



Military Despatches

August 2017

Stranger than fiction

Facts, figures and trivia about US Civil War

History, as told by 'varsity students

WWII ended in 1957, Hitler shot himself in the bonker, Kennedy solved the Canadian Missile Crisis

Head-to-Head

We look some of the fighter aircraft of World War II

Forged in Battle

The South African Ratel IFV



More than 11 million casualties

Ten of the bloodiest battles every fought

For the military enthusiast

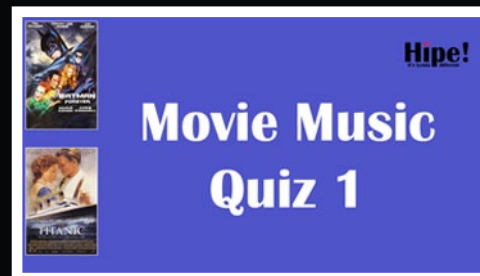


Click on any video below to view



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.



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

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.



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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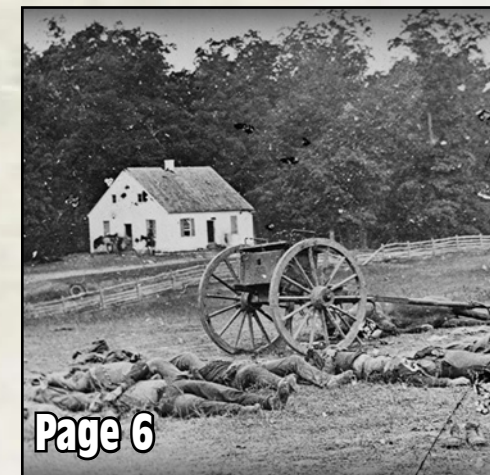
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Cover Photograph

Captured at exactly the right moment, this photograph shows a 25-pounder cannon being fired by members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) during a demonstration in Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town. In 1975, during Operation Savannah, the South Africans were still using the British 25-pounder in action.





Editor's Sitrep

Let me start off by saying that I was shocked, surprised, and more than a little pleased at the reaction to the first issue of Military Despatches. It seems that the majority of readers enjoyed it.

I was hoping that at least a few people would read it, but I was not expecting it to be downloaded 63,000 times in the first month.

One of the problems of putting a magazine together is content. What exactly are you going to put into the magazine? Many editors sit with the problem of not having enough material. I, on the other hands, sit with the problem of having too much material. It's a question of "what should I include this month?"

Sometimes it can be difficult selecting the information to include. This month, for example, I wanted to feature Operation Market Garden under the Battlefield section.

The only problem is that Operation Market Garden was a huge operation, consisting of both an armoured element and an airborne element. So I though maybe I could focus on a particular aspect of the operations, say the Battle of Arnhem.

Yet that lasted for nine days. I would need at least a twenty page article just to give it justice. And I feel that a magazine article about a single topic should never be more than six pages.

Then again, maybe I should just leave articles of this nature to college and university students. Read the article on page 14 to get an idea of what I'm talking about. Some of these people can sum up the entire Second World War in a paragraph. And their knowledge of history is astounding.

Did you know, for instance, that WWII ended in 1957. Or that Hitler shot himself in the bonker. Have you heard about the Six Minute War or the Canadian Missile Crisis?

From next month we will be starting a new section in the magazine. It's called "I was there" and will feature eyewitness accounts of military events.

If you have an article that you think our readers will find interesting, please feel free to submit it.

Until next month.

Matt

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Forged in Battle

The Ratel IFV

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 South African Ratel IFV (Infantry Fighting Vehicle).

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Who are we?

We show you a badge or patch and you tell us which unit, regiment or corps it is.

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Book Review

Iron Fist From The Sea tells the remarkable story of operations carried out by the Elite South African 4 Recce Commando. Douw Steyn and Arnè Söderlund, the authors, have an intimate knowledge of the subject matter.

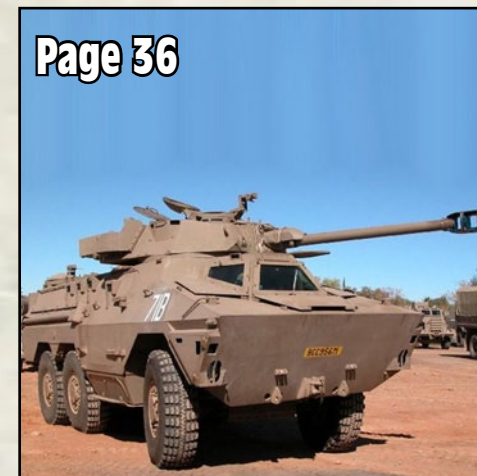
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The Lighter Side

Potty Humour

In the bush there were no hot showers, flushing toilets or running water. When answering the call of nature troops often had to make use of very basic facilities, sometimes with amusing results.

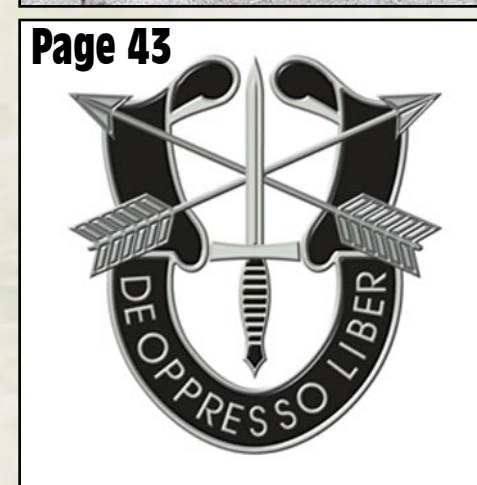
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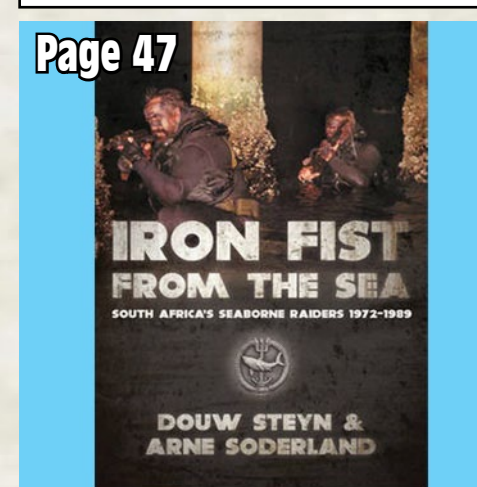
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US Civil War - facts, figures & trivia

A few facts, figures and trivia about the US Civil War, the bloodiest war ever fought on American soil.

The US Civil War was the bloodiest war ever fought on American soil. During an average day during the war, approximately 600 people were killed.

By the end of the war, over 618,000 people had died. This is more Americans than WWI, WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War combined.

Ten most costly Civil War battles

1. Battle of Gettysburg

Date - July 1–3, 1863
Total Casualties - 51,112
Union Casualties - 23,049
Confederate Casualties - 28,063

2. Battle of Chickamauga

Date - September 19–20, 1863
Total Casualties - 34,624
Union Casualties - 16,170
Confederate Casualties - 18,454

3. Battle of Chancellorsville

Date - May 1–4, 1863
Total Casualties - 30,099
Union Casualties - 17,278
Confederate Casualties - 12,821

4. Battle of Spotsylvania

Date - May 8–21, 1864
Total Casualties - 30,399
Union Casualties - 18,399
Confederate Casualties - 12,000

5. Battle of Antietam

Date - September 17, 1862
Total Casualties - 23,134
Union Casualties - 12,410
Confederate Casualties - 10,724

6. Battle of the Wilderness

Date - May 5–7, 1864

Total Casualties - 25,416
Union Casualties - 17,666
Confederate Casualties - 11,000

7. Second Battle of Manassas

Date - August 29–30, 1862
Total Casualties - 25,251
Union Casualties - 16,054
Confederate Casualties - 9,197

8. Battle of Stones River

Date - December 31, 1862
Total Casualties - 34,624
Union Casualties - 16,170
Confederate Casualties - 11,739

9. Battle of Shiloh

Date - April 6–7, 1862
Total Casualties - 23,741
Union Casualties - 13,047
Confederate Casualties - 10,694

10. Battle of Fort Donelson

Date - February 13–16, 1862
Total Casualties - 19,455
Union Casualties - 2,832
Confederate Casualties - 16,623

US Civil War Trivia

- During the Civil War, 2% of the U.S. population died. This is equivalent to six million men today. While rifles were the deadliest weapons during the war, disease killed more men. Camps became breeding grounds for measles, chicken pox, and mumps. One million Union soldiers contracted malaria.
- One of every 65 Federals and one of every 45 Confederates were killed in action.
- A Civil War soldier's chance of surviving the war was

about one in four.

- More Americans died at the Bloody Angle at Spotsylvania, Virginia, in May 1864 than at Omaha Beach on D-Day in 1944.
- The youngest soldier in the Civil War was a 9 year-old boy from Mississippi. The oldest was an 80 year-old from Iowa. More than 10,000 soldiers serving in the Union Army were under 18 years old.
- Daniel Emmett, the composer of "Dixie" was not only from the North, but he was also a loyal Unionist. He was disgusted by the song's popularity in the South. Lincoln claimed that it was one of "the best tunes I ever heard." Listen to the song by clicking [here](#).
- An estimated 800 wounded men burned to death at the Battle of the Wilderness because they were unable to crawl away from advancing brush fires.
- Immediately after the war, two out of three men sentenced to state prisons in the North were Civil War veterans.
- In the 20 years after the Civil War, the national divorce rate increased 150%.
- Seven future U.S. presidents served in the Civil War: Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, William McKinley, James Garfield, Benjamin Harrison, Chester A. Arthur, and Andrew Johnson.

- The Civil War prison camp Elmira had two observation towers constructed for onlookers. Citizens paid 15 cents to look at the inmates. Concession stands by the towers sold peanuts, cakes, and lemonade while the men inside starved.
- Nearly 3,000 people died in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. About the same number of men died in the first 15 minutes at Grant's assault at Cold Harbor on June 3, 1864.
- The Twenty-Sixth North Carolina Infantry suffered the worst regimented losses in a single battle: 708 of 800 killed, wounded, or missing at Gettysburg.
- In the North, more than 1/3 of all men of military age served in the war. For the South, it was nearly 2/3.
- Fighting took place on each day of the war, which lasted approximately 1,396 days, from 1861 to 1865. Nearly 10,455 military "events" took place during the war.
- During the Civil War, diarrhea (Greek, meaning "I flow away") was the most common and deadly disease. More Civil War soldiers died from diarrhea than were killed in battle. About one in 40 cases was fatal. Death came from dehydration, exhaustion, or the rupture of the intestinal wall.
- Both the war's bloodiest day (Antietam) and its bloodiest battle (Gettysburg) occurred in Union states. More than 5,000 soldiers died at Antietam, making September 17, 1862, the single bloodiest day

in U.S. military history.

- The Civil War was the first time the national draft was used in American history (April 16, 1862).
- The Civil War was known by more than 25 names, including "The Brothers War," "The War to Suppress Yankee Arrogance," "The War for the Union," and "The War of the Rebellion."
- Of the three million soldiers in the Civil War, 1% were regular army, 9% were draftees or substitutes, and the rest were volunteers.
- The amphibious landing of 110,000 at Iwo Jima cost 5,931 American lives and wounded 17,372 more. Roughly the same numbers and losses were involved in the Civil War battle at Chickamauga. Iwo Jima spanned 36 days. Chickamauga lasted 36 hours (September 19-20, 1863).
- Gettysburg was the largest battle ever fought in North America. Its victor, General Meade, was born in Spain.
- The bullet (especially the Minie) accounted for more than 90% of battle fatalities. The soft, low-velocity bullets tumbled and spread apart inside the body, which caused excessive and irreparable tissue damage. Only 4% of Civil War battlefield casualties came from the muzzle of a canon.
- On average, of every 100 fatalities on the battlefield, five men died from limb wounds, 12 from punctures to the lower abdomen, 15 from damage to the heart or liver, and more than 50 from lacerations to



BRAVERY REWARDED: The first U.S. Medal of Honor was awarded during the Civil War on March 25, 1863. It was awarded to six survivors of the April 1862 Andrew's Raid. In all, 2,625 soldiers and sailors received the medal during the war. There were 433 awarded during WWII.

the head or neck.

- The U.S. Army did not start issuing dog tags until 1906.
- In Vietnam, one in 400 of the wounded died of their injuries. In the Korean War, one in 50 wounded American soldiers died. In the Civil War, one in seven wounded Federals died and one in five wounded Confederates died—sometimes within minutes, sometimes after months of suffering.
- Amy Clarke wanted to fight near her husband during the Civil War and so disguised herself as "Richard Anderson" to join a Tennessee unit of the Confederacy. Although her husband died at Shiloh, she continued to fight until she was wounded and captured by Union soldiers. When they discovered she was a woman, she was sent back to the Con-



AMPUTATION BOX: The most common operation performed on soldiers during the Civil War was amputation. The best surgeon could have a limb severed and discarded within five minutes. Civil War doctors were nicknamed “sawbones.” There were 60,000 partial or complete amputations during the war. Surgeons never washed their hands after an operation, because all blood was assumed to be the same, nor did he wash his instruments.

