ranged from 25 to 120 mm. It was armed with an 88 mm KwK 36 L/56 with 92 AP and HE rounds. Its secondary armament consisted of two 7.92 mm MG 34 machine guns with 4,800 rounds.

It was powered by the May-

bach HL230 P45 V-12 and had an operational range of 195 km on road and a top road speed of 45.4 km/h.

The Tiger was feared by Allies on both the Eastern and Western Fronts. While only a small number of Tigers were produced (only 1,347) the psychological impact they had was impressive.

he Tiger gave fame to a few WWII tank aces, like Kurt Knispel, Michael Wittmann and Otto Carius, something rarely heard of before, since the life expectancy of a tank crew was always quite shorter than that of fighter pilots



Russian Tanks

In 1939, the USSR had the biggest armored force in the world, numerically superior to all western powers combined. Before 1936, the Red Army displayed brilliant and innovative armored tactics, well trained crews and experienced officers. But, starting in 1936, Stalin ordered a series of "great purges", out of fear of a military coup. New officers were also always chosen on loyalty over skill.

Kliment Voroshilov (KV-1)

The Kliment Voroshilov was a Soviet heavy tank that saw service from 1939 to 1945.

The KV series were known for their heavy armour protection and were practically immune to the 37 mm KwK 36 and

howitzer-like, short barreled 75 mm KwK 37 guns mounted, respectively, on the early Panzer III and Panzer IV tanks fielded by the invading German forces. Until more effective guns were developed by the Germans, the

KV-1 was invulnerable to almost any German weapon except the 88 mm Flak gun.

The KV-1 weighed 45 tonnes, was 6.75 m in length, 6.32 m wide and 2.71 m high. It carried a crew of five.

Its armour was 90 mm in front, 75 mm on the side and 70 mm in the rear. It was armed with a 76.2 mm L-11 gun and 2, 3, or 4 DT machine guns.

It was powered by a Model V-2 V12 diesel engine and had an operational range of 335 km. Its top speed was 35 km/h.



T-34 and T34-85

The Soviet T-34 medium tank has often been credited as the most effective, efficient and influential tank design of WW2.

It provided an unprecedented combination of firepower, mobility, protection and ruggedness. It served from 1940 to the late 1960s.

It weighed 26.1 tonnes, had a length of 6.68 m, a width of 3.0 m and a height of 2.45 m. The T-34 carried a crew of four while the later T-34-85 had a crew of five.

Its frontal armour was 47 mm thick while the rear armour was 45 mm. The T-34 had a 76.2 mm F-34 gun while the T-34-85 had a 85 mm ZiS-S-53 gun. Both with also armed with two

7.62 mm DT machine guns.

Both were powered by the Model V-2-34 38.8 L V12 diesel engine and both had a top speed of 53 km/h. The T-34 had an operational range of 400 km and the T-34-85 and operational range of 240 km.

The T-34's wide tracks gave it the ability to move over deep mud or snow and this was vital

during the harsh Russian winter.

The combat statistics for 1941 show that the Soviets lost an average of over seven tanks for every German tank lost. This was mainly due to poorly trained crews and the fact that the Soviets at first used a four man crew with the tank commander also acting as the loader.



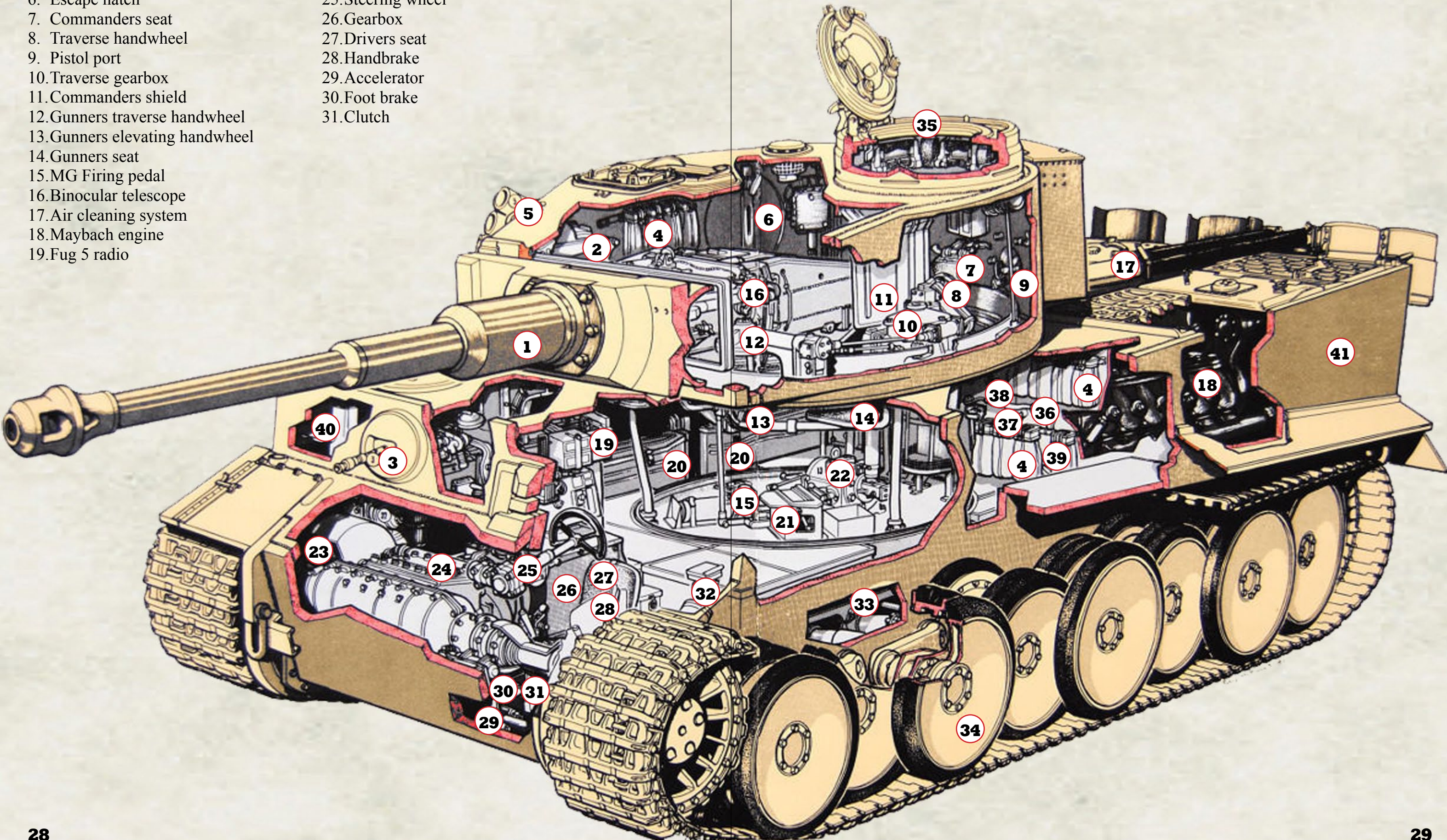
Pzkpfw VI Tiger (SdKfz 181) Ausf E

1. 88 mm L/56 gun
2. 7.92 mm MG34
3. 7.92 mm MG34
4. MG34 Ammo pouch
5. Smoke dischargers
6. Escape hatch
7. Commanders seat
8. Traverse handwheel
9. Pistol port
10. Traverse gearbox
11. Commanders shield
12. Gunners traverse handwheel
13. Gunners elevating handwheel
14. Gunners seat
15. MG Firing pedal
16. Binocular telescope
17. Air cleaning system
18. Maybach engine
19. Fug 5 radio

20. 88 mm bins
21. Hydraulic traverse foot pedal
22. Hydraulic traverse control
23. Disc brake drum
24. Steering unit
25. Steering wheel
26. Gearbox
27. Drivers seat
28. Handbrake
29. Accelerator
30. Foot brake
31. Clutch

32. Shock absorber
33. Torsion bar suspension
34. Overlapping bogie wheels
35. Commanders cupola
36. Fan drive clutch lever
37. Air intake valve control
38. Petrol primer
39. Petrol tap

40. MG Ammo pouch
41. Zimmerit anti mine protection, 200 kg over whole tank





Japanese Tanks

Due to the war with China, Japan produced a large number of tanks. Although initially the Japanese used tanks to good effect in their campaigns, full-scale armored warfare did not occur in the Pacific and Southeast Asian theaters as it did in Europe, and tank development was neglected in favor of naval activities.

The best Japanese designs were never used in combat as they were kept back in expectation of defending the Japanese Home Islands.