- federate - in a dress.
- The Civil War was the first time a submarine ever sank an enemy ship when the submarine the Hunley sank the USS Housatonic. However, the Hunley was damaged in the attack, wandered seaward, and sank drowning all eight hands. Only five of Housatonic’s 155 died. The Hunley was finally recovered 136 years later.
- In 2008, the body of a Union soldier was discovered in Antietam. His remains were laid to rest in the regimental home of New York State.
- Nearly 1/3 of Union Army soldiers were immigrants (7.5% were Irish; 10% were German). Other immigrant soldiers were French, Italian, Polish, English, and Scottish. Approximately one in 10 were African American.
- African American soldiers were allowed to join the Union Army in 1863, but they were paid lower wages than white soldiers and were charged rent for their clothing. Some black Union soldiers refused their salary for 18 months as protest. In September 1864, they finally received equal pay.
- During the war, the Union confiscated Robert E. Lee’s estate and turned it into a cemetery so that he would be reminded of the carnage he caused. It later became Arlington National Cemetery.
- During the Civil War, generals usually led their soldiers into battle, a rare occurrence in modern wars. Because of this, generals were 50% more likely to die in combat than privates were.
- Although both the North and South did not allow women in the army, it is estimated that between 250 and 400 women fought disguised as men.
- To prevent escape at Camp Douglas in Chicago, prisoners were not allowed to wear clothes. Even blankets were taken away. Many Confederates froze to death.
- Edward Everett, the main speaker at the Gettysburg dedication, spoke for 2 hours. President Abraham Lincoln, who was invited almost as an afterthought, spoke for two minutes. His speech went down in history.
- The North expected to win because (a) they had more men to fight (22 million people in the North versus seven million white people in the South), (b) there were more factories in the North to make guns and bullets, and (c) the North had more railroads for

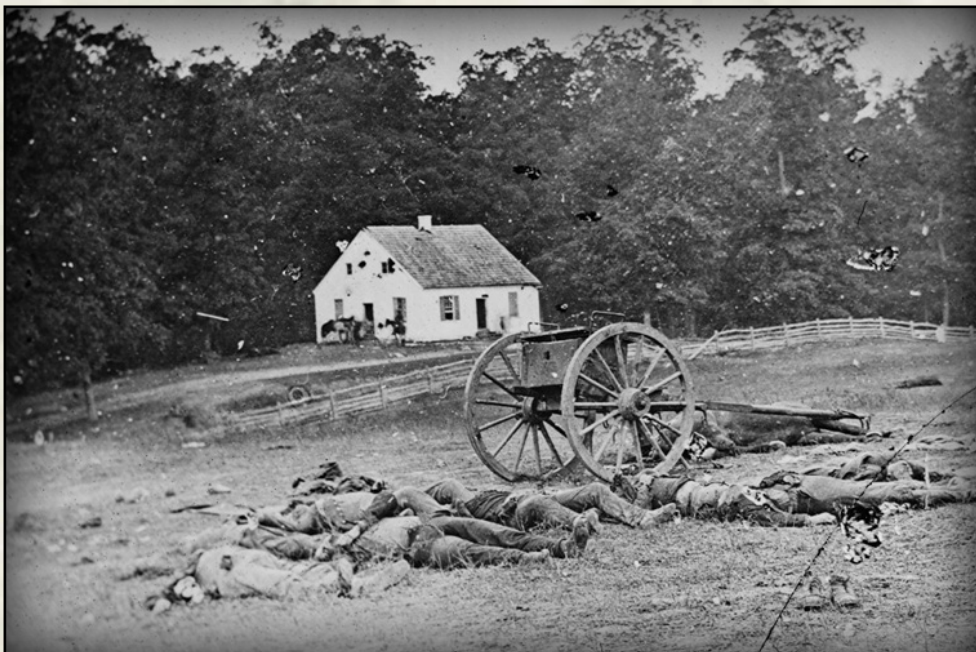
transporting guns and supplies.

- The South expected to win because (a) Northerners did not know their way around the South, where most of the fighting would take place, (b) Southern farmers were already skilled marksmen and riding horses, and (c) they were fighting to save a way of life.
- Confederate General Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson got his nickname during the first Battle of Bull Run. During battle, his men noted he stood “like a stone wall.” He was later accidentally shot and killed by his own men.
- At Gettysburg, the First Minnesota captured the battle flag of the Twenty-eighth Virginia. In 2001, the state of Virginia requested that Minnesota return it. As of 2017, Minnesota still possessed the banner.
- The Union uniform was blue and the Confederate uniform was gray. But because clothes were scarce during the war, it was common for soldiers to wear “enemy” colors and mistakenly be fired upon by their own men.
- The first battle between ironclads occurred during the Civil War in March 1862, between the Confederate ship Merrimack and the Union Monitor. No winner was declared.
- Only two people were convicted of war crimes in the Civil War. The first was Confederate Capt. Henry Wirz. He was tried and executed after the war for murder and conspiracy associated with his command at Andersonville,



ONE AND ONLY: Dr. Mary Edwards Walker was not only the first woman surgeon in U.S. Military history, but she was also the only woman in the Civil War to be awarded the Medal of Honor, the highest honour given to a citizen of the U.S. She is the only female recipient of the award to date.

- an infamous prison camp. The second was Confederate guerilla Champ Ferguson.
- The Industrial Revolution facilitated the mass production of weaponry, but the medical revolution and its use of antiseptics was still years away. Additionally, while rifled weapons and mini bullets increased the firing range threefold, soldiers still used traditional military methods, which depended on massed infantry at close range. All of this led to high mortality rates and excessively bloody battles. The Civil War became dubbed as the “first modern war.”
- Of the nearly 200,000 African Americans who fought for the North, more than 100,000 were runaway slaves. The number of African Americans who enlisted in the Union Army was larger than the number of soldiers in the entire Confederate Army in the final months of the war. Twenty-five African American soldiers were awarded the



THE MEDIA GETS INVOLVED: The Civil War was the first war to be immediately reported in the press. The first 'war' photographs were taken at the Battle of Antietam.

- Congressional Medal of Honor. Approximately 35,000 of the nearly 200,000 died during the war.
- An Iowa regiment had a rule that any man who uttered an oath should read a chapter in the Bible. Several of them got nearly through the Old Testament.
- During the Battle of Antietam, Clara Barton tended the wounded so close to the fighting that a bullet went through her sleeve and killed a man she was treating.
- Not fond of ceremonies or military music, Ulysses S. Grant said he could only recognize two tunes. "One was Yankee Doodle, the other one wasn't."
- Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., future chief Justice, was wounded three times during the Civil War - in the chest at Ball's Bluff, in the back at Antietam and in the heel at Chancellorsville
- Confederate Private Henry Stanley fought for the Sixth Arkansas, and was captured at Shiloh, but survived to go to Africa to find Dr. Livingston and utter the famous words "Doctor Livingstone I presume."
- On July 4, 1863, after 48 days of siege, Confederate General John C. Pemberton surrendered the city of Vicksburg, Mississippi to Union General, Ulysses S. Grant. For the next 81 years, the city Vicksburg, Mississippi did not celebrate the Fourth of July.
- On both sides of the conflict, potential recruits were offered monetary rewards, or "bounties," for enlisting, as much as \$677 in New York. "Bounty jumping" soon became so popular, that hundreds of men signed up, and then deserted, to enlist again elsewhere.
- For those who were drafted, the law allowed them to pay a substitute to go in their place. Another type of "bounty jumper" was born when men would hire out to more than one draftee and then make

a hasty exit once they were paid. The record for bounty jumping was held by John O'Connor, who admitted to hiring himself out 32 times before being caught. He received a 4 year prison term.

- In the battle of Gettysburg, 1,100 ambulances were in use. The medical director of the Union army boasted that all the wounded were picked up from the field within 12 hours after the battle was over. This was a far cry from the second battle of Bull Run, when many of the wounded were left on the field in the rain, heat, and sun for three or four days.
- On the night before the Battle of Gettysburg, Confederate commander Robert E. Lee had a heart attack. This has been cited as one of the reasons why he made some critical mistakes, such as the costly and notoriously foolhardy Pickett's Charge.
- Senator John J. Crittendon of



THAT'S NOT ME: General Ulysses Simpson Grant was actually named Hiram Ulysses Grant. His name was incorrectly recorded on his West Point application.



TAKING A CHANCE AT CHANCELLORSVILLE: During the Battle of Chancellorsville, at least one Union soldier discovered he was the victim of corrupt government contractors when he found that his rifle cartridges were filled with dirt rather than gunpowder.

- Kentucky had two sons who became major generals during the Civil War: one for the North, one for the South.
- One of the unlikely heroes of the Battle of Gettysburg was General George Custer. A few miles from the main battle the Southern cavalry under General J.E.B Stuart was attempting to ride around the rear of the Northern position, where they could have caused chaos on the North's supply lines. They were stopped by Custer who defeated a much larger force.
- The Confederate cruiser Shenandoah sailed completely around the world, raiding Union whalers and commerce vessels. The ship and its crew surrendered to English authorities in Liverpool more than six months after Lee's surrender at Appomattox.
- The Confederate forces lost 63 Brigadier Generals, seven Major Generals, and three Lieutenant Generals during the war.
- More than 3,000 horses were killed at Gettysburg
- Thomas Stewart, aged 92 years, of East Newtown, Ohio, was a private in the 101st Ohio regiment, and took part in the battle of Perryville, where he was complimented for his bravery and soldierly bearing.
- At the Battle of Gettysburg

the commander of the Union Army was brand new. General George Meade had been appointed only three days before the battle started.

- Confederate General Martin Green's last words were "A bullet has not yet been molded that will kill me." He said this in response to a warning to keep his head down while inspecting the defenses at Vicksburg. Moments later he was shot in the head and killed by a Union sharpshooter.
- The Battle of Gettysburg was about shoes. Many of the Confederate soldiers were barefoot because all of the shoe factories were in the north. A contingent went to Gettysburg because there was a shoe factory there. They wanted to capture it, but when they arrived they found thousands of Union soldiers already in Gettysburg.
- The rebel yell was a battle cry used by Confederate soldiers during the American Civil War. Confederate soldiers used the yell during charges to intimidate the enemy and boost their own morale. Watch rare footage, taken in 1935, of Confederate veterans recreating the rebel yell by clicking [here](#).
- On May 13, 1865, a month after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Private John J. Williams of the 34th Indiana became the last man killed in the Civil War, in a battle at Palmito Ranch, Texas. The final skirmish was a Confederate victory.

Watch a documentary on Guns of the Civil War - [click here](#).

The Story of Moth O

Early this year the Memorable Order of Tin Hats celebrated its 90th anniversary. This is the story of the man who began the Order.

Charles Alfred Evenden was a soldier, cartoonist, and author. Yet he will be best remembered as the founder of the Memorable Order of Tin Hats, the Moths.

Charles Evenden was born to John Charles Evenden of Kent and his wife Elizabeth Gregory in London on October 1, 1894. He was the eldest of 13 children.

He was educated at Haggerston Road School in the London Borough of Hackney where, even at an early age, he showed great promise. At the age of twelve he was top of the school and remained there for two years.

His academic achievements earned him two scholarships to the prestigious Charterhouse School. His parents, however, could not afford to send him to Charterhouse and he was forced to leave school and enter the workforce. His parents found him a job in a factory where he earned a mere half-a-crown (about 30 cents) a week. To supplement his income he started selling newspapers.

One of the things that Charles really enjoyed was the newspaper cartoons and he began to study them. He began attending drawing classes and on one occasion he sent a cartoon to the Daily Express. They complimented him on his cartoon and the psychological effect of this act was to influence his whole life.

At the outbreak of World War I he joined the Australian Army and was posted to Egypt. As a member of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps he took part in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign - a campaign that would see more than 130,000 men die and over 261,000 being wounded.

During this campaign he was badly shell-shocked and evacuated to Malta. From there he was sent back to England where he was hospitalised. At the end of the war he returned to a farming life in Australia.

His farming efforts proved to be financially unsuccessful. He thus took up newspaper work in Melbourne. After a brief period, he decided to try newspaper life in South Africa. In 1923 he arrived in Durban where he joined the staff of The Natal Mercury as its cartoonist under the nom-de-plume of EVO. He remained with this paper from 1924 until 1953.

With the startling simplicity of his ideas he soon made a name for himself. To emphasise his attitude towards politicians and bureaucrats he created two characters 'Dr Mug' and 'Mr Wump'. His brand of Cockney humour had a special appeal for the newspaper's readers.

According to the Dictionary of South African Biography, one night in 1927 after he and the editor of The Natal Mercury, RJ Kingston Russell, had seen a war film, Charles was



Charles Alfred Evenden - Moth O
1894 - 1961

persuaded to draw a cartoon on 'remembrance'.

According to the Dictionary, "The cartoon showed a tin helmet surmounted by a burning candle. Around the flames of the candle were six words - True Comradeship - Mutual Help - Sound Memory".

However, the official MOTH website carries a cartoon captioned Forgetfulness and this led to the founding of the Order.

This is confirmed by the Eastern Province Herald which describes the cartoon as follows: "a bullet- and shrapnel-riddled Allied helmet awash in the ocean. In the background a steamship passes over the horizon, leaving the forgotten, ghostly form of a veteran forlornly wading through the water."

The concepts of True Comradeship, Mutual Help and

Sound Memory were to become the inspiration of a remarkable organisation of ex-front line soldiers, of all ranks, known as the Memorable Order of Tin Hats (MOTH).

Charles, as the founder of the movement and its guiding inspiration was given the title of 'Moth O' - a position he held until his death. He was also known as Moth EVO.

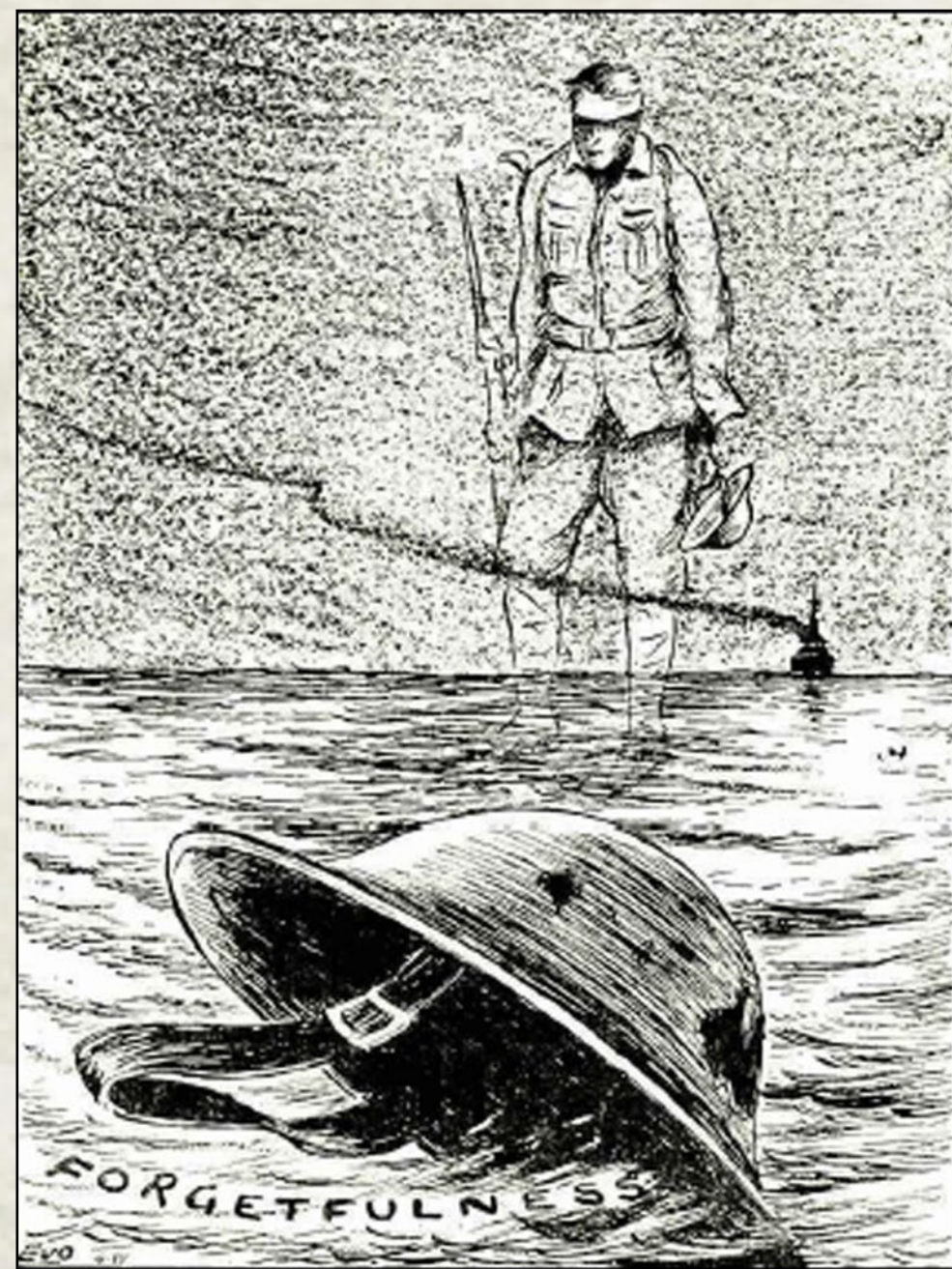
The membership of the MOTH movement, under EVO's vigorous direction and leadership, grew into thousands.

Men and women of two world wars, of the Second Anglo Boer War (1899-1902) and even those of former enemy forces streamed into its ranks. All who were prepared to keep alive the memories of comradeship and self-sacrifice - the finer virtues that war brings forth - were welcomed and made at home in shell holes with colourful and meaningful names of war-time memories and occasions.

The shellholes spread to the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and to Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Membership was extended to those who had participated in the South African Border War.

The MOTH national headquarters is situated in Warriors Gate, Durban, which is modelled on a Norman design from a photograph given to EVO by Admiral Evans-of-the-Broke. In 1948 EVO opened Mount Memory - a monument to the missing and dead of the Second World War, in the foothills of the Drakensberg mountains.

He married Reenie Carlos and had a son, Barrie, and a



INSPIRATION: The cartoon that was to become the inspiration behind the formation of the Memorable Order of Tin Hats.

daughter. Barrie was posted as missing in action when his ship was torpedoed by a U-boat in the Mediterranean Sea.

He wrote the story of how the MOTH organisation was created in his book *Old soldiers never die* (Durban, 1952). He was also the author of *Like a little candle* (Durban, 1959).

In 1955 he was received by Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, at Clarence House. On 11 November 1955 the freedom of the city of Durban was conferred on him, at a parade

of 14,000 Moths, by the then Mayor, Councillor Vernon Esery.

Charles Alfred Evenden, Moth O, answered the Sunset Call in Entabeni Hospital in Durban on April 1, 1961. He was 66 years old. EVO was cremated, and his ashes were scattered over the Durban bay.

For more information about the Moths you can visit their official website at www.moth.org.za or by clicking [here](#).

Bet you never knew that

History records, recalls and retells events from the past. But some people have a pretty fuzzy recollection when it comes to history.

It was George Santayana that said, "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

I recently came across a book that contained answers to exam questions as given by American college and university students. Some of them make our local students look like geniuses. And let's face it, that takes some doing to say the very least.

Some of these answers defy belief, but at least they must have given those poor souls that had to grade the papers a bit of amusement. And I somehow suspect that many of these students would have been doomed to repeat history the next year. Take a look at some of the answers given.

World War II

"The Germans took the by-pass around France's Marginal Line. This was known as the 'Blintz Krieg'. The French huddled up and threw sneers at the Germans."

Japan boomed Pearl Harbour; the main U.S. base in Southern California. American sailors watched in shock as the sky filled with Japanese zebras."

There you have it; World War II summed up in a few sentences. But, if I may, I would like to point out a few minor errors.

The French defensive line was known as the Maginot Line. The Germans did by-pass it by attacking through Belgium

and going around the Maginot Line. The Germans used a tactic known as Blitzkrieg (Lightning War).

I also believe that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour, not boomed it. And while the US Navy does have a base in San Diego, Southern California Pearl Harbour, however, is 6,521 km away on the island of Oahu, Hawaii.

And lastly, the sky was probably filled with zeros and not zebras. The Mitsubishi A6M Zero was a long-range fighter aircraft used by Japan.

"Germany invaded Poland, France invaded Belgium, and Russia invaded everybody."

Those sneaky Russians, invading everybody like that.

"Hilter's attack on Russia was secretly called 'Operation Barbarella'."

The German invaders were popular for a while in Russia, but their habit of slaughtering innocent civilians tended to give them an image problem."

The Russians defended Stalingrad feercely as the city was named after Lenin."

The German invasion of Russia was code-named Operation Barbarossa.

Naturally when you go around slaughtering innocent civilians it is going to give you an image problem.

Stalingrad was, of course, named after Joseph Stalin him-

self. You'll probably find that Leningrad was named after Lenin.

"Hitler, who had become depressed for some reason, crawled under Berlin."

Here he had his wife Evita put to sleep, and then shot himself in the bonker."

Hitler had become depressed. Who would have imagined it. By April 1945 the war was almost over and Hitler had lost. By January 1945 Hitler had retreated to the Führerbunker under the Reich Chancellery.

On the evening of April 30, 1945 Hitler committed suicide. His wife committed suicide a few minutes before him. Her name was Eva Braun and Hitler had only married her the day before.

So Hitler actually shot himself in the bunker, and not the bonker.

"Unfortunately, the Second World War was not concluded until 1957."

It actually ended with the surrender of Japan on September 2, 1945.

"War screeched to an end when a nukuleer explosion was dropped on Heroshima."

First of all, you can't drop an explosion. You can, however, drop a bomb that will cause an explosion.

This is what happened on August 6, 1945 when the Ameri-



TORA, TORA, TORA: Japanese Zebras boom Pearl Harbour.

cans dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The bomb caused an atomic explosion, not a nuclear one.

The Modern Era

"Wars fought in the 1950's include the Crimean War, Vietnam, and the Six-Minute War."

John F. Kennedy worked closely with the Russians to solve the Canadian Missile Crisis."

Wrong on all accounts. The Crimean War did take place during the 50s, but it was the 1850s (October 1853 – February 1856).

The Vietnam War lasted between 1955 and 1975, but it was only in the 1960s that America become heavily involved.

The 1967 Six-Day War between Israel and the Arab nations was named that because the war only lasted six days - not six minutes.

John F. Kennedy did not work closely with the Russians. In fact he threatened them. The Russians had set up nuclear mis-

sile bases on the island of Cuba. Kennedy felt that these were a direct threat to America and he told the Russians to take them down and remove the missiles back to Russia. Otherwise he would consider military action.

The US Navy and Coast Guard set up a blockade around Cuba. It was perhaps the closest that the world ever came to a nuclear war.

Eventually the Russians backed down. This incident became known as the 'Cuban Missile Crisis'.

The Cold War

Martin Luther Junior's famous "If I had a hammer" speech."

I know that Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream. I had no idea he had a hammer as well.

If I recall *If I Had A Hammer* was a hit song for Pete Seeger back in 1956. Peter, Paul and Mary also had a hit with the song in 1962, as did Trini Lopez in 1963.

"World War II became the

Cold War, because Benjamin Franklin Roosevelt did not trust Lenin and Stalin. An ironed curtain fell across the haunches of Europe."

I think that when the ironed curtain fell it must have fallen onto this guy's head.

Benjamin Franklin, one of America's founding fathers, died on April 17, 1790. A bit before World War II.

At least Franklin Delano Roosevelt was around for most of World War II. But he died on April 12, 1945, before World War II ended.

And Vladimir Lenin was another not around for the Cold War. He died on January 21, 1942.

"The Berlin Wall was built somewhere in Europe. President Kennedy soothed the masses, however, with his story about 'Ich Ben the Berliner.'"

The Berlin Wall was built somewhere in Europe - Berlin may have been a clue.

And what Kennedy actually said back in 1963 was "Ich bin ein Berliner." Which roughly translates as "I am a citizen of Berlin."

"Actually, the fall of empires has been a good thing, because it gives more people a chance to exploit their own people without outside interference."

Actually, I would have probably given this student 100% for this answer.

So there you have it. History rewritten by some of the greatest college and university minds the United States has to offer.

God bless America.

Conscription

Yes, no or maybe?

It's one thing to volunteer as a soldier. But what about those that are conscripted and have no choice in the matter. We take a closer look at compulsory military service.



Just about every country in the world has an army of some sort. Even the Vatican (and yes, the Vatican is an actual country) has its own army. With just 110 men the Swiss Guard, the Vatican's army, is the smallest in the world.

Most countries around the world will have a permanent defence force that will normally have an army and often a navy and air force as well. The people who serve in these armed forces usually do so as a full-time career.

The vast majority of countries with a permanent armed force will also have a sizeable reserve force. The people that serve in the reserve force are volunteers and serve for a certain period of time each year.

Yet not everyone that serves in the military or fights in a war is there because they want to be. As far back as history can recall people have been forced to take up arms against their will. To this day rebel and guerilla armies will abduct people and force them to join their ranks. It's a case of "either you fight for us, or you are against us and we will kill you." Not much of a choice, is it.

Even the British Royal Navy came up with a unique method to recruit sailors. Working and living conditions for the average sailor in the Royal Navy in the 18th century were harsh by modern standards and generally much worse than conditions on British merchant ships; their pay was around half that paid by merchantmen and was lower than that paid to a farm labourer.

To recruit sailors to serve on Royal



YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW: A new intake of national servicemen report for their call up.

Navy warships, they came up with a system known as 'impressment'. Groups of Royal Navy recruiters, known as 'press gangs', would usually wait outside a pub at night. If some drunk walked out he would be hit over the head with a baton and knocked unconscious.

He would later wake up to find himself aboard a Royal Navy ship and be informed that he was now a serving member of the Royal Navy. And he had no choice in the matter. If he tried to leave or run away he would be tracked down, charged with desertion, and could be sentenced to death.

Many countries in the past used a system of conscription or compulsory military service. This in effect meant that the governments of those countries past legislation that made military service a law.

To this day there are numerous countries where conscription is still enforced. In Africa countries such as Angola, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Somalia and Sudan all have compulsory military service.

In Israel, for example, men and women over the age of 18 are liable for conscription. The men do three years and the women two.

South Africa is no stranger to conscription. From 1968 to 1993 South Africa had a system of compulsory military service that was known as 'national service'.

During this period the policy of apartheid was still the law of the country and the army, navy and air force fell under the command of the South African Defence Force (SADF).

National service began in 1968 when it was decided that

all white South African males would be required to do a period of compulsory military service. Note carefully the use of the word compulsory. It was not a request, it was an instruction and it was backed up by an act of parliament - Defence Act (this would later include the Defence Act Amendment, 1982).

Every white male who was a South Africa citizen or had permanent residence was required to register with the South African Defence Force in the year that he turned 16. Once you had completed your schooling or decided to leave school, the South African Defence Force required your services.

At first national service was for a period of nine months and then 12 months. Then, in 1978, it was increased to 24 months. Once this initial period of service was over they were then placed into the citizen force where they would have to serve between 30 and 90 days a year for the next 12 years.

You could, of course, refuse to do national service. It did mean that you would be arrested, charged, and sent to prison for three years. And you would not serve your time in a civilian prison. You would serve it in a military prison known as 'detention barracks'.

While there were indeed some who did opt to spend time in prison rather than serve in a military that they believed was fighting to maintain the policy of apartheid, the vast majority went ahead and reported for their national service.

There were two intakes or call ups per year. The larger

of the two was in January and another in July. You would receive a letter with your call up papers, or instructions to report for national service.

National servicemen could be called up to serve in either the army, navy or air force. Later on a forth arm, the South African Medical Services (SAMS) was formed and they would also receive an allocation of the call up.

While national servicemen did get to serve in the navy, air force and medical services it was the army that claimed most of them. The Infantry Corps was by far the largest corps in the army. The majority of national servicemen were absorbed by the Infantry Corps where they received intensive training in the use of military weapons, fieldcraft and counter-insurgency operations.

Eight infantry battalions were situated throughout South Africa at Bloemfontein, Walvis Bay, Potchefstroom, Middelburg, Ladysmith, Grahamstown, Upington and Phalaborwa. The infantry also had their own school at Oudtshoorn in the Western Cape.

You had absolutely no choice in where you were called up. You could be called up to do your training at a unit that was hundreds, sometimes thousands of kilometres from where you lived.

Once you arrived for your national service the first nine weeks were taken up by basic training. This began the process of taking what were essentially school boys and turning them into soldiers. For many of the youngsters it came as a harsh



A BURDEN TO BEAR: National servicemen on a route march during basic training.

realisation that their lives were about to be changed.

"The army didn't care who you were or where you came from," says Kyle who was 18 when he did his basic training with the infantry. "It didn't make any difference if you had a university degree or a standard six education. They didn't care if you came from a wealthy family or from the slums. As far as they were concerned you were the lowest form of life. It was their mission during basic to break everyone down to the same level and then build them up again."

Many that did national service say that the military were very good at the breaking down part, but not always as good at building them up again.

There was a very strict rank structure in the military that was made up of officers, warrant officers (sergeant majors), non-commissioned officers (NCO) and other ranks.