Type 89 medium tank I-Go (Chi-Ro)

The Type 89 medium tank I-Go was a medium tank used by the Imperial Japanese Army from 1932 to 1942 in combat operations of the Second Sino-Japanese War, at Khalkhin Gol against the Soviet Union, and in WWII.

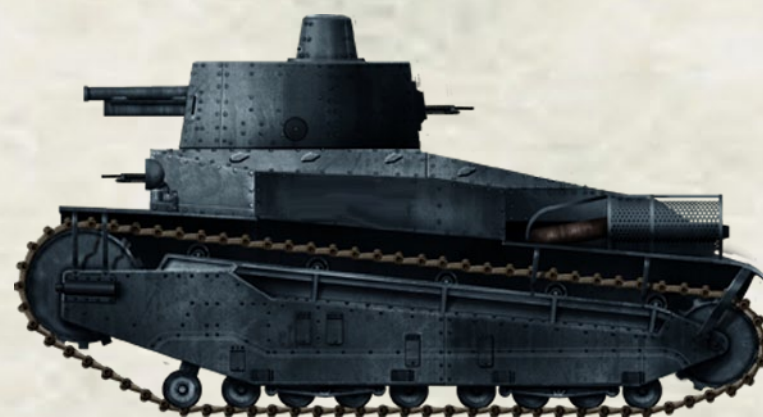
It weighed 14.10 tonnes, had a length of 5.73 m, a width of 2.15 m and a height of 2.56 m. It carried a crew of four - Commander/gunner, loader, driver and hull gunner.

Its armour ranged from 6 to

17 mm and it was armed with a 57 mm Type 90 gun with 100 rounds. Its secondary armament consisted of two 6.5 mm Type 91 machine gun (hull, turret rear).

The Chi-Ro was powered by a Mitsubishi A6120VD air-cooled inline 6-cylinder diesel engine and

had an operational range of 170 km. It had a top speed of 26 km/h.



The Battle of Kursk was a Second World War engagement between German and Soviet forces on the Eastern Front near Kursk (450 kilometres or 280 miles south-west of Moscow) in the Soviet Union during July and August 1943. The German offensive was code-named Operation Citadel (German: Unternehmen Zitadelle) and led to one of the largest armoured clashes in history, the Battle of Prokhorovka. The German offensive was countered by two Soviet counter-offensives, Operation Polkovodets Rumyantsev and Operation Kutuzov. For the Germans, the battle was the final strategic offensive that they were able to launch on the Eastern Front. Their extensive loss of men and tanks ensured that the victorious Soviet Red Army enjoyed the strategic initiative for the remainder of the war.

During the Battle of Kursk the Germans lost an estimated 760 tanks. The Russians lost 6,064 tanks and assault guns.



American Tanks

US tank doctrine in WWII emphasized that American tanks should avoid fighting enemy tanks. Killing enemy tanks would be left to anti-tank units, equipped with AT guns and purpose-built tank destroyers.

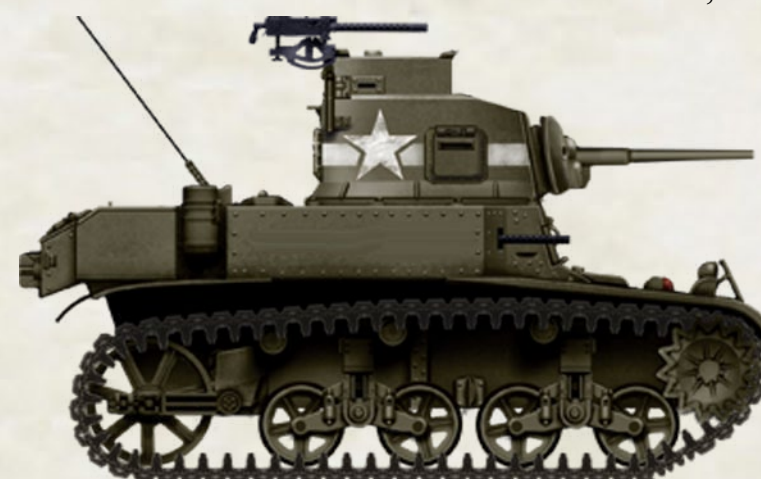
The M4 Sherman was to be used to support the infantry and to break holes in the enemy line and use their superior speed and maneuverability to outflank the enemy, cut off his supply lines, and hit vulnerable targets like artillery and supply dumps.

M3 Stuart

The M3 Stuart, officially Light Tank, M3, was an American light tank of World War II. It was supplied to British and Commonwealth forces under

lend-lease prior to the entry of the U.S. into the war. The British nicknamed the tank the "Honey Tank".

Thereafter, it was used by U.S. and Allied forces until the end of the war.



It weighed 15.19 tonnes, had a length of 4.84 m, a width of 2.23 m and a height of 2.26 m. It carried

a crew of four - Commander, gunner, driver, assistant driver.

Its armour ranged from 9.5 to 63.5 mm and it was armed with a 37 mm M6 gun with 147 rounds. It had three 7.62 mm Browning M1919A4 machine guns with 6,750 rounds.

The Stuart was powered by twin Cadillac Series 42 220 hp. It had an operational range of 160 km and a top speed of 58 km/h on road.

M4 Sherman

The M4 Sherman was the most numerous battle medium tank used by the United States and some of the other Western Allies in WWII.

The M4 Sherman proved to be reliable, relatively cheap to produce and available in great numbers. Thousands were distributed through the Lend-Lease program to the British Commonwealth and Soviet Union. It served in the US Military from 1942 to 1957 and was produced in numerous variants.

It weighed 33.4 tonnes, had a length of 5.84 m, a width of 2.62 m and a height of 2.74 m. It carried a crew of five - Commander, gunner, loader, driver,

assistant driver/bow gunner.

The Sherman's armour ranged from a minimum of 12.7 mm to 177.8 mm. It was armed with a 76 mm gun with 71 rounds. Its secondary armament consisted of a .50 caliber Browning M2HB machine gun (300-600 rounds) and two .30 caliber Browning M1919A4 machine guns (6,000-6,750 rounds).

It was powered by a Chrysler A57 30 cylinder gasoline engine; 370 hp. It

had an operational range of 241 km on road and a top speed of 48 km/h.

After World War II, Shermans were supplied to some NATO armies; Shermans were used by U.S. and allied forces in the Korean War.



Karl Dönitz

Senior submarine officer in the Kriegsmarine, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, the man that replaced Adolf Hitler as fuhrer of Germany - Karl Dönitz was all this and more.

Karl Dönitz (sometimes spelt Doenitz) was born in Grünau near Berlin on 16 September 1891.

In 1940 he enlisted in the *Kaiserliche Marine* (Imperial Navy) and on 27 September 1913 he was commissioned as a *Leutnant zur See* (acting sub-lieutenant).

At the outset of World War I he served on the light cruiser SMS Breslau in the Mediterranean Sea. Dönitz was promoted to *Oberleutnant zur See* on 22 March 1913 and was temporarily assigned as airfield commander of the Dardanelles.

From there, he requested a transfer to the submarine forces, which became effective in October 1916. He served as watch officer on U-39, and from February 1918 onward as commander of UC-25. On 5 September 1918, he became commander of UB-68, operating in the Mediterranean. On 4 October, after suffering technical difficulties, this boat was sunk by British forces and Dönitz was taken prisoner on the island of Malta.

It was while he was in a prison camp near Sheffield that he formulated what he called *Rudel-taktik* ("pack tactic", commonly called "wolfpack").

He was only released from the British prisoner of war camp in July 1919, nearly eight months after the war had ended. He returned to Germany in 1920 and continued his naval career.

On 10 January 1921, he became a *Kapitänleutnant* (lieutenant) in the new German navy (*Vorläufige Reichsmarine*). Dönitz commanded torpedo boats, becoming a *Korvettenkapitän* (lieutenant-commander) on 1 November 1928.

On 1 September 1933, he became a *Fregattenkapitän* (commander) and, in 1934, was put in command of the cruiser Emden, the ship on which cadets and midshipmen took a year-long world cruise in preparation for a future officer's commission.

On 1 September 1935, he was promoted to *Kapitän zur See* (naval captain). He was placed in command of the first U-boat flotilla *Weddigen*, which included U-7, U-8 and U-9.

During 1935, the

Weimar Republic's navy, the *Reichsmarine*, was replaced by the Nazi German navy, the *Kriegsmarine*.

By November 1937, Dönitz became convinced that a major campaign against merchant shipping was practicable and began pressing for the conversion of the German fleet almost entirely to U-boats.