National servicemen would begin with the lowest possible rank. If, for instance, they were in the infantry they would hold

the rank of 'rifleman'.

A national serviceman could go on to become an NCO but could only go as high as the rank of corporal. If they successfully completed an officers course they could be promoted to the rank of 2nd lieutenant. If, however, they had a university degree they could become a lieutenant.

An infantry battalion, for instance, was divided up into a number of companies. Each company would have a company commander (usually a captain) and a company sergeant major.

Companies were further divided into platoons which were in turn divided into squads. As a national serviceman you would find yourself in a squad with a corporal in charge of you.

During basic training it was the corporals (usually national servicemen themselves) that carried out the majority of the training. And it was frightening just how much power a corporal wielded.

It is an old adage that power corrupts and absolute power



DOUBLE TIME A large portion of basic training would be spent on the parade ground. Here the conscripts were taught how to drill and react to commands. Here a group is shown moving at double time.

corrupts absolutely. This was unfortunately the case with many of the corporals that were involved in training conscripts. Some of them were particularly brutal in their methods and it is a sad fact that more than one recruit died during basic training as a direct result of physical abuse from the instructors.

While the instructors were not officially permitted to physically or mentally abuse the troops, those in authority often looked the other way. This was particularly the case during the '70s and early '80s.

"Our corporal was a little weed of a guy," says Craig who did national service in 1975. "I could have given him one slap and knocked his head off. But we were all terrified of him. If he said 'jump' you didn't ask why, you didn't argue, you just asked how high."

And he does have a point. As a national serviceman you

were part of the huge military machine and if you didn't go along with the flow the machine would eat you up and spit you out in pieces.

The military even had its own laws and regulations laid out in the Military Discipline Code (MDC). If you violated one of these regulations you could be formally charged and put on trial.

Minor offences would be handled with a process known as a 'Summary Trial'. They could try you and, if found guilty, could sentence you up to 120 days in detention barracks. And something you have to realise is that time spent in detention did not count. If you spent 90 days in detention then you had to do an extra 90 days of your national service.

For serious offences you could be court martialled. A court martial had the power to sentence you to death.

Taking the above into account, it's little wonder that most national servicemen did what they were told and tried to avoid trouble as much as possible.

During basic training the day would normally begin at 6.00 am with PT. Then, after breakfast, the rest of the morning would be spent on the parade ground learning to march. Afternoons would be spent doing field craft, first-aid training, map reading, and other military skills. Naturally the national servicemen would also spent time at the shooting range.

Most evening were spent preparing for the next morning's dreaded inspection. Your corporal would normally inspect your bungalow every morning from Monday to Thursday. Friday mornings, however, was the big inspection. This would be carried out by your company commander, company sergeant major, and your corporal.

After six weeks of basic training, national servicemen were supposed to be given leave from Friday evening to Sunday evening, known as a pass, every second weekend. This was not always the case and sometimes a national serviceman could go for months without every getting the opportunity to go home.

The Friday morning inspections were very strict and, if you your squad was supposed to get a pass that afternoon, it could be cancelled if you failed to pass the inspection. If one person failed they could cancel the pass for everyone in the squad.

And an inspection involved more than just sweeping the

floor and making your bed. The floors had to be polished so that they shone. Beds had to be made up in a special way so that the edges had creases. All clothes had to be washed and perfectly ironed. Boots and shoes had to be polished. Every bit of equipment had to be cleaned. It was common for national servicemen to work right through the night to prepare for a Friday morning inspection.

“I remember one Friday morning inspection,” says Craig. “We were supposed to be on pass that weekend. Our company commander came around for inspection and he noticed a fly sitting on one of the window panes. He turned to our corporal and asked him why we were keeping pets in the bungalow. And so our pass was cancelled.”

After basic training national servicemen would go on to do individual and advanced training. After this they were posted out to various units where they carried out a multitude of functions.

Many, however, would be sent to the then South West Africa - to what became known as the ‘Border War’. Some of them would go on to see combat and, sadly, some of them would die.

It is estimated that more than 2,000 South African troops were killed during the Border War. And this does not take into account the many more that died in training accidents or road accidents during their national service.

National service was done away with in 1993, a year before South Africa’s first democratic elections. From 1968 to



MORNING INSPECTION: Most national servicemen hated morning inspections with a passion.

1993 over 600,000 white South African males did national service.

There has been no conscription in South Africa for the past 24 years. The old SADF is a thing of the past and now the SANDF (South African National Defence Force) is responsible for the military security of the country. It is a military force that is made up of permanent staff and reserve force volunteers.

Yet some people would like to see conscription introduced once again. But this time it would not be only for whites, but for everyone that leaves school. They suggest that everyone who leaves school should spend at least six months in the military.

They say it would help with unemployment, give the youth discipline and that they could be well utilised during their period of conscription. Engineers could build roads and provide water for rural areas, infantry could be used to patrol game

reserves and stop rhino poaching. They could also assist the police with crime prevention.

They also reason that by giving the youth training and skills during their conscription period, it would make them far more employable once they had completed their service. All of this sounds very positive. But you have to look at the negative aspects as well.

First of all, how keen would the youth be to do some form of national service. What would you do with those that refused? Throw them into prisons that are already overcrowded?

Then you have to consider the financial implications. It’s not cheap to run a defence force. All of the conscripts would have to be fed, housed, clothed and provided with medical treatment if necessary. Naturally you would also have to pay them something. Where would this money come from?

The current defence budget would have to be drastically increased. Money would have to



ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER PATROL: South African troops, most of the conscripts, carry out a patrol in Owamboland in the then South West Africa. Patrols could last up to eight days.

be diverted from other departments to pay for it.

Something else that needs to be taken into consideration is where would you train them. Many of the old military bases

and units were closed down. So where exactly would the conscripts be housed and where would they be given training.

Personally I don’t believe we will ever see conscription in

South Africa again. It would be an interesting experiment to see how the youth of today would handle something like that.

Can you imagine them spending nine weeks of basic training with no cellphones, no Facebook, no Twitter, no e-mails, no text messages, and no Internet.

As a last thought I asked Craig, who I had interviewed for this article, if he would like to see his own son doing national service.

“I don’t really know,” Craig said. “Maybe if it was for six months. And as long as if he didn’t have to go and fight in a war. I think it would probably do him some good. It would at least teach him a bit of respect and discipline and maybe how to make his own damn bed.”

Service Rendered

National Service in the
South African Defence Force
1968 - 1992



A collection of stories and
memories from those that served.

Matt Tennyson

Service Rendered

The story of conscription in South Africa. Between 1968 and 1992 white South African males were conscripted into the South African Defence Force for compulsory national service.

After completing basic training they were then trained in specific fields before being posted out to serve in units around South Africa.

Many would be sent as support or combat troops to what was then known as South West Africa to fight in what has now become known as the ‘Border War’.

This e-book tells the story of what it was like to be a national serviceman. It takes readers through basic and individual training, postings to various units, and to the border war.

With 300 pages and more than 200 photographs, this e-book is a must for anyone that served.

If you would like a copy of *Service Rendered* send an e-mail to editor@hipe.co.za and use Service Rendered in the subject line and we will e-mail you a copy.

Fighters of World War II

Military aircraft had come a long way since the canvas and wood planes of World War I.

Speed, operational range and fire power had developed in leaps and bounds.

For example the fastest planes of World War I were the Spad S.XIII and SE5a. Both had a top speed of 222 kp/h.

Compare this to the American

P-51 Mustang with a top speed of 708 km/h.

Before the end of the war the first jet-powered fighter, the German Messerschmitt Me 262, was introduced into combat.

The Me 262 had a top speed of 900 km/h. Although it only became operational late in the war, Me 262 pilots claimed to have shot down a total of 542

Allied aircraft.

The primary role of the fighter was air-to-air combat against other aircraft. Its purpose was to establish air superiority over a battlefield, which is considered essential for victory in conventional warfare.

Fighters were also used to escort bombers and provide cover against enemy fighters.



British Fighter Aircraft



Hawker Hurricane

Although overshadowed by the Supermarine Spitfire, the Hurricane became renowned during the Battle of Britain, accounting for 60 percent of the RAF air victories in the battle, and served in all the major theatres of the Second World War.

Hurricane Mk.IIC

Crew: 1
Length: 9.84 metres
Wingspan: 12.19 metres
Height: 4.0 metres
Loaded weight: 3,480 kg
Engine: 1 × Rolls-Royce Merlin XX liquid-cooled V-12

Performance

Maximum speed: 547 km/h
Range: 965 km
Service ceiling: 10,970 metres
Rate of climb: 14.1 metres per second

Armament

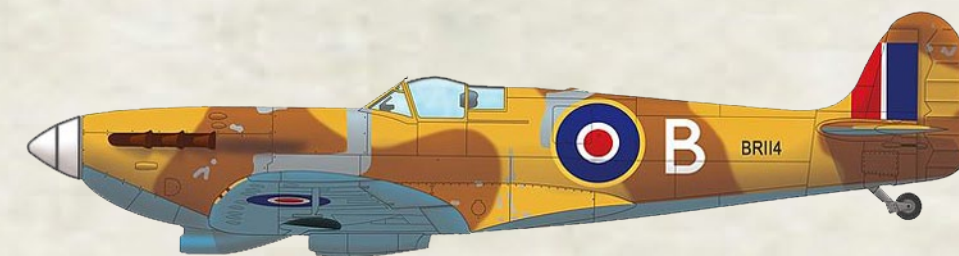
Guns: 4 x 20 mm Hispano Mk II cannon
Bombs: 2 x 110 km or 230 kg bombs.

Fact File

While the British were not the first to make use of heavier-than-air military aircraft, the RAF is the world's oldest independent air force: that is, the first air force to become independent of army or navy control. It was founded on 1 April 1918, by the amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). At that time it was the largest air force in the world.

After the Battle of Britain, the Spitfire superseded the Hurricane to become the backbone of RAF Fighter Command, and saw action in the European, Mediterranean, Pacific, and South-East Asian theatres. The Spitfire served in several roles, including interceptor, photo-reconnaissance, fighter-bomber and trainer.

Supermarine Spitfire



Spitfire Mk VB

Crew: 1
Length: 9.12 metres
Wingspan: 11.23 metres
Height: 3.86 metres
Loaded weight: 3,000 kg
Engine: 1 × Rolls-Royce Merlin 45 super-charged V12 engine

Performance

Maximum speed: 595 km/h
Range: 756 km
Service ceiling: 11,125 metres
Rate of climb: 13.2 metres per second

Armament

Guns: 8 x .303 Browning Mk II machine guns or 4 x 20 mm Hispano Mk II cannon

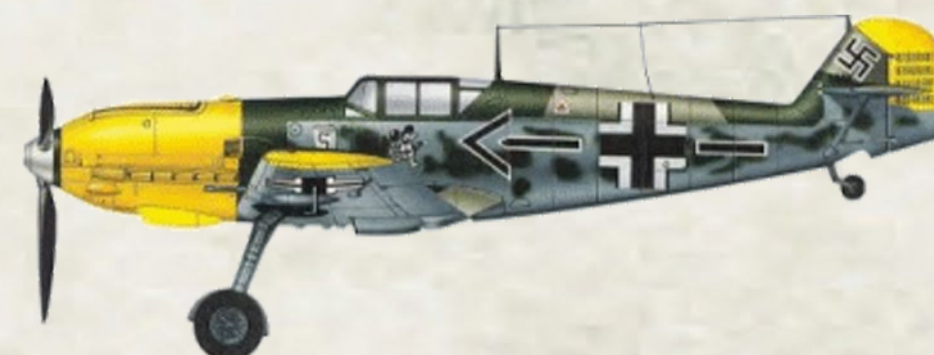
Fact File

Hermann Göring, head of the Luftwaffe, was a veteran WW I fighter pilot ace, he was a recipient of the coveted Pour le Mérite, also known as the "Blue Max". He was the last commander of *Jagdgeschwader 1*, the fighter wing once led by Manfred von Richthofen, the famous Red Baron.



German Fighter Aircraft

Messerschmitt Bf 109



Bf 109 G-6

Crew: 1
Length: 8.95 metres
Wingspan: 9.925 metres
Height: 2.60 metres
Loaded weight: 3,148 kg
Engine: 1 × Daimler-Benz DB 605A-1 liquid-cooled inverted V12

Performance

Maximum speed: 640 km/h
Range: 850 km
Service ceiling: 12,000 metres
Rate of climb: 17.0 metres per second

Armament

Guns: 2 × 13 mm synchronized MG 131 machine guns
1 × 20 mm MG 151/20 cannon

The Fw 190 proved superior in all but turn radius to the Royal Air Force's main front-line fighter, the Spitfire Mk. V, especially at low and medium altitudes. The 190 maintained superiority over Allied fighters until the introduction of the improved Spitfire Mk. IX

Focke-Wulff 190 Würger



Fw 190 A-8

Crew: 1
Length: 9.00 metres
Wingspan: 10.51 metres
Height: 3.95 metres
Loaded weight: 4,417 kg
Engine: 1 × BMW 801 D-2 radial engine, 1,250 kW

Range: 800 km
Service ceiling: 11,410 metres
Rate of climb: 15 metres per second

Armament

Guns: 2 × 13 mm synchronized MG 131 machine guns
4 × 20 mm MG 151/20 E cannon

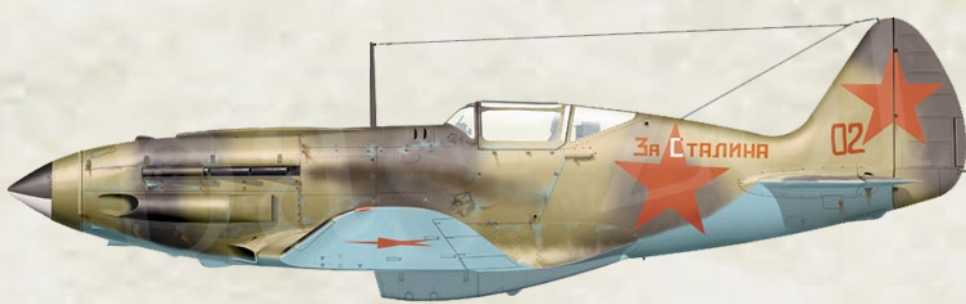
Performance

Maximum speed: 656 km/h



Russian Fighter Aircraft

Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-3



MiG-3

Crew: 1
Length: 8.25 metres
Wingspan: 10.20 metres
Height: 3.30 metres
Loaded weight: 3,355 kg
Engine: 1 × Mikulin AM-35A liquid-cooled V12 engine, 993 kW