He advocated a strategy of attacking only merchant ships, targets relatively safe to attack.

He pointed out that destroy-

ing Britain's fleet of oil tankers would starve the Royal Navy of supplies needed to run its ships, which would be just as effective as sinking them. He thought a German fleet of 300 of the newer Type VII U-boats could knock Britain out of the war.

Dönitz revived the World War I idea of grouping several submarines together into a "wolf-pack" to overwhelm a merchant convoy's defensive escorts. Implementation of wolfpacks had been difficult in World War I owing to the limitations of available radios. In the interwar years, Germany had developed ultrahigh frequency transmitters which it was hoped would make their radio communication unjammable, while the Enigma cipher machine was believed to have made communications secure.

Dönitz also adopted and claimed credit for Wilhelm Marschall's 1922 idea of attacking convoys using surface or very-near-the-surface night attacks. This tactic had the added advantage of making a submarine undetectable by sonar.

At the time the surface strength of the Kriegsmarine was much less than that of the British Royal Navy. Commander-in-Chief on the Navy Admiral Erich Raeder believed that any war with Britain in the near future was hopeless. He was quoted as remarking that all the Germans could hope to do was die valiantly.

Dönitz, in contrast, was not constrained by such fatalism, but set about intensely training his crews in the new tactics. He trained his crews under the most realistic conditions - in all weather at all times. Previously crews had been under instruc-

tions to attack a target from over 3,000 metres away. Dönitz had them fire at 300 metres.

The marked inferiority of the German surface fleet left submarine warfare as Germany's only naval option once war broke out.

On 28 January 1939, Dönitz was promoted to *Kommodore* (Commodore) *Führer der Unterseeboote* (Commander of submarines).

On 1 October 1939, Dönitz became a *Konteradmiral* (Rear Admiral) and "Commander of the Submarines" (*Befehlshaber der Unterseeboote, BdU*); on 1 September the following year, he was made a *Vizeadmiral* (vice admiral).

Although Dönitz was known as a brilliant naval tactician, his main contribution would eventually be as a leader.

Under him the U-boat arm would eventually achieve the highest standards of combat efficiency and seamanship. He enjoyed greeting a boat personally when it returned from patrol and speaking frankly with its crew - officers and enlisted men alike, to draw the proper lessons from the patrol.

Dönitz minimized red tape in order to present awards as soon as a boat docked, or even while the boat was still at sea.

With the fall of France he moved his headquarters to Kernevel near Lorient to be closer to his men. He made certain the crews had high pay and the best rations. He even had a special express train place at his disposal to ferry U-boat men on leave back to Germany - while Allied planes bombed the French ports, U-boat crews relaxed in far-away resorts.

He also facilitated communications to boost morale. BdU

would often send messages to U-boats at sea with news from home. One man was informed of the birth of a son with the message "Arrived, one sailor. With periscope." Radio weddings were even performed at sea, the captain officiated for the groom on board the U-boat while in radio contact with the bride and minister on shore.

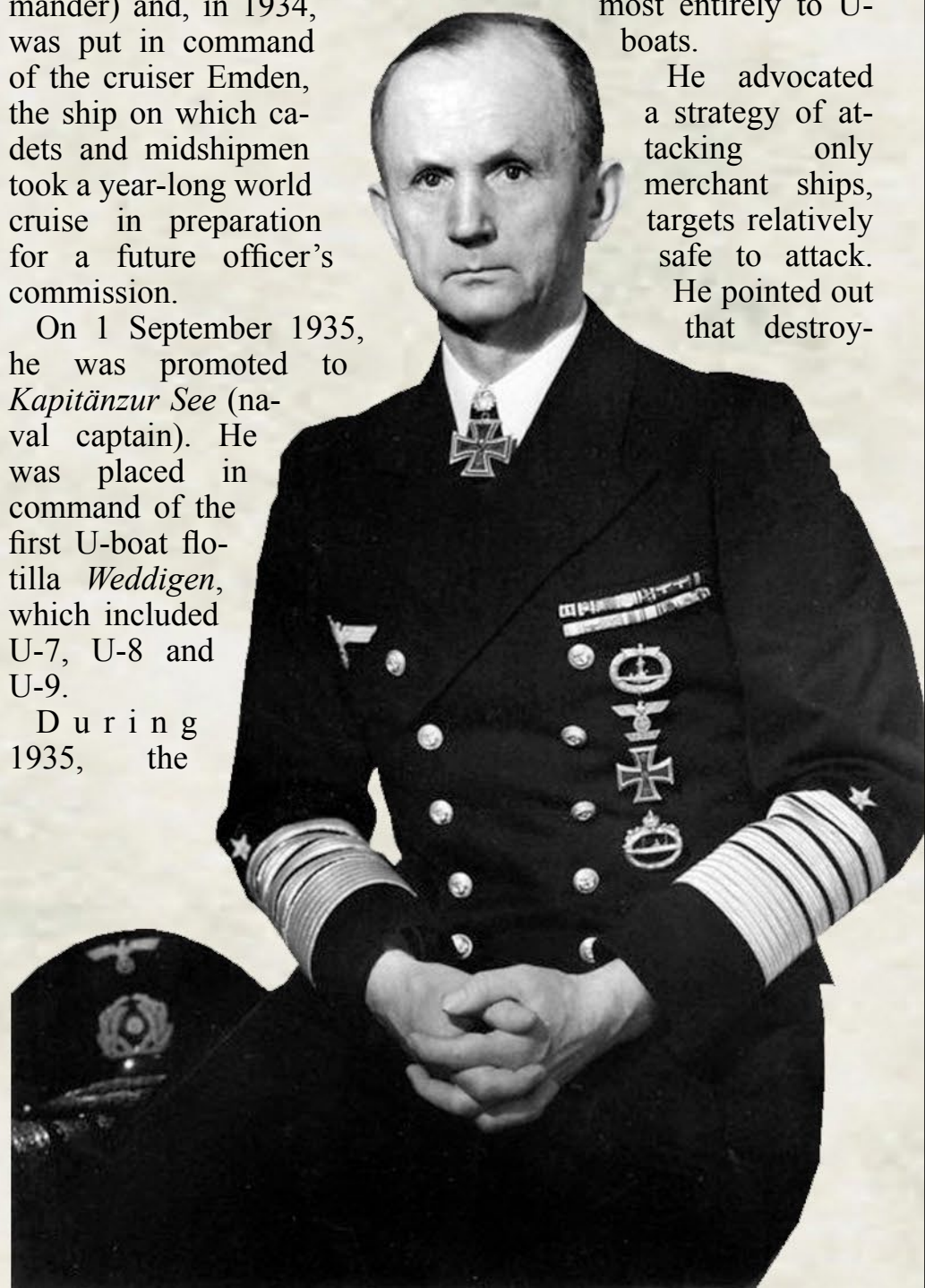
Dönitz's affection for his men was returned in full measure by the U-boat crews. They had great confidence in their admiral, and felt great respect for the lonely figure who so often greeted them on their return from the Atlantic.

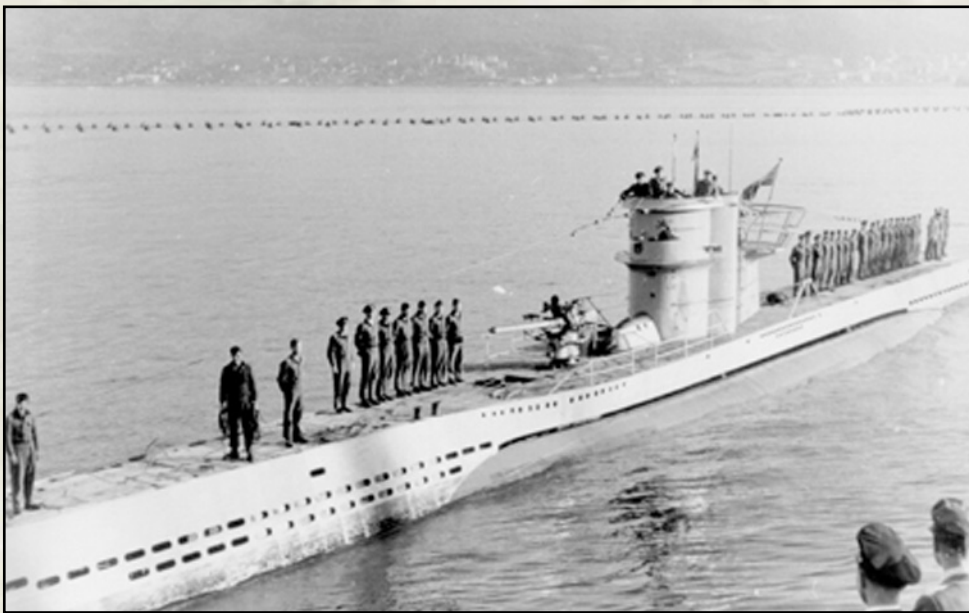
The U-boat crews nicknamed him "Uncle Karl", and sometimes referred to him as "The Big Lion". So closely tied were the personal loyalties of the U-boat crews to the admiral that the branch was jokingly referred to as "Frickorps Dönitz". This loyalty was a key factor in the U-boats continuing high morale and unflagging efforts even in the desperate closing months of the war.