Range: 820 km
Service ceiling: 12,000 metres
Rate of climb: 10,28 metres per second

Armament

Guns: 1 × 12.7 mm Berezin UB machine gun
2 × 7.62 mm ShKAS machine guns in the cowl
6 × RS-82 rockets
2 × 100 kg bombs

Performance

Maximum speed: 640 km/h

Yakovlev Yak-1



Yak-1

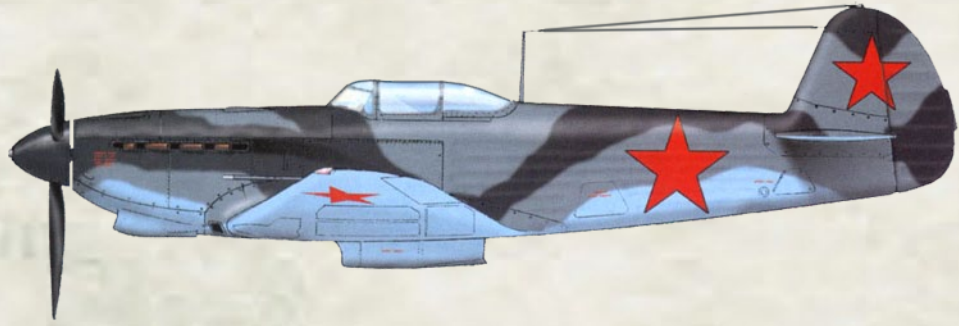
Crew: 1
Length: 8.5 metres
Wingspan: 10.0 metres
Height: 2.64 metres
Loaded weight: 2,883 kg
Engine: 1 × Klimov M-105PF V-12 liquid-cooled engine, 880 kW

Performance

Maximum speed: 592 km/h

The Yak-9 had a lowered rear fuselage decking and all-around vision canopy. Its lighter airframe gave the new fighter a flexibility that previous models had lacked. The Yak-9 was the most mass-produced Soviet fighter of all time.

Yakovlev Yak-9



Yak-1

Crew: 1
Length: 8.55 metres
Wingspan: 9.74 metres
Height: 3.00 metres
Loaded weight: 3,117 kg
Engine: 1 × Klimov M-105 PF V-12 liquid-cooled piston engine, 880 kW

Performance

Maximum speed: 597 km/h
Range: 1,360 km
Service ceiling: 9,100 metres
Rate of climb: 13.7 metres per second

Armament

Guns: 1 × 20 mm ShVAK cannon
1 × 12.7 mm UBS machine gun

The Yak-1 was manoeuvrable, reliable, fast and well armed. It was easy to maintain and formed an excellent basis for subsequent models. Designer Alexander Yakovlev was awarded the Order of Lenin - the highest decoration bestowed by the Soviet Union.

Range: 700 km
Service ceiling: 10,050 metres
Rate of climb: 15.4 metres per second

Armament

Guns: 1 × 20 mm (0.8 in) ShVAK cannon
1 × 12.7 mm (0.5 in) Berezin UBS machine gun

Fact File

The Russians destroyed over 500 German aircraft by ramming them in midair.
“It takes a brave man not to be a hero in the Red Army.” – Joseph Stalin.



American Fighter Aircraft

The Grumman F4F Wildcat was an American carrier-based fighter aircraft that began service with both the United States Navy and the British Royal Navy (as the Martlet) in 1940. With a top speed of 512 km/h, the Wildcat was outperformed by the faster 533 km/h, more maneuverable, and longer-ranged Mitsubishi A6M Zero.

Grumman F4F-3

Crew: 1
Length: 8.76 metres
Wingspan: 11.58 metres
Height: 3.60 metres
Loaded weight: 3,367 kg
Engine: 1 × Pratt & Whitney R-1830-76 double-row radial engine, 1,200 hp

Performance

Maximum speed: 531 km/h

Curtiss P-40 Warhawk



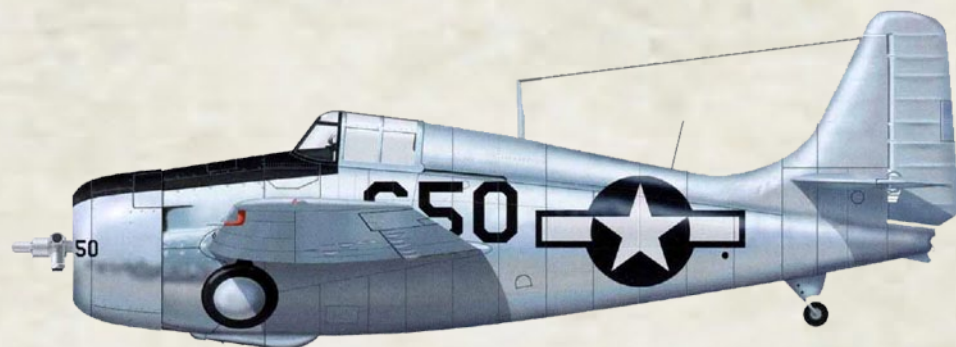
P-40E

Crew: 1
Length: 9.68 metres
Wingspan: 11.38 metres
Height: 3.76 metres
Loaded weight: 3,760 kg
Engine: 1 × Allison V-1710-39 liquid-cooled V12 engine, 1,150 hp

Performance

Maximum speed: 580 km/h
Range: 1,100 km

Gruman F4F Wildcat



Range: 1,360 km
Service ceiling: 12,000 metres
Rate of climb: 11.7 metres per second

Armament

Guns: 4 × 12.7 mm AN/M2 Browning machine guns
Bombs: 2 × 45 kg bombs and/or 2 × 220 litre drop tanks

The Curtiss P-40 Warhawk was both a fighter and a ground-attack aircraft. The P-40's lack of a two-speed supercharger made it inferior to Luftwaffe fighters in high-altitude combat and it was rarely used in operations in Northwest Europe. However, between 1941 and 1944, the P-40 played a critical role with Allied air forces in three major theaters: North Africa, the Southwest Pacific, and China.

Service ceiling: 8,800 metres
Rate of climb: 11 metres per second

Armament

Guns: 6 × 12.7 mm M2 Browning machine guns

Lockheed P-38 Lightning



Lightning P-38L

Crew: 1
Length: 11.53 metres
Wingspan: 15.85 metres
Height: 3.91 metres
Loaded weight: 7,940 kg
Engine: 2 × Allison V-1710-111/113 V-12 piston engine, 1,600 hp

Performance

Maximum speed: 667 km/h

The Republic P-47 Thunderbolt was effective as a short-to-medium range escort fighter in high-altitude air-to-air combat and ground attack in both the World War II European and Pacific theatres. With a weight of up to eight tonnes it was one of the heaviest fighters of the war.

P-47D-30 Thunderbolt

Crew: 1
Length: 11.00 metres
Wingspan: 12.42 metres
Height: 4.47 metres
Loaded weight: 5,774 kg
Engine: 1 × Pratt & Whitney R-2800-59B twin-row radial engine, 2,600 hp

Performance

Maximum speed: 697 km/h
Range: 2,900 km
Service ceiling: 13,100 metres
Rate of climb: 16.15 metres per second

With its distinctive twin booms and central nacelle containing the cockpit and armament the Lockheed P-38 Lightning was nicknamed *Gabelschwanz-Teufel* (fork-tailed devil) by the German Luftwaffe and *Ni hikōki, ippai-rotto* (two planes, one pilot) by the Japanese. The P-38 was unusually quiet for a fighter, with the exhaust muffled by the turbo-superchargers.

Range: 2,100 km
Service ceiling: 13,000 metres
Rate of climb: 24.1 metres per second

Armament

Guns: 1× Hispano M2(C) 20 mm cannon
4× M2 Browning machine gun 12.7 mm machine guns
4× M10 three-tube 112 mm rocket launchers

Republic P-47 Thunderbolt



Armament

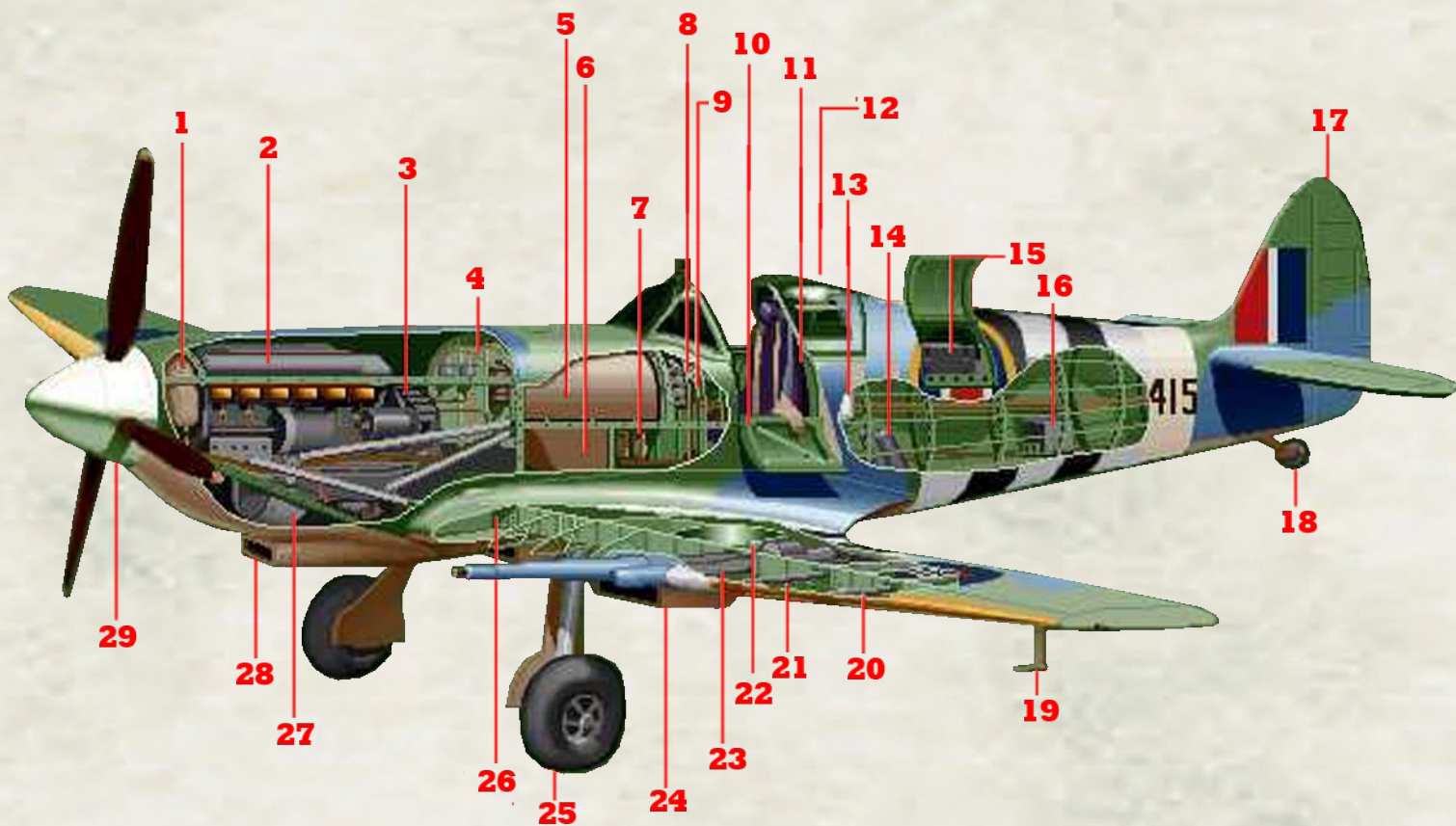
Guns: 8 × 12.7 mm M2 Browning machine guns
Up to 1,134 kg of bombs
10 × 127 mm unguided rockets

Fact File

American pilot Owen J. Baggett became legendary as the only person to shoot down a Japanese aircraft with a .45 calibre M1911 pistol.

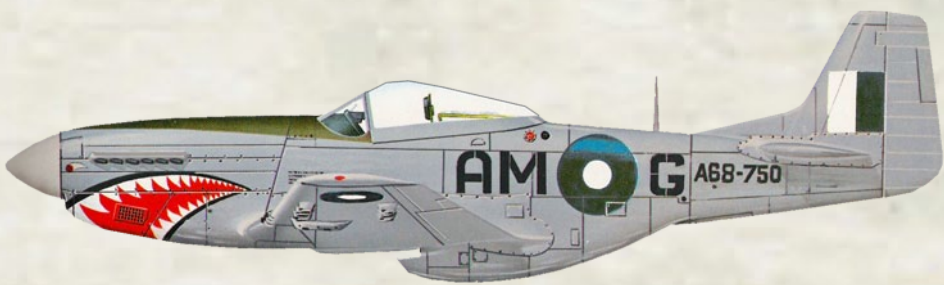
Baggett had bailed out and was parachuting when a Japanese aircraft headed straight at him. He fired three shots with his pistol and one of them hit the Japanese pilot in the head, killing him instantly.

Supermarine Spitfire



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Glycol Tank. | 15. Radio transceiver. |
| 2. Rolls Royce Merlin 66 V12 in-line liquid cooled engine. | 16. Battery. |
| 3. Two-stage compressor kicked in at 4,267 metres and at 6,096 metres. | 17. Fabric-covered rudder. |
| 4. Fire wall. | 18. Non-retractable tail wheel. |
| 5. Upper fuel tank - 181.7 litres. | 19. Pitot tube. |
| 6. Lower fuel tank - 140.06 litres. | 20. .303 Browning machine gun. |
| 7. Rudder pedals. | 21. .303 Browning machine gun. |
| 8. Instrument panel. | 22. Wheel well. |
| 9. Control column. | 23. 20 mm Hispano cannon. |
| 10. Pilot cockpit access door. | 24. Radiator air intake (one under each wing). |
| 11. Armoured plate behind pilot. | 25. Retractable undercarriage. |
| 12. Sliding canopy. | 26. Fuselage wing connector. |
| 13. Oxygen bottle. | 27. Oil tank - 28.3 litres. |
| 14. Parachute flare tubes. | 28. Carburetor air intake. |
| | 29. Rotol propeller and constant speed unit. |

North American Aviation P-51 Mustang



The P-51 Mustang was regarded by many as one of the best fighter aircraft of World War II. From late 1943, P-51Bs and Cs (supplemented by P-51Ds from mid-1944) were used by the USAAF's Eighth Air Force to escort bombers in raids over Germany.

P-51D Mustang

Crew: 1
Length: 9.83 metres
Wingspan: 11.28 metres
Height: 4.08 metres
Loaded weight: 4,175 kg
Engine: 1 × Packard V-1650-7 liquid-cooled V-12, with a 2 stage intercooled supercharger, 1,490 hp

Performance

Maximum speed: 708 km/h
Range: 2,755 km
Service ceiling: 12,800 metres
Rate of climb: 16.3 metres per second

Armament

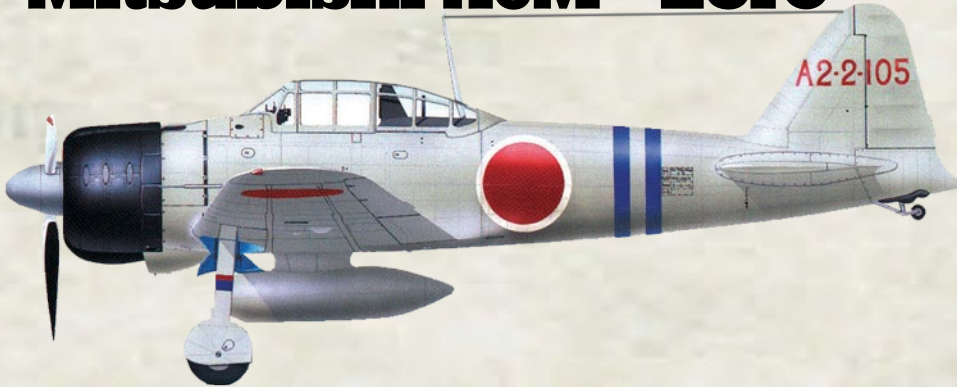
Guns: 6 × 12.7mm AN/M2 Browning machine guns



Japanese Fighter Aircraft

When it was introduced early in World War II, the Mitsubishi A6M “Zero” was considered the most capable carrier-based fighter in the world, combining excellent maneuverability and very long range. The Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service (IJ-NAS) also frequently used it as a land-based fighter.

Mitsubishi A6M “Zero”



P-51D Mustang

Crew: 1
Length: 9.06 metres
Wingspan: 12.0 metres
Height: 3.05 metres
Loaded weight: 2,796 kg
Engine: 1 × Nakajima Sakae 12 engine, 700 kW

Range: 3,104 km
Service ceiling: 10,000 metres
Rate of climb: 15.7 metres per second

Armament

Guns: 2× 7.7 mm Type 97 aircraft machine guns in the engine cowling
2× 20 mm Type 99-1 cannon in the wings

Performance

Maximum speed: 534 km/h

George S. Patton Jr.

Loved by some, loathed by others, George Patton was never far from the action - nor from controversy.

Born in San Gabriel, California on 11 November, 1885, there was little doubt that George Smith Patton Jr. would become a soldier. It was in his blood. He came from a family with an extensive military background. Members of his family fought for both the United States Army and Confederate States Army during the American Civil War.

As a child Patton had difficulty learning to read and write but overcame this. He was described as an intelligent boy who was widely read on classical military history. He attended Virginia Military Institute, which his father and grandfather attended. While at Virginia he was nominated for West Point.

At West Point Patton excelled at military drills though his academic performance was so poor that he was forced to repeat his first year after failing mathematics. When he graduated from West Point on June 11, 1909 his was ranked 46 out of 103. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Cavalry Branch of the United States Army.

In March 1916 Mexican forces loyal to Pancho Villa crossed into New Mexico and raided the border town of Columbus. The violence in Columbus killed several Americans. In response,

the U.S. launched the Pancho Villa Expedition into Mexico. When Patton discovered that his unit would not participate he managed to get himself assigned as an aide to expedition commander John J. Pershing.

In mid-April Patton asked Pershing for the opportunity to command troops. He initial combat experience came on May 14, 1916 in

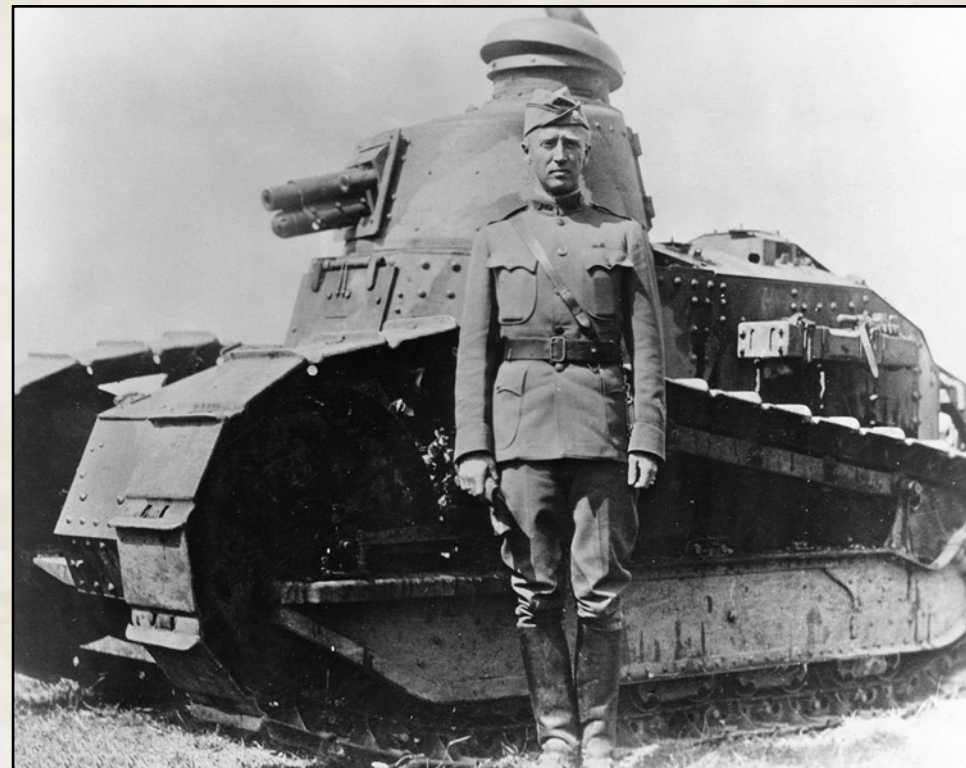
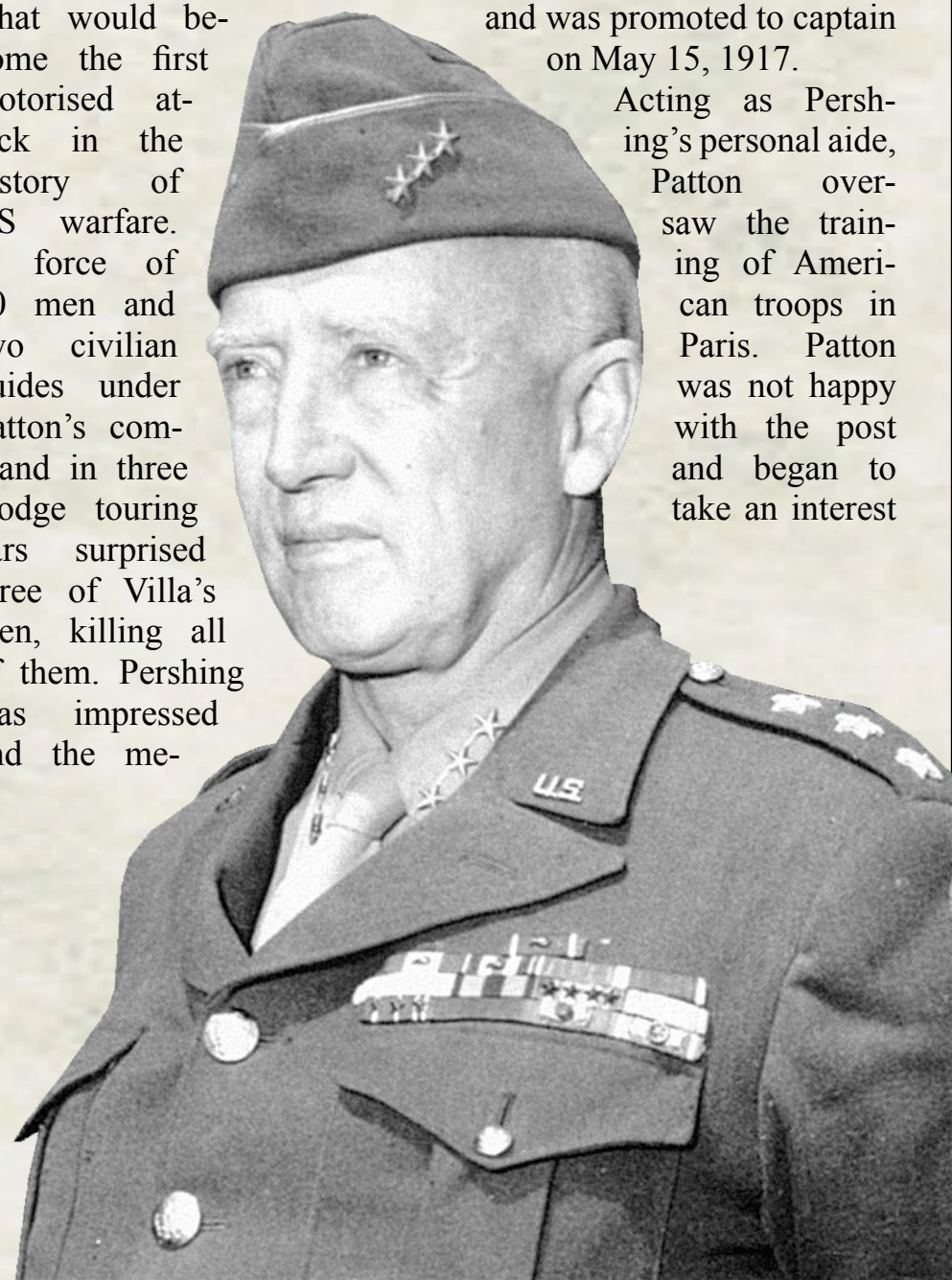
what would become the first motorised attack in the history of US warfare. A force of 10 men and two civilian guides under Patton's command in three Dodge touring cars surprised three of Villa's men, killing all of them. Pershing was impressed and the me-

dia dubbed Patton the "bandit killer". On May 23, 1916 Patton was promoted to first lieutenant.

World War I

After the United States entered World War I, Pershing was named commander of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) on the Western Front. Patton requested to join his staff and was promoted to captain on May 15, 1917.

Acting as Pershing's personal aide, Patton oversaw the training of American troops in Paris. Patton was not happy with the post and began to take an interest



TANK COMMANDER: Lt Colonel George S. Patton in front of a French Renault FT light tank during the summer of 1918.

in tanks. At this time Pershing sought to give Patton command of an infantry battalion. While in hospital for jaundice, Patton met Colonel Fox Conner, who encouraged him to work with tanks instead of infantry.

On November 10, 1917 Patton was assigned to establish the AEF Light Tank School. He left Paris and reported to the French Army's tank training school at Champlieu where he drove a Renault FT light tank. He was promoted to major on January 26, 1917.

He received the first 10 tanks on March 23, 1918 at the Tank School at Bourg. As he was the only US soldier with tank-driving experience, Patton personally backed seven of the tanks off the train. In the post, Patton trained tank crews to operate in support of infantry, and promoted its acceptance among reluctant infantry officers. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel on April 3, 1918, and at-

tended the Command and General Staff College in Langres.

He commanded American-crewed Renault FT tanks at the Battle of Saint-Mihiel, leading the tanks from the front for much of the attack. He walked in front of the tanks into the German-held village of Essey, and rode on top of a tank during the attack into Pannes, seeking to inspire his men.

During the Meuse-Argonne Offensive on September 26, Patton was wounded while leading six men and a tank in an attack on German machine guns near the town of Cheppy. He commanded the battle from a shell hole for another hour before being evacuated. He stopped at a rear command post to submit his report before heading to a hospital.

While recuperating from his wound, Patton was promoted to colonel in the Tank Corps of the U.S. National Army on October 17. He returned to duty on

October 28 but saw no further action before hostilities ended with the armistice of November 11, 1918. For his actions in Cheppy, Patton received the Distinguished Service Cross. For his leadership of the brigade and tank school, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. He was also awarded the Purple Heart for his combat wounds after the decoration was created in 1932.

Between the wars

On his return to the United States on March 2, 1919 Patton was assigned to Camp Meade in Maryland and reverted to his permanent rank of captain on June 30, 1920. The very next day he was promoted to major again. Loathing duty as a peacetime staff officer, he spent much time writing technical papers and giving speeches on his combat experiences at the General Staff College.

Some of the highlights of the inter-war years included his meeting Dwight D. Eisenhower, who would play a major role in his future. The two corresponded frequently and Patton sent Eisenhower notes and assistance to help him graduate from the General Staff College. In August 1923, Patton saved several children from drowning when they fell off a yacht during a boating trip off Salem, Massachusetts. He was awarded the Silver Lifesaving Medal for this action.

In July 1932, Patton was executive officer of the 3rd Cavalry, which was ordered to Washington by Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur. Patton took command of

the 600 troops of the 3rd Cavalry, and on July 28, MacArthur ordered Patton's troops to advance on protesting veterans known as the "Bonus Army" with tear gas and bayonets. Patton was promoted to lieutenant colonel in the regular Army on March 1, 1934, and to colonel on July 24, 1938 and given command of the 5th Cavalry at Fort Clark, Texas.

World War II

When the Germans invaded Poland on September 1, 1939 the U.S. military entered a period of mobilization, and Patton sought to build up the power of U.S. armoured forces. Patton was promoted to brigadier general on October 2, made acting division commander in November, and on April 4, 1941 was promoted again to major general and made Commanding General of the 2nd Armoured Division.