On 30 January 1943, Dönitz replaced Erich Raeder as Commander-in-Chief of the Navy (*Oberbefehlshaber der Kriegsmarine*) and *Großadmiral* (Grand Admiral) of the Naval High Command (*Oberkommando der Marine*). His deputy, Eberhard Godt, took over the operational command of the U-boat force.

In the final days of the war Hitler had taken refuge in the *Führerbunker* beneath the Reich Chancellery garden in Berlin. *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Göring was considered the obvious successor to Hitler, followed by *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler.

Both, however, managed to





WELCOME BACK: When U-boats returned from patrol Karl Dönitz would often be waiting to personally welcome them back.

infuriate Hitler. Göring had radioed Hitler in Berlin asking for permission to assume leadership of the Reich. Then Himmler had tried to seize power by entering into negotiations with Count Bernadotte. On 28 April 1945, the BBC reported Himmler had offered surrender to the western Allies and that the offer had been declined. Hitler expelled both Göring and Himmler from the Nazi Party.

In his last will and testament, dated 29 April 1945, Hitler named Dönitz his successor as *Staatsoberhaupt* (Head of State), with the titles of *Reichspräsident* (President) and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The same document named Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels as Head of Government with the title of *Reichskanzler* (Chancellor).

On 1 May, the day after Hitler's own suicide, Goebbels committed suicide. Dönitz thus became the sole representative of the crumbling German Reich. He appointed Finance Minister Count Ludwig Schwerin von Krosigk as "Leading Minister" and they attempted to form a government.

On 1 May, Dönitz announced that Hitler had fallen and had appointed him as his successor.

On 2 May, the new government of the Reich fled to Flensburg-Mürwik before the approaching British troops. That night, Dönitz made a nationwide radio address in which he announced Hitler's death and said the war would continue in the east "to save Germany from destruction by the advancing Bolshevik enemy". However, Dönitz knew Germany's position was untenable and the Wehrmacht was no longer capable of offering meaningful resistance. During his brief period in office, he devoted most of his effort to ensuring the loyalty of the German armed forces and trying to ensure German troops would surrender to the British or Americans and not the Soviets. He feared vengeful Soviet reprisals, and hoped to strike a deal with the western Allies.[17] In the end, Dönitz's tactics were moderately successful, enabling about 1.8 million German soldiers to escape Soviet capture.

On 4 May, Admiral Hans-

Georg von Friedeburg, representing Admiral Dönitz surrendered all German forces in the Netherlands, Denmark, and northwestern Germany under Dönitz's command to Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery at Lüneburg Heath just southeast of Hamburg, signalling the end of World War II in northwestern Europe.

A day later, Dönitz sent Friedeburg to U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower's headquarters in Rheims, France, to negotiate a surrender to the Allies. The Chief of Staff of OKW, *Generaloberst* (Colonel-General) Alfred Jodl, arrived a day later. Dönitz had instructed them to draw out the negotiations for as long as possible so that German troops and refugees could surrender to the Western powers, but when Eisenhower let it be known he would not tolerate their stalling, Dönitz authorised Jodl to sign the instrument of unconditional surrender at 1:30 on the morning of 7 May. Just over an hour later, Jodl signed the documents. The surrender documents included the phrase, "All forces under German control to cease active operations at 23:01 hours Central European Time on 8 May 1945." At Stalin's insistence, on 8 May, shortly before midnight, Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm Keitel repeated the signing in Berlin at Marshal Georgiy Zhukov's headquarters, with General Carl Spaatz of the USAAF present as Eisenhower's representative. At the time specified, World War II in Europe ended.

On a personal level the war had cost Dönitz both of his sons. The younger, Peter, was killed on 19 May 1943, when U-954 was sunk in the North Atlantic with all hands. After this loss,

Awards and Decorations

- Iron Cross (1914) 2nd class & 1st class (1916).
- General Honour Decoration (Allgemeines Ehrenzeichen).
- Friedrich Cross, 1st class.
- Ottoman War Medal Order of the Medjidie, 4th class.
- Knight of the Royal House Order of Hohenzollern with Swords.
- Honour Cross of the World War 1914/1918.
- Sudetenland Medal.
- Clasp to the Iron Cross (1939) 2nd class & 1st class (1939).
- Military Order of Savoy Knight; Commander's Cross.
- Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves.
- Order of Michael the Brave, 2nd and 3rd class.
- Order of the Rising Sun, First Class.
- Order of Naval Merit in white.

the elder son, Klaus, was allowed to leave combat duty and began studying to be a naval doctor. Klaus was killed on 13 May 1944 while taking part in an action contrary to standing orders prohibiting his involvement in any combat role. He persuaded his friends to let him go on the torpedo boat S-141 for a raid on Selsey on his 24th birthday. He was killed when the boat was sunk by the French destroyer *La Combattante*.

Following the war, Dönitz was held as a prisoner of war by the Allies. He was indicted as a major war criminal at

the Nuremberg Trials on three counts: (1) conspiracy to commit crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity; (2) planning, initiating, and waging wars of aggression; and (3) crimes against the laws of war. Dönitz was found not guilty on count (1) of the indictment, but guilty on counts two and three.

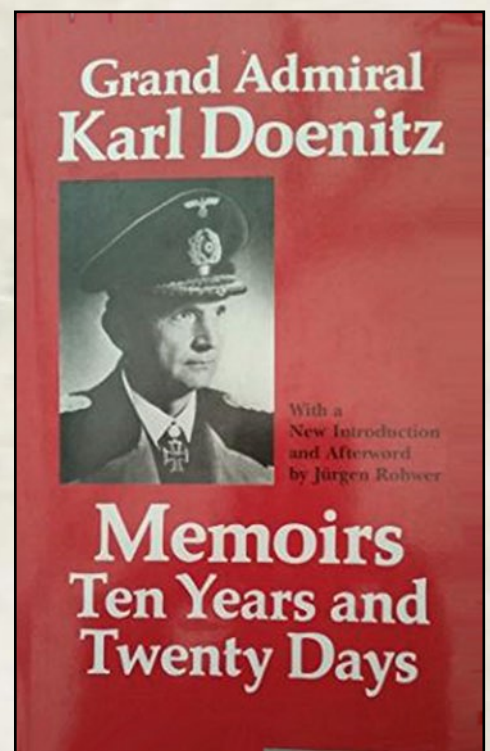
Dönitz was, for nearly seven decades, the only head of state to be convicted by an international tribunal until the conviction of Liberia's Charles Taylor in April 2012.

Dönitz was imprisoned for 10 years in Spandau Prison in what was then West Berlin. Dönitz was released on 1 October 1956, and retired to the small village of Aumühle in Schleswig-Holstein in northern West Germany.

There, he worked on two books. His memoirs, *Zehn Jahre, Zwanzig Tage* (Memoirs: Ten Years and Twenty Days), appeared in Germany in 1958 and became available in an English translation the following year.

This book recounted Dönitz's experiences as U-boat commander (10 years) and President of Germany (20 days). In it, Dönitz explains the Nazi regime as a product of its time, but argues he was not a politician and thus not morally responsible for much of the regime's crimes. He likewise criticizes dictatorship as a fundamentally flawed form of government and blames it for much of the Nazi era's failings.

Despite his postwar claims, Dönitz was seen as supportive of Nazism during the war. Several naval officers described him as "closely tied to Hitler and Nazi ideology." He refused to help Albert Speer stop the scorched earth policy dictated



by Hitler, and is also noted to have declared, "In comparison to Hitler we are all pipsqueaks. Anyone who believes he can do better than the Führer is stupid."

Dönitz lived out the rest of his life in relative obscurity in Aumühle, occasionally corresponding with collectors of German naval history, and died there of a heart attack on 24 December 1980. As the last German officer with the rank of *Großadmiral* (grand admiral), he was honoured by many former servicemen and foreign naval officers who came to pay their respects at his funeral on 6 January 1981. He was buried in Waldfriedhof Cemetery in Aumühle without military honours, and soldiers were not allowed to wear uniforms to the funeral.