In December 1940, he staged a high-profile mass exercise in which 1,000 tanks and vehicles were driven from Columbus, Georgia, to Panama City, Florida, and back. He repeated the exercise with his entire division of 1,300 vehicles the next month. Patton earned a pilot's license and, during these manoeuvres, observed the movements of his vehicles from the air to find ways to deploy them effectively in combat.

A reporter, after hearing a speech where Patton said that it took "blood and brains" to win in combat, began calling him "blood and guts". The nickname would follow him for the rest of his life. Soldiers under his command were known at times



BERLIN IS THAT WAY: Patton was a commander who believed in leading from the front.

to have quipped, "our blood, his guts". Nonetheless, he was known to be admired widely by the men under his charge. Patton was also known simply as "The Old Man" among his troops.

North Africa Campaign

Patton was assigned to help plan the Allied invasion of French North Africa as part of Operation Torch in the summer of 1942. Patton commanded the Western Task Force, consisting of 33,000 men in 100 ships, in landings centered on Casablanca, Morocco. The landings, which took place on November 8, 1942, were opposed by Vichy French forces, but Patton's men quickly gained a beachhead and pushed through fierce resistance. Casablanca fell on November 11 and Patton negotiated an armistice with French General Charles Noguès. The Sultan of Morocco was so impressed that he presented Patton with the Or-

der of Ouissam Alaouite, with the citation "*Les Lions dans leur tanière restent en le voyant approcher*" (The lions in their dens tremble at his approach).

Sicily Campaign

For Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily, Patton was to command the Seventh United States Army, dubbed the Western Task Force, in landings at Gela, Scoglitti and Licata to support landings by Bernard Montgomery's British Eighth Army. Patton's I Armored Corps was officially redesignated the Seventh Army just before his force of 90,000 landed before dawn on D-Day, July 10, 1943, on beaches near the town of Licata. The armada was hampered by wind and weather, but despite this the three U.S. infantry divisions involved, the 3rd, 1st, and 45th, secured their respective beaches. They then repulsed counterattacks at Gela, where Patton personally

led his troops against German reinforcements from the Hermann Göring Division.

The slapping incidents

Two high-profile incidents of Patton striking subordinates during the Sicily campaign attracted national controversy following the end of the campaign. On August 3, 1943, Patton slapped and verbally abused Private Charles H. Kuhl at an evacuation hospital in Nicosia after he had been found to suffer from "battle fatigue".

On August 10, Patton slapped Private Paul G. Bennett under similar circumstances. Ordering both soldiers back to the front lines, Patton railed against cowardice and issued orders to his commanders to discipline any soldier making similar complaints.

Word of the incident reached Eisenhower, who privately reprimanded Patton and insisted he apologize. Patton apologised to both soldiers individually, as well as to doctors who witnessed the incidents, and later to all of the soldiers under his command in several speeches.

Phantom Army

The German High Command had more respect for Patton than for any other Allied commander and considered him central to any plan to invade Europe from the United Kingdom. Because of this, Patton was made a prominent figure in the deception operation, Fortitude, in early 1944. Through the British network of double-agents, the Allies fed German intelligence a steady stream of false reports about troops

sightings and that Patton had been named commander of the First United States Army Group (FUSAG), all designed to convince the Germans that Patton was preparing this massive command for an invasion at Pas de Calais. FUSAG was in reality an intricately constructed "phantom" army of decoys, props, and fake signals traffic based around Dover to mislead German aircraft and to make Axis leaders believe a large force was massing there so as to mask the real location of the invasion in Normandy. Patton was ordered to keep a low profile to deceive the Germans into thinking he was in Dover throughout early 1944, when he was actually training the Third Army. As a result of Operation Fortitude, the German 15th Army remained at Pas de Calais to defend against Patton's supposed attack. This formation held its position even after the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944. Patton flew into France a month later and returned to combat duty.

Battle of the Bulge

Patton played a prominent role in both the Normandy breakout offensive and the Lorraine Campaign. During the Battle of the Bulge Patton was ordered to relieve Bastogne before it was overrun. Desiring good weather for his advance, which would permit close ground support by U.S. Army Air Forces tactical aircraft, Patton ordered the Third Army chaplain, Colonel James Hugh O'Neill, to compose a suitable prayer: "Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly be-

seech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies, and establish Thy justice among men and nations. Amen." When the weather cleared soon after, Patton awarded O'Neill a Bronze Star Medal on the spot.

The Final Push

By February 1945, the Germans were in full retreat. On February 23 the U.S. 94th Infantry Division crossed the Saar and established a vital bridgehead at Serrig through which Patton pushed units into the Saarland. Patton had insisted upon an immediate crossing of the Saar River against the advice of his officers.

Once again, Patton found other commands given priority on gasoline and supplies. To obtain these, Third Army ordnance units passed themselves off as First Army personnel and in one incident they secured thousands of gallons of gasoline from a First Army dump. Between January 29 and March 22, the Third Army took Trier, Coblenz, Bingen, Worms, Mainz, Kaiserslautern, and Ludwigshafen, killing or wounding 99,000 and capturing 140,112 German soldiers, which represented virtually all of the remnants of the German First and Seventh Armies. An example of Patton's sarcastic wit was broadcast when he re-



GOOD LUCK: George S. Patton (right) shakes hands with Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery. While the fierce rivalry between them is well known, Montgomery actually had a lot of respect for the American.

ceived orders to by-pass Trier, as it had been decided that four divisions would be needed to capture it. When the message arrived, Trier had already fallen. Patton rather caustically replied: "Have taken Trier with two divisions. Do you want me to give it back?"

In its advance from the Rhine to the Elbe, Patton's Third Army, which numbered between 250,000 and 300,000 men at any given time, captured 84,860 km² of German territory. Its losses were 2,102 killed, 7,954 wounded, and 1,591 missing.

German losses in the fighting against the Third Army totalled 20,100 killed, 47,700 wounded, and 653,140 captured.

The End

After the war Patton was appointed military governor of Bavaria, where he led the Third Army in denazification efforts. Unhappy with his position and depressed by his belief that he would never fight in another war, Patton's behaviour and statements became increasingly erratic.

On December 8, 1945, Patton's chief of staff, Major General Hobart Gay, invited him on a pheasant hunting trip near Speyer to lift his spirits. Observing derelict cars along the side of the road, Patton said, "How awful war is. Think of the waste." Moments later his car collided with an American army truck at low speed.

Gay and others were only slightly injured, but Patton hit his head on the glass partition

in the back seat. Patton was discovered to have a compression fracture and dislocation of the cervical third and fourth vertebrae, resulting in a broken neck and cervical spinal cord injury that rendered him paralyzed from the neck down. He spent most of the next 12 days in spinal traction to decrease spinal pressure. All non-medical visitors, except for Patton's wife, who had flown from the U.S., were forbidden. Patton, who had been told he had no chance to ever again ride a horse or resume normal life, at one point commented, "This is a hell of a way to die."

He died in his sleep of pulmonary edema and congestive heart failure at about 18:00 on December 21, 1945 Patton was buried at the Luxembourg American Cemetery and Me-

morial in the Hamm district of Luxembourg City, alongside wartime casualties of the Third Army, per his request to "be buried with his men".

What others said about Patton

"He was one of those men born to be a soldier, an ideal combat leader. It is no exaggeration to say that Patton's name struck terror at the hearts of the enemy."

Dwight D. Eisenhower

"He is our greatest fighting general, and sheer joy".

Franklin D. Roosevelt

"I had heard of him, but I must confess that his swashbuckling personality exceeded my expectation. I did not form any high opinion of him, nor had I any reason to alter this view at any later date. A dashing, courageous, wild and unbalanced leader, good for operations requiring thrust and push but at a loss in any operation requiring skill and judgment."

British Field Marshal Alan Brooke

"That crazy cowboy general"

Adolf Hitler

"Patton was the American Guderian. He was very bold and preferred large movements. He took big risks and won big successes."

Generaloberst Alfred Jodl

"Patton had developed tank warfare into an art, and understood how to handle tanks brilliantly in the field. I feel compelled, therefore, to compare him with Generalfeldmarschall

Rommel, who likewise had mastered the art of tank warfare. Both of them had a kind of second sight in regard to this type of warfare."

Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring

Target Patton

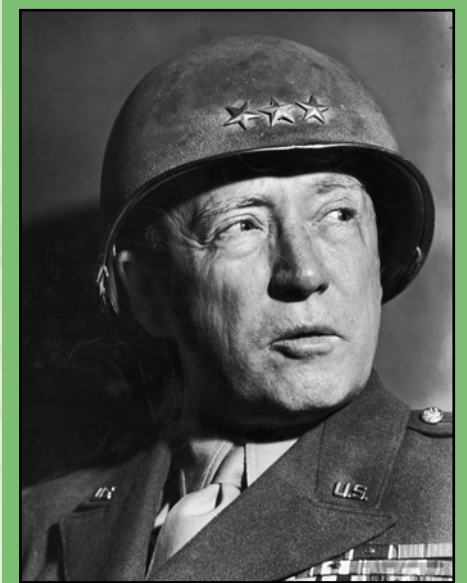
In a book released in 2008, *Target Patton*, the newly unearthed diaries of a colourful assassin for the wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of the CIA, reveal that American spy chiefs wanted Patton dead because he was threatening to expose allied collusion with the Russians that cost American lives.

Although he had suffered serious injuries in a car crash in Mannheim, Patton was thought to be recovering and was on the verge of flying home.

But after a decade-long investigation, military historian Robert Wilcox claims that OSS head General "Wild Bill" Donovan ordered a highly decorated marksman called Douglas Bazata to silence Patton.

In interviews with Mr Bazata, who died in 1999, and extracts from his diaries, detailing how he staged the car crash by getting a troop truck to plough into Patton's Cadillac and then shot the general with a low-velocity projectile, which broke his neck while his fellow passengers escaped without a scratch.

Mr Bazata also suggested that when Patton began to recover from his injuries, US officials turned a blind eye as agents of the NKVD, the forerunner of the KGB, poisoned the general.



Quotes by George S. Patton

1. "A pint of sweat will save a gallon of blood."
2. "A good plan, violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan next week."
3. "Lead me, follow me, or get the hell out of my way."
4. "Do everything you ask of those you command."
5. "Say what you mean and mean what you say."
6. "Many soldiers are led to faulty ideas of war by knowing too much about too little."
7. "Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity."
8. "If everybody is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking."
9. "Do more than is required of you."
10. "Moral courage is the most valuable and usually the most absent characteristic in men."
11. "I am a soldier, I fight where I am told, and I win where I fight."

Ratel IFV

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 South African Ratel IFV.

Up until the late 1960s the South African Army had used the British Alvis Saracen Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC). There were, however, a few problems with this.

First of all the Saracen was becoming very dated. Secondly, and more importantly, South Africa were beginning to feel the squeeze of the international arms embargo. It was becoming more and more difficult to get hold of spare parts for the Saracens. It became clear that South Africa would need to find an alternative.

The decision was made that South Africa would have to both design and manufacture their own vehicles. The Ratel was the end result.

It was named after the Ratel (Afrikaans word for honey badger), a small carnivore that has few natural predators due to its thick skin and ferocious defensive abilities.

Unlike the Saracen, the Ratel was not an APC but rather an IFV (Infantry Fighting Vehicle). It was intended to provide infantry battalions with mechanised capabilities.

Contrary to some views the Ratel was a totally new requirement and not a replacement for the Saracen. In fact, the

Saracens were retained in their original roles for some years after the Ratel entered service and even underwent an upgrade (Project Fellies) before they were eventually retired.

Enter the Ratel

The Ratel was engineered largely from a prototype from a local subsidiary of Büssing and it was built on a modified 6x6 MAN military truck chassis.

Three more prototypes were developed and tested by the SADF (South African Defence Force) between 1971 and 1975. A production contract for the vehicle was then awarded to Sandock-Austral.

Mass production of a base Ratel-20 chassis peaked in 1976, and the vehicle entered combat deployment in 1977.

Other variants, including the improved Mark II and Mark III versions of the basic Ratel were phased in throughout the 1980s. Mark I vehicles were upgraded to Mark II and III during refits. Over a thousand Ratels were eventually manufactured.

Characteristics

From the outset it was important that the Ratel be designed with the Southern African environment in mind. It also had to make use of the combat experience of the SADF. The main

requirements were that the vehicle had to be well armoured, well armed, and offer mobility.

The Ratel made history by being the first wheeled IFV. Prior to that IFVs were tracked vehicles.

The six run-flat tires gave the Ratel long-distance speed, mobility, and ease of maintenance that tracked vehicles lack. The fact that it was wheeled gave it another major advantage. Unlike the United States Army's M2/M3 Bradley or Warsaw Pact's BMP designs, the Ratel did not need to be transported long distances on trains or trailer trucks. It can simply be driven to the destination.

Another plus factor was that the Ratel had an operational radius of 1,000 kilometres, far superior to other IFVs. The M2/M3 Bradley, for example, has an operational radius of 450 kilometres.

While the vehicle's high profile makes it a bigger target it enables the crews to see the surrounding area more easily when maneuvering in tall bush, something common to the terrain in Southern Africa.

The Ratel offered good ground clearance and cross country performance. When it came to mobility the Ratel ticked all the right boxes.

The Ratel was relatively lightly armoured when compared to some other IFVs. This



FULL SPEED: A Ratel-20 on an exercise at De Brug training area near Bloemfontein.

was in order to preserve mobility, weapon space, and range.

The vehicle was well protected against bullets and artillery shell splinters, but vulnerable to anti-tank guns, automatic cannon, rocket-propelled grenades and guided missiles. Yet the SADF's experiences in Angola showed that the Ratel was far more likely to be faced with small-arms fire than to run into main battle tanks.

Something else of paramount importance was protection against land mines. The bottom of the hull was angled and reinforced so as to deflect mine blasts out to the sides. The wheels, if damaged, were also far easier to repair or replace than tracks.

The Ratel-20's primary armament consisted of a locally produced Denel Land Systems GI-2 20 millimetre autocannon mounted in a non-powered turret at the front of the vehicle.