However, a number of German naval officers disobeyed this order and were joined by members of the Royal Navy, such as the senior chaplain the Rev Dr John Cameron, in full dress uniform. Also in attendance were over 100 holders of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

AK-47 Assault Rifle

Each month "Forged in Battle" looks at weapons, equipment or units that have been tried and tested on the battlefield. This month we look at the legendary AK-47.

It's probably the most recognised firearm in the world. It is used in 115 countries and manufactured in 33 countries. Even after nearly seven decades it remains the most popular and widely used assault rifle in the world. It is simple to maintain, reliable under harsh conditions, costs little to produce and, above all, is easy to use.

The weapon in question is, of course, the Avtomat Kalashnikova - better known as the AK-47 or just AK.

The AK-47 has seen service with armed forces as well as irregular forces worldwide, and was the basis for developing many other types of individual and crew-served firearms. Of the estimated 500 million firearms worldwide, approximately 100 million belong to the Kalashnikov family, three-quarters of which are AK-47s.

Origins and Development

During World War II, the *Sturmgewehr 44* assault rifle used by German forces made a deep impression on their Soviet counterparts.

The select-fire rifle was chambered for a new intermediate cartridge, the 7.92×33mm Kurz, and combined the firepower of a submachine gun with the range and accuracy of a rifle.

On 15 July 1943, an earlier model of the *Sturmgewehr* was demonstrated before the Peo-

ple's Commissariat of Arms of the USSR. The Soviets were impressed with the weapon and immediately set about developing an intermediate caliber automatic rifle of their own, to replace the PPSH-41 submachine guns and outdated Mosin-Nagant bolt-action rifles that armed most of the Soviet Army.

The calibre decided upon was the new 7.62x39mm cartridge. Naturally they would have to design a new rifle for the new cartridge. One of those that submitted a design for a new submachine gun was tank sergeant Mikhail Kalashnikov.

Born in 1919 Kalashnikov was attracted to all kinds of machinery from an early age. After leaving school he found a job as a mechanic at a tractor factory in Kurya.

In 1939 Kalashnikov was conscripted into the Red Army. Because of his small size and his engineering skills he was assigned as a tank mechanic. Later he was promoted to the rank of sergeant and became a tank commander.

He served on the T-34s of the 24th Tank Regiment, 108th Tank Division station in Stryi. In October 1941 he was wounded during the Battle of Bryansk and spent six months recovering in hospital.

It was while in hospital that he heard fellow soldiers complaining about the Soviet rifles.

This is when he came up with the idea of making a new rifle.

His first submachine gun design was not accepted, but his talent as a designer was noted. From 1942 onwards Kalashnikov was assigned to the Central Scientific-developmental Firing Range for Rifle Firearms of the Chief Artillery Directorate of the Red Army.

In 1944 he designed a new gas-operated carbine for the new 7.62x39mm cartridge. His design lost out to the new Simonov carbine which would eventually be adopted as the SKS.

In 1946 a competition was held to design the best assault rifle. Although Kalashnikov was competing against more experienced designers such as Vasily Degtyaryob and Georgy Shpagin, his design won.

His winning entry was called the Mikhtim and it became the blueprint for a family of prototype rifles that culminated in 1947 when he designed the Avtomat Kalashnikova model 1947 rifle or AK-47.

In 1949 the AK-47 became the standard issue assault rifle of the Soviet Army and was used by the majority of the member states of the Warsaw Pact.

Design

The AK-47 was designed to be a simple, reliable automatic rifle that could be manufactured quickly and cheaply, using



mass production methods that were state of the art in the Soviet Union during the late 1940s.

The AK-47 uses a long stroke gas system that is generally associated with great reliability in adverse conditions. The large gas piston, generous clearances between moving parts, and tapered cartridge case design allow the gun to endure large amounts of foreign matter and fouling without failing to cycle.

Operating Mechanism

To fire, the operator inserts a loaded magazine, pulls back and releases the charging handle, and then pulls the trigger. In semi-automatic, the firearm fires only once, requiring the trigger to be released and depressed again for the next shot.

In full-automatic, the rifle continues to fire automatically cycling fresh rounds into the chamber, until the magazine is exhausted or pressure is released from the trigger.

After ignition of the cartridge primer and propellant, rapidly expanding propellant gases are diverted into the gas cylinder above the barrel through a vent near the muzzle.

The build-up of gases inside the gas cylinder drives the long-stroke piston and bolt carrier rearward and a cam guide ma-

chined into the underside of the bolt carrier along with an ejector spur on the bolt carrier rail guide, rotates the bolt approximately 35° and unlocks it from the barrel extension via a camming pin on the bolt.

The moving assembly has about 5.5 mm of free travel, which creates a delay between the initial recoil impulse of the piston and the bolt unlocking sequence, allowing gas pressures to drop to a safe level before the seal between the chamber and the bolt is broken.

The AK-47 does not have a gas valve; excess gases are vented through a series of radial ports in the gas cylinder. The Kalashnikov operating system offers no primary extraction upon bolt rotation, but uses an extractor claw to eject the spent cartridge case.

Fire Selector

The fire selector is a large lever located on the right side of the rifle, it acts as a dust-cover and prevents the charging handle from being pulled fully to the rear when it is on safe. It is operated by the shooter's right fore-fingers and has three settings: safe (up), full-auto (center), and semi-auto (down). The reason for this is that under stress a soldier will push the se-

lector lever down with considerable force bypassing the full-auto stage and setting the rifle to semi-auto. To set the AK-47 to full-auto requires the deliberate action of centering the selector lever.

To operate the fire selector lever, right handed shooters have to briefly remove their right hand from the pistol grip, which is ergonomically sub-optimal. Some AK-type rifles also have a more traditional selector lever on the left side of the receiver just above the pistol grip.

This lever is operated by the shooter's right thumb and has three settings: safe (forward), full-auto (center), and semi-auto (backward).

Magazines

The standard magazine capacity is 30 rounds. There are also 10, 20, and 40-round box magazines, as well as 75-round drum magazines.

The AK-47's standard 30-round magazines have a pronounced curve that allows them to smoothly feed ammunition into the chamber. Their heavy steel construction combined with "feed-lips" (the surfaces at the top of the magazine that control the angle at which the cartridge enters the chamber) machined from a single



FOLDING BUTT: Used by paratroopers and tank crews.

PRACTICAL: The AK bayonet has a cutting edge, a serrated edge and can be used as wire cutters.

steel billet makes them highly resistant to damage. These magazines are so strong that “Soldiers have been known to use their mags as hammers, and even bottle openers”.

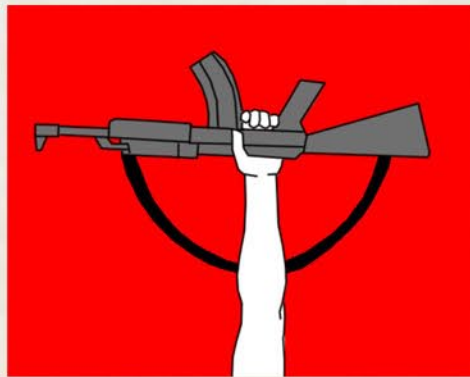
This contributes to the AK-47 magazine being more reliable, but makes it heavier than U.S. and NATO magazines.

Accessories

All current model AKM rifles can mount under-barrel 40 mm grenade launchers such as the GP-25 and its variants, which can fire up to 20 rounds per minute and have an effective range of up to 400 metres.[62] The main grenade is the VOG-25 (VOG-25M) fragmentation grenade which has a 6 m (9 m) lethality radius. The VOG-25P/VOG-25PM (“jumping”) vari-

ant explodes 0.5–1 metre above the ground.

The AK-47 can also mount a (rarely used) cup-type grenade launcher, the Kalashnikov grenade launcher that fires standard RGD-5 Soviet hand-grenades. The maximum effective



range is approximately 150 meters. This launcher can also be used to launch tear-gas and riot control grenades.

All current AKs (100 series) and some older models, have side rails for mounting a variety of scopes and sighting devices, such as the PSO-1 Optical Snip-

er Sight. The side rails allow for the removal and remounting of optical accessories without interfering with the zeroing of the optic. However, the 100 series side folding stocks cannot be folded with the optics mounted.

Further Development

A redesigned version designated the AKM (M for “modernized” or “upgraded”; in Russian: *Avtomat Kalashnikova Modernizirovanniy* was introduced in 1959. This new model used a stamped sheet metal receiver and featured a slanted muzzle brake on the end of the barrel to compensate for muzzle rise under recoil. In addition, a hammer retarder was added to prevent the weapon from firing out of battery (without the bolt being fully closed), during rapid or automatic fire.

This is also sometimes referred to as a “cyclic rate reducer”, or simply “rate reducer”, as it also has the effect of reducing the number of rounds fired per minute during automatic fire. It was also roughly one-third lighter than the previous mode.



RARELY USED: An AKM fitted with the Kalashnikov Grenade Launcher.



Replacement

In 1974, the Soviets began replacing their AK-47 and AKM rifles with a newer design, the AK-74, which uses 5.45×39mm ammunition. This new rifle and cartridge had only started to be manufactured in Eastern European nations when the Soviet Union collapsed, drastically slowing production of the AK-74 and other weapons of the former Soviet bloc.

Influence

Throughout the world, the AK and its variants are commonly used by governments, revolutionaries, terrorists, criminals, and civilians alike. In some countries, such as Somalia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Congo and Tanzania, the prices for Black Market AKs are between \$30 and \$125 per weapon and prices have fallen in the last few decades due to mass counterfeiting.

There are places around the world where AK type weapons

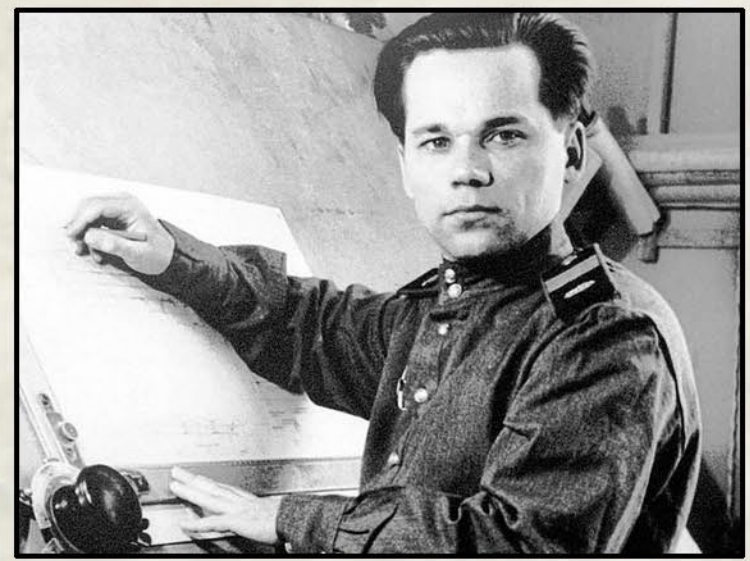
USED BY ALL: A rebel faction in Somalia practice on a make-shift shooting range. The AK has seen action in nearly every major conflict since the 1950s.



can be purchased on the Black Market “for as little as \$6, or traded for a chicken or a sack of grain”.

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, as well as United States and other NATO

nations supplied arms and technical knowledge to numerous countries and rebel forces around the world. During this time the Western countries used relatively expensive automatic rifles, such as the FN FAL, the HK G3, the M14, and the M16. In contrast, the Russians and Chinese used the AK-47; its low production cost and ease of manufacture allow them to make AKs in vast numbers.



THE DESIGNER: A young Mikhail Kalashnikov, the man that designed the AK-47.

In the pro-communist states, the AK-47 became a symbol of third-world revolution. During the 1980s, the Soviet Union became the principal arms dealer to countries embargoed by Western nations, including Middle Eastern nations such as Iran, Libya, and Syria, which welcomed Soviet Union backing against Israel.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, AK-47s were sold both openly and on the black market to any group with cash, including drug cartels and dictatorial states, and more recently they have been seen in the hands of Islamic groups such as Al-Qaeda, ISIL, and the Taliban in Afghanistan and Iraq, and FARC, *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* guerrillas in Colombia.

In Mexico, the AK-47 is known as “*Cuerno de Chivo*” (literally “Goat’s Horn”) because of its curved magazine design. It is one of the weapons of choice of Mexican drug cartels. It is sometimes mentioned in Mexican folk music lyrics.

Mikhail Kalashnikov would go on to become a Lieutenant General in the Red Army. He died on 23 December 2013 at the age of 94.

Air Strike - The Six Day War

On 5 June 1967 the Israelis launched one of the most devastating offensives in the history of warfare.

In it's short history Israel was no stranger to war. The Arab-Israeli War of 1948-49 challenged the creation of the state of Israel, and in 1956 Israel had to fight a war against Egypt. Neither war, however, led to any sort of peace or stability for the Arabs or the Jews in the Middle East.

Israel suffered from two major disadvantages. Firstly it was surrounded by hostile countries. Israel shared borders with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. All were Arab countries and regarded the mere existence of Israel an outrage.

The second disadvantage was the fact that Israel enjoyed no natural frontiers. At its narrowest point it measured only 21km. The entire country covered only 36,360 square km. It lacked the depth in which to manoeuvre and it also lacked space in which to fight defensively.

By May 1967 tensions in the area were once again at fever pitch. Since the end of the war in 1956 a United Nations force had occupied the Sinai, acting as a buffer between Egypt and Israel. As long as the UN force was there, Israel was safe, Then Egypt had demanded the withdrawal of the UN force by 16 May. On 17 May seven Egyptian divisions, five infantry and two armoured, had moved into the Sinai.

The Egyptians then closed

the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping and the creation of a unified Arab command posed a threat that the government of Israel could not ignore.

By occupying the Sinai, closing the straits, and forming a unified command with Jordan and Syria the Egyptians had backed Israel into a corner.

The Israelis immediately began to call up its reservists and by 20 May it was completed. With such limited manpower and financial resources Israel could not afford to keep her citizen army mobilised for more than two weeks. Any longer would cause severe damage to the economy.

Israel was limited to two choices - go to war within two weeks of 20 May or stand her forces down.

Egyptian President Abdel Nasser did not expect an Israeli attack, but he was confident that if one did develop his forces would win. He was wrong on both counts.

All Israeli intelligence reports indicated that an attack by the Arabs was imminent. Israel felt she had no other choice but to launch a preemptive strike.

Plan of Attack

Israel was outnumbered. The Arabs had more men, tanks and aircraft. They knew that for their attack to have any chance of success it was vital that they achieve air superiority.

Egypt was regarded as the

main threat and the initial Israeli air strike would be against eight Egyptian airfields in Sinai, on the Suez Canal and around Cairo.

The timing of the attack was sheer genius. Military doctrine dictates that the best time for an attack is at first light. The Israeli air strike was planned for 08h45 Egyptian time.

The relative lateness of the hour was chosen for a number of reasons. First of all the Egyptians would be hit when they least expected it. By that time the early morning mist in the Nile Delta had lifted. Most importantly, the Egyptian air patrols and radar surveillance had been stood down with the passing of the time for a classic dawn attack. More over the change-over of watches within the Egyptian air command was taking place.

In another move that went against the norm, the Israelis chose not to make Arab radar stations their first priority. To achieve surprise in the strikes against the airfields around Cairo the Israelis flew deep into the Mediterranean before they turned to attack the air fields from the rear.

And it wasn't just a quick 'hit-and-run' strike either. The Israelis kept successive waves of attacking aircraft over the major targets until resistance was totally broken. For 80 minutes the Israelis kept up a continuous attack on airfields hous-

ing the cutting edge of Egyptian air power. At the end of the first day's operation about 300 Arab aircraft had been destroyed with the Israelis losing only ten of their own.

As can be expected the Israeli intelligence was spot on and the target identification by the pilots was outstanding. Dummy installations and aircraft were ignored while the real targets were destroyed.

That the Israelis were able to keep waves of attacking aircraft over the target was due to careful calculation of flight times and an allowance of ten minutes time-over-target for each attacking wave before the next wave arrived to take over.

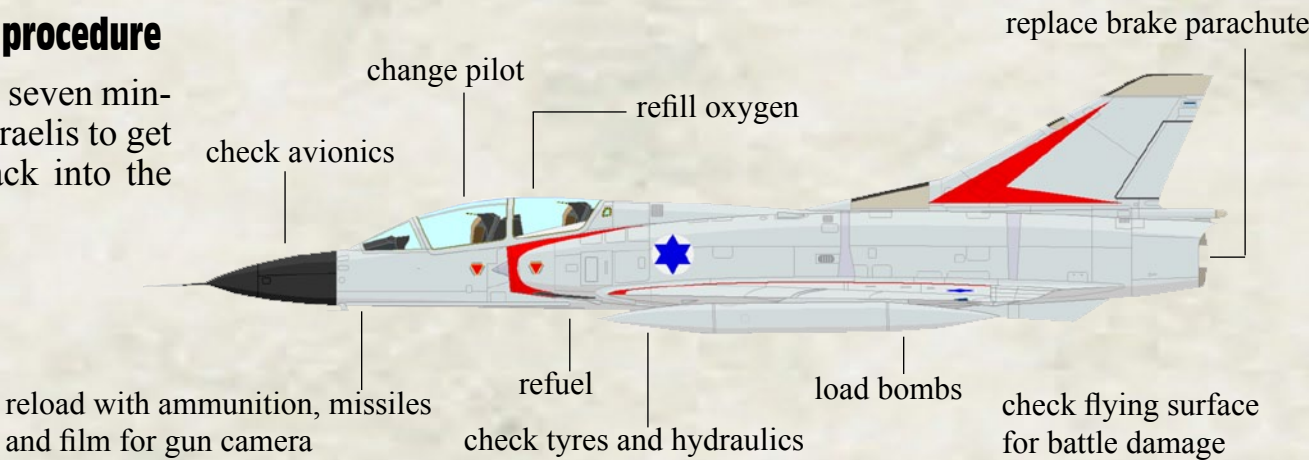
Once the eight original airfields had been dealt with the Israelis extended their operations to cover a further nine Egyptian airfields. They then moved on to cover the Jordanian, Iraqi and Syrian fronts. On the first day they annihilated the Jordanian Air Force and inflicted such heavy loses on the Syrian Air Force that it took virtually no active part in the war. The fact of the matter is that the Jordanian and Syrian Air Forces had been destroyed within the space of 25 minutes.

Most of the damage from the Israeli aircraft was inflicted by cannon fire against aircraft caught on the ground. Some

Arab-Israeli Forces 1967			
Country	Men	Tanks	Aircraft
 Israel	264,000	800	350
 Egypt	240,000	1,200	450
 Syria	50,000	400	120
 Jordan	50,000	200	40
 Iraq	70,000	400	200
 Saudi Arabia	50,000	100	20
 Algeria	60,000	100	100
 Kuwait	5,000	24	9
Arab Total	525,000	2,424	939

Turn-around procedure

It took a mere seven minutes for the Israelis to get an aircraft back into the air.





WATCHFUL EYE: Israeli Dassault Mirage III aircraft patrol over the battlefield. With total air supremacy they were able to attack ground targets at will.

Israeli pilots actually lowered their undercarriage to reduce speed and increase the accuracy of their fire.

Yet the Israelis did not rely on cannon only. A variety of bombs had been developed to make

runways unuseable. Some were set on long time delay fuses to discourage ground crews from trying to repair the runways. Installations and runways in Sinai were relatively lightly attacked because the Israelis planned on

using them for themselves.

In the end the war lasted only six days and became known as the Six Day War. A total of 418 Arab aircraft were destroyed for the loss of 27 Israeli aircraft.

While the war lasted for six days it was, for all intents and purposes, over after three hours. In that time the Israelis inflicted a huge defeat on the Arabs from which they could never hope to recover. Once the Israelis had secured air superiority the outcome of the war was never in doubt.

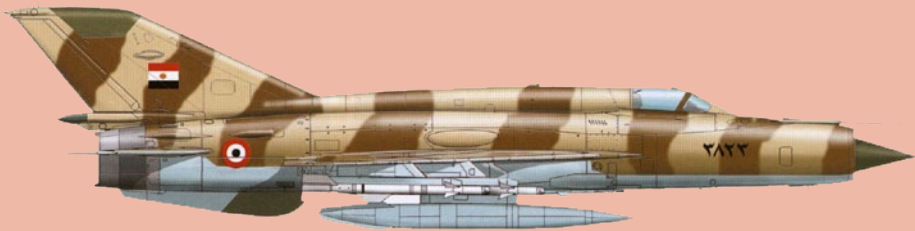
In the history of air warfare no operation stands comparison with the Israeli Air Force attack on 5 June 1967 with regard to the expertise in execution and significance for the outcome of a campaign.

Dassault Mirage III



Crew: 1
Length: 15.03 m
Wingspan: 8.22 m
Maximum speed: 2,350 km/h
Combat range: 1,200 km
Guns: 2× 30 mm 552 cannon with 125 rounds per gun
Missiles: 2× AIM-9 Sidewinder Air to Air missiles (AAM)

Mig-21 (Fishbed)



Crew: 1
Length: 14.7 m
Wingspan: 7.154 m
Maximum speed: Mach 1.05
Combat range: 1,470 km
Guns: 1 × internal 23 mm Gryazev-Shipunov GSh-23L autocannon with 200 rounds
Various air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles

Firearm Identification

This month's quiz isn't that difficult - if you know your firearms that is. Take a look at the images below then tell us what firearm it is. And as a clue we can tell you that eight of these firearms date back to World War II.



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Enemy at the Gates

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Both become romantically interested in Tania Chernova, a resident of Stalingrad who has become a private in the local militia. Seeing as how she studied German at Moscow University Danilov has her transferred

to an intelligence unit away from the battlefield.

With the Soviet snipers, and Zaytsev in particular, taking an increasing toll on German officers the director of the Wehrmacht sniper school at Zossen, Major Erwin König, is deployed to Stalingrad to take out Zaytsev. When the Red Army command learns of König's mission, they dispatch König's former student Koulikov to help Zaytsev kill him.

Sacha Filippova, a young Soviet boy, volunteers to act as a double agent by passing König false information about Zaytsev's whereabouts, thus giving Zaytsev a chance to ambush the major.

Zaytsev and Tania have fallen in love and this causes a great deal of jealousy from Danilov who disparages Zaytsev in a letter to his superiors

What follows is a deadly game of cat-and-mouse as the two snipers hunt each other in the ruined city.

While Vasily Zaytsev was a real person, the story of his duel with König is fictional. No sniper named König has ever been identified in the German records.

Enemy at the Gates is well worth watching. There are a couple of really good scenes such as when König sets a trap for Zaytsev in an old factory.

The film was based on the book *Enemy at the Gates: The Battle for Stalingrad* by William Craig and the movie runs for 131 minutes.

Cast

Jude Law – Vasily Zaytsev

Joseph Fiennes – Commissar Danilov

Rachel Weisz – Tania Chernova

Bob Hoskins – Nikita Khrushchev

Ed Harris – Major Erwin König

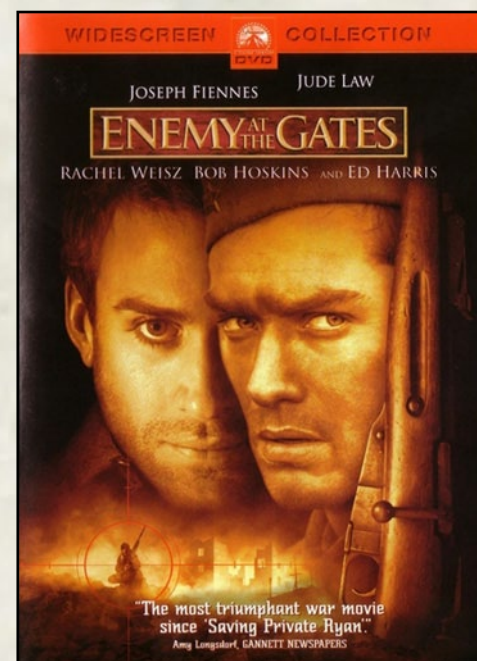
Ron Perlman – Koulikov

Eva Mattes – Mother Filippova

Gabriel Marshall-Thomson – Sasha Filippova

Matthias Habich – General Friedrich Paulus

Click on the cover below to watch the trailer of the movie.



Cuito Cuanavale - Frontline Accounts by Soviet Soldiers

Compiled and edited by Gennady Shubin, Igor Zhdarkin, Vyacheslav Barabulya and Alexandra Kuznetsova-Timonova this book is a follow-up to the very



successful *Bush War* which provided personal, first-hand encounters of Soviet military advisors to the Angolan Army.

This volume concentrates on the climax of this conflict - the 1987/8 Battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

It was the largest battle on African soil since World War II. South Africa and Unita went up against Angolan FAPLA troops and their Cuban allies. It was a battle that to this day is hotly debated with both sides claiming victory.

The Soviet soldier's experience of the war and their views and assessment of their South African enemies as well as their Cuban and Angolan allies will fascinate South African readers. At the same time they offer

new insights into the conflict.

Having known quite a few people that took part in the battle I've been lucky enough to listen to first-hand accounts. I also read a number of books on the battle, mostly written from the South African perspective.

This book gives a fresh and unique perspective in that it gives a glimpse of how the 'other' side saw the battle.

The book is well written and the accounts really are personal. Anyone that served in combat will find themselves nodding their heads and identifying with many of the stories. After all, no matter in which army you were, soldiers remain soldiers.

Echoes of an African War

Nearly every war, it seems, produces at least one great poet. During the Rhodesian War Chas Lotter was that man.

As a field medic, Sergeant Lotter served for nine years with frontline units of the Rhodesian Army. It was these years of action, emotion and savage experience that fuelled the poet's fire in him. He started writing poetry "on the backs of cigarette boxes" in an attempt to deal with the realities of the war. From such humble beginnings emerged a series of vivid pictures of an African nation at war.

Echoes of an African War follows the story of a young army recruit who exchanged his home and his family for the

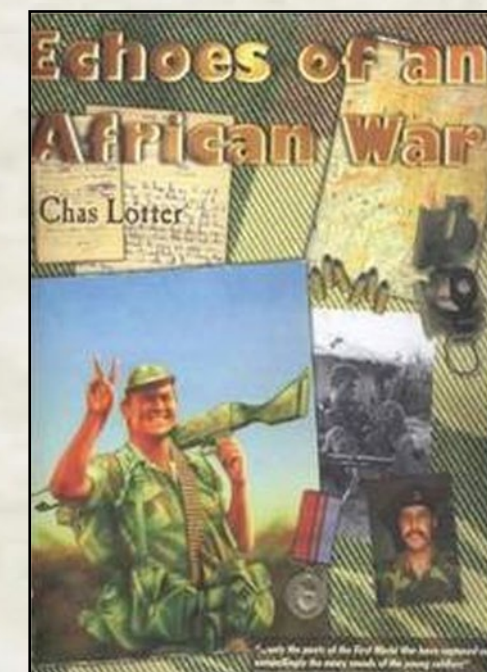
world of barrack life.

It sketches the years, until 1973, when a low-intensity war allowed a young man to explore the African bush. The story then bursts into the late 1970s when the conflict escalated into a vicious civil war. It covers the war's end, in 1980, and the subsequent readjustment to civilian life before finishing, in 1999, when, as a mature man, he looks back and remembers events that are now history.

Besides the many excellent poems, the book is also filled with photographs, maps, sketches and documents from the Rhodesian War.

If you enjoy poetry or are a military enthusiast then this is a must-have book for your collection.

Chas Lotter is a member of the English Academy of Southern Africa and his poetry has been published around the world. He lives in Pretoria, South Africa.





COMPANY OF HEROES 2

Comrade Matt O' Brien heads to the Eastern Front and Stalingrad.

People will sometimes ask me, "Matt, aren't you a little old to be playing games." It's a question I can answer with one word, "No."

While I really enjoy gaming they have to be games that interest and challenge me. In fact the vast majority of the games I play have a military theme to them.

So the games that I will be reviewing for this magazine will obviously also have a military theme to them.

Games can broadly be divided into a number of categories. You get first-person shooters (FPS), real time strategy (RTS), role playing games (RPG) and simulations (Sims).

First-person shooters are often referred to as 'running and gunning' games. You are armed with various weapons and you have goals to achieve. They are normally not very realistic and I won't be reviewing any of them for this magazine.

The type of games I will focus on are real time strategy and simulation games. Think of these as chess on a much more complicated scale.

The first game I want to look at is Company of Heroes 2. This is a real time strategy game set during World War II.

When it was released back in 2006, Company of Heroes

was one of the best WWII RTS games around. Built around the concepts of cover and directional fire, suppression and morale, you had to use actual battlefield strategies if you wanted to succeed.

In Company of Heroes 2 the action moves to the Eastern Front. In the single player campaign you control the Soviet Army from Operation Barbarossa to the Battle of Berlin.

Where the game really comes into its own is in skirmish mode. You can play multi-player, co-op, or even go up against the AI (Artificial Intelligence). What's also cool is that you can play as the Russians or the Germans.

Each side starts with a headquarters building which allows you to recruit engineers. The map is divided up into a number of territories that you need to capture to secure the area. You also need to capture ammunition and fuel points. These points are spent recruiting new units, building structures and vehicles, and developing new tactics. As you built new structures, capture new territory and engage in combat you are awarded command points. These allow you access to better units, buildings, vehicles and equipment.

Your engineers can construct a barracks which then allows

you to recruit infantry. A support centre will allow you to build or recruit better infantry, anti-tank guns, artillery, mortars and heavy machine guns. The vehicle centre allows you to build light vehicles and armoured cars. Finally the tank hall allows you to build armour such as tanks and self propelled guns.

There are many new innovations in the game, such as the cold weather that can kill your troops and that you can cross rivers that have frozen. Get caught in a blizzard and your troops will start dropping like flies.

You will need to build a temporary camp, or transport them back to an existing one. Snow can also change the geography of the landscape. The new and more accurate line-of-sight system also rewards clever placement of units, and commanders with the nerve to keep to their hiding places.

Your engineers can repair vehicles and structures and can also be armed with demolition charges. You can build bunkers, tank traps and observation towers. They can also lay mines or barbed wire. Infantry can also dig trenches for cover.

Most vehicles and units can be upgraded with better equipment. Those that survive com-



FRONTAL ASSAULT: The American Forces launch an assault against German positions. Actual battlefield tactics plays a big part in being successful at the game.

bat engagements gain experience and can become veterans, giving them more benefits.

Company of Heroes 2 released a number of add-ons for the game. The good news is that the game now comes complete with all the add-ons.

The Western Front Armies

This added the American forces to the game. It also added Oberkommando Wes to the Axis forces. The Oberkommando faction is intended to represent Germany's military situation near the end of the Second World War.

This add-on also comes with a new campaign, but once again it is skirmish mode where you will get the most enjoyment.

Ardennes Assault

While this did not add any new factions to the game it did have a new campaign that was set in Belgium. It is based on the Battle of the Bulge.

The British Forces

The final add-on saw the introduction of the British Forces.

They operate slightly different to the other factions in

that they do not have buildings. They have trucks that act as their headquarters, barracks, support centre and tank hall.

This means that they can be packed up and then moved to a new location.

If you plan on being successful in skirmishes you will have to make the best use of your faction's strengths and use the correct tactics.

The Soviet Union places emphasis on cheap yet effective units, embodied by units such as the T-34 Medium Tank and the expendable Conscript Infantry Squads.

Unlike the Soviets, the German army relies on a well-trained versatile army. Their tanks are generally considered superior to the Soviet tanks, but they are fewer in numbers. This applies for most German units. Fewer in squad size/more expensive, but superior compared to their Soviet counterpart.

The US faction emphasizes versatility and flexibility, designed to bend but not break under enemy pressure. The USF is somewhat better at holding territory points than the Soviet

Red Army as they can construct fighting positions and tank traps. US vehicles have vehicle crews that can disembark to carry out repairs or escape their doomed vehicle.

The Oberkommando faction is intended to represent Germany's military situation near the end of the Second World War. As a faction, they have access to cutting-edge military innovations, such as STG.44 Infrared scopes and the Jagdtiger heavy tank destroyer.

The British Forces have an emphasis on versatile and well trained infantry, supported by powerful artillery and highly durable but slow tanks.

Company of Heroes 2 is one of the better RTS games around. It's not that difficult to learn to play the game and with skirmish mode it will provide hours and hours of entertainment.



Publisher	-	Relic
Genre	-	RTS
Platform	-	PC
Score	-	8/10
Price	-	R199

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 *grootaal* (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 swaartgevaar*" (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



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.

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.

Well done sergeant major

John (19) tells an amusing story from his basics about a church parade he attended one Sunday morning.

"There were quite a few of us that belonged to Pentecostal churches. In the army these were known as 'Free Churches'.

"Because we didn't have any pastors that could come and

conduct a service at the camp we would all be transported to one of the churches in town on a Sunday morning.

"It was quite a big deal because it was the only time we got out of the camp. And of course there were always young girls at church.

"This one Sunday morning our sergeant major decided that he would attend as well. Just to make sure we were all well behaved.

"When we arrived at the church some of us were given the task of handing out hymn books to the people as they arrived. The sergeant major was standing with us. One of the troops walked in and he still had his beret on his head. This was a huge no-no because you did not wear headgear when you were in church.

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

"I couldn't believe it. The sergeant major had just dropped two huge f-bombs in church. The poor church people were shocked."

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."

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