This was supplemented by a coaxial 7.32 x 51 mm machine gun and another 7.32 x 51 mm pintle-mounted machine gun situated by the commander's

roof hatch. There was an additional pintle-mounted dual machine gun at the rear of the Ratel's upper deck. This was accessed from a roof hatch and provided cover for the Ratel's rear quarter. It was removed on later models.

The 20 mm cannon was belt fed and had a high rate of fire. Ammunition was selected for specific engagements and would typically consist of a combination of HE (high explosive) and APTC (armour piercing tungsten carbide) rounds. The APTC was capable of destroying a T-34 tanks as evidenced during Operation Protea.

The Ratel also had four rifle ports on each side of the vehicle, allowing the infantrymen to fire from within the vehicle.

The Ratel had multiple doors and hatches. The two main doors were located on the side of the vehicle, but a small rear door and roof hatches allowed the crew to exit the vehicle from many directions at once, or to dismount under cover during an ambush.

Due to its large operational

Ratel-20

Weight

18,500 kg

Length

7.212 metres

Width

2.516 metres

Height

2.915 metres

Crew

3 crew + 7 infantry

Armour

20 mm

Main Armament

20 mm autocannon

Secondary Armament

1 x 7.62 mm coaxial MG

1 x 7.62 Anti-aircraft MG

2 x 2 smoke grenade dischargers

Engine

D 3256 BTXF 6-cylinder in-line turbo charged diesel
282 hp (210 kW)

Power/weight

15.24 hp/tonne

Suspension

Wheeled 6 x 6, 350 mm clearance

Operational Range

1,000 kilometres

Speed

115 km/h (road)

65 km/h (off road)

range the Ratel was ideal for long missions over rugged terrain with little logistical support.

They were loaded with all sorts of equipment and supplies. Spare wheels were lashed on the roof of the hull, while food was stored in every available space. The average number of 7.62 mm machine gun rounds carried was at least 6,000. All Ratels featured tactical radio

communication which enabled reliable command and control. Spare whip aerials for the radio were carried somewhere on the hull as they had a tendency to break when driving through the bush.

The Ratel was equipped with two drinking water tanks and each vehicle carried a cooking stove, tool kit, tow bar, cable and spare parts. One in every four vehicles carried a field shower kit.

In May 1978 the Ratel-20s, operating as part of Combat Group Juliet, played a major role in the assault on Chetequera during Operation Reindeer.

Ratel variants

As the South African Border War escalated cross-border operations became more frequent, and more complex.

An alliance had developed between the South Africans and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), who were engaged in a more conventional war against the People's Armed Forces of Liberation of Angola (FAPLA).

FAPLA was aided by the Cubans and the Soviets. This meant that during cross-border operations the SADF was frequently coming up against conventional Soviet armour.

Ratel-60

The Ratel-60 was fitted with a turret that carried a short 60 mm M2 breech loading mortar. Its purpose was reconnaissance, fire support and anti-ambushing. In the direct role the 60 mm mortar was effective up to 300 metres, or 1,700 metres in the indirect role. It could fire HE (high explosive), canister, smoke and illuminating rounds. It would usually operate from the rear to supply indirect fire.



FIRE SUPPORT: A Ratel-90, armed with its 90 mm gun.

Ratel-90

The Ratel-90 was based on the Ratel-20 but mounted low-velocity 90 mm gun, a license-made copy of the 1950s-vintage French GIAT F1, is very accurate out to 2 km range. It is generally considered to be inadequate for facing modern main battle tanks, but it is quite capable against armoured personnel carriers or other lighter AFVs, unarmoured vehicles, exposed infantry, and buildings or entrenchments. The 90 mm gun cannot be fired from a moving Ratel because the fire-control system is decidedly primitive and not stabilised; the turret and gun are manually traversed.

On the rare occasions when SADF Ratels encountered enemy armour, such as the Soviet-made tanks encountered in Operations Modular, Hooper, and Packer in 1988, they achieved successes through manoeuvrability and only at very short ranges. 61 Mechanised Infantry Battalion Group found that each enemy T-55 and T-62 required multiple shots from the 90 mm

guns to disable it, and that the SADF vehicles had to attack in groups, fire from point-blank range, and hit the tanks in the engine vents, turret rim, or similar weak points in order to have an effect, the 90 mm shells being otherwise ineffective against the Soviet tanks' armour.

End of an era

A number of other countries have since produced vehicles similar to the Ratel, including the Chinese WZ-523. The Belgian Simba, for example, is all but a direct copy of the Ratel. A number of South American countries have produced vehicles very similar in looks and design.

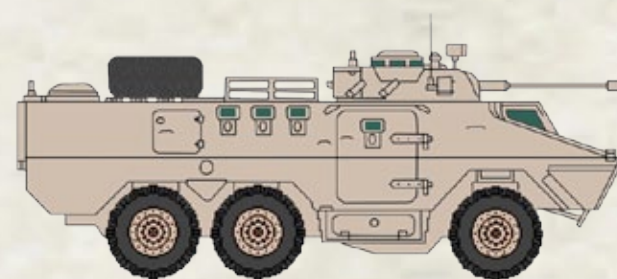
Besides South Africa, a number of other African countries use the Ratel. They include Cameroon, Djibouti, Ghana, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Yemen and Zambia.

When the Ratel is finally retired from service South Africa will be saying goodbye to a vehicle that served them well for 40 years.

The Ratel Family

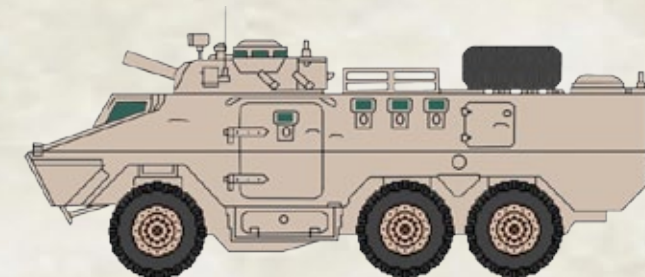
Ratel-20

The original Ratel. It was armed with a Denel Land Systems GI-2 20 millimetre autocannon, two 7.32 x 51 mm machine guns, and four smoke dischargers. It carried a crew of three and a squad of seven infantry troops.



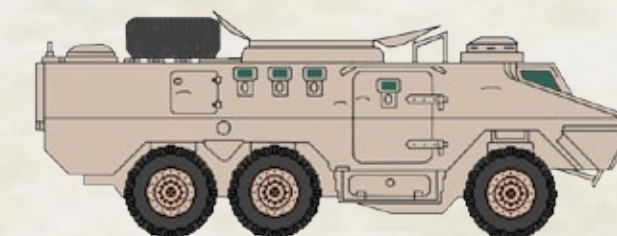
Ratel-60

Armed with a short 60 mm M2 mortar the Ratel-60 was used to provide indirect fire support. It carried a crew of three and a squad of seven infantry troops.



Ratel-81

An 81 mm mortar was installed in the crew compartment for use as a fire support platform.



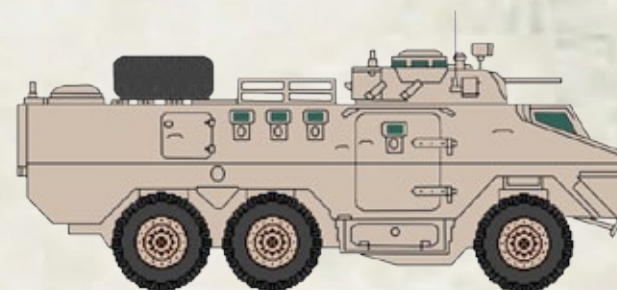
Ratel-90

Armed with a 90 mm gun was used to engaged targets such as APCs, light IFVs, unarmoured vehicles, buildings and entrenchments. It carried a crew of three and six infantry troops.



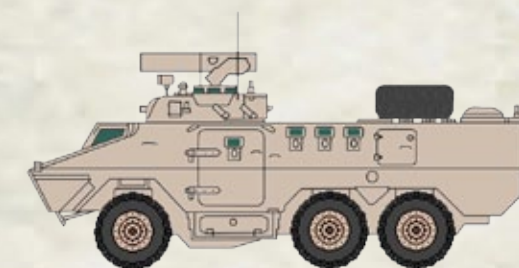
Ratel Command

Armed a 12,7 mm machine gun, the Ratel Command operated as a mobile command post. It had a two-seater turret and carried nine personnel.



Ratel ZT3

Armed with a launcher containing three ZT3 Ingwe (leopard) laser-guided missiles, the Ratel ZT3 was used to engage enemy armour and main battle tanks. Additional missiles were stored within the hull.



Other variants

- Ratel-120: 120 mm mortar platform. Prototype only.
- Ratel EAOS: Enhanced Artillery Observation System. Used for artillery support.
- Ratel Maintenance: Setup as a mobile workshop.
- Ratel Logistic: Eight wheeled logistic vehicle. Only two prototypes were built.

Ten bloodiest battles

These ten battles claimed more than 11 million casualties, with all but one of them being fought in the 20th century.

Instead of focusing on a specific battle this month, we're going to look at what were possibly the ten bloodiest battles.

The casualty figures given included killed, wounded and missing in action. They are not exact figures but give an estimation of the number of casualties.

Take into account that during the Vietnam War the official figure of Americans killed is 58,318. In the battles listed below the number killed in a single day often exceeded this.

10. Battle of Shanghai

(August 13 – November 26, 1937)

The Battle of Shanghai was the first of the twenty-two major engagements fought between the National Revolutionary Army (NRA) of the Republic of China (ROC) and the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) of the Empire of Japan during the Second Sino-Japanese War. It was one of the largest and bloodiest battles of the entire war,

The Chinese soldiers had to rely primarily on small-caliber weapons in their defense of Shanghai, against an overwhelming Japanese onslaught of air, naval, and armored striking power.

In the end, Shanghai fell, and China lost a significant portion of its best troops, while also

failing to elicit any international intervention.

The Japanese, indoctrinated with notions of martial superiority, were not expecting the fierce resistance shown by the Chinese, and it shook the Japanese Army.

Casualties: 388,000

9. Siege of Changchun

(May 23 – October 19, 1948)

The Siege of Changchun was a siege operation launched by the People's Liberation Army during the Chinese Civil War against the city of Changchun, defended by the Nationalist forces. The Siege of Changchun was part of the Liaoshen Campaign, and the fall of Changchun marked the end of its first stage.

The PLA had the city surrounded and the nationalists stood no chance. The communists decided to allow nationalist soldiers to leave the city at any time, but refused to allow civilians to do so. Civilians were blockaded within Changchun and deliberately starved as way of pressuring enemy generals to surrender.

It is estimated that 80% of the civilian population were killed.

Casualties: 431,000 (including 330,000 civilians)

8. Battle of Wuhan

(June 11 – October 27, 1938)

Another battle of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Chinese were defending the city of Wuhan from a Japanese attempt to capture it.

Over one million Chinese soldiers were defending against a force of 350 thousand Japanese. Bombings, artillery strikes, and chemical weapons attacks weakened the Chinese defenses enough for the Japanese to capture Wuhan after 4 months of fighting.

While it was a victory for the Japanese, it had cost them dear.

Casualties: 540,000

7. Battle of Berlin

(April 16 – May 2, 1945)

The Battle of Berlin was the final major offensive of the European theatre of World War II.

The Soviets had completely encircled Berlin at the beginning of the battle. The Nazis had little left to offer and most of the defence of the city was left to the Hitler Youth and hastily conscripted civilian units.

Before the battle ended Adolf Hitler had committed suicide. On May 7, 1945 the Germans signed an unconditional surrender.

Casualties: 681,000



WUHAN: A victory for the Japanese. But a costly one that shook their confidence.

6. First Battle of Kiev

(August 23 – September 26, 1941)

The First Battle of Kiev resulted in a very large encirclement of Soviet troops in the vicinity of Kiev during World War II. This encirclement is considered the largest encirclement in the history of warfare (by number of troops).

The battle was an unprecedented defeat for the Red Army, with 452,700 soldiers, 2,642 guns and mortars and 64 tanks being trapped.

The Southwestern Front suffered 700,544 casualties, including 616,304 killed, captured or missing during the battle. The 5th, 37th, 26th, 21st and the 38th armies, consisting of 43 divisions, were almost annihilated and the 40th Army suffered many losses.

Casualties: 829,000

5. Battle of Verdun

(February 21 – December 18, 1916)

The Battle of Verdun was the largest and longest battle of the First World War on the Western Front between the German and French armies.

The German 5th Army attacked the defences of the Fortified Region of Verdun and those of the French Second Army on the right bank of the Meuse.

The German strategy in 1916 was to inflict mass casualties on the French, a goal achieved against the Russians from 1914 to 1915, to weaken the French Army to the point of collapse.

Although the French took heavy casualties, they held out. At times they even counter-attacked. In August and December, French counter-offensives recaptured much of the ground lost on the east bank and recovered Fort Douaumont and Fort Vaux.

Casualties: 976,000

4. Battle of the Somme

(July 1 – November 18, 1916)

The Battle of the Somme, also known as the Somme Offensive, was a battle of the First World War fought by the armies of the British and French against the German Empire. It took place on both sides of the upper reaches of the River Somme in France.

The battle was intended to hasten a victory for the Allies and was the largest battle of the First World War on the Western Front.

The Allies suffered more than 60,000 casualties on the first day of the battle.

Casualties: 1,000,000

3. Battle of Baghdad

(January 29 – February 10, 1258)

The Siege of Baghdad entailed the investment, capture, and sack of Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, by Ilkhanate Mongol forces and allied troops.

The Mongols were under the command of Hulagu Khan (or Hulegu Khan), brother of the khagan Möngke Khan, who had intended to further extend his rule into Mesopotamia but not to directly overthrow the Caliphate. Möngke, however, had instructed Hulagu to attack Baghdad if the Caliph Al-Musta'sim refused Mongol demands for his continued submission to the khagan and the payment of tribute in the form of military support for Mongol forces in Iran.

Due to their reputation as efficient and brutal warriors their

7 Deadliest Wars

1. World War II

1939 to 1945

Location. Worldwide
Between 40,000,000 and
72,000,000 deaths

2. Taiping Rebellion

1851 to 1864

Location. China
Between 20,000,000 and
100,000,000 deaths

3. World War I

1914 to 1918

Location. Worldwide
Between 15,000,000 and
65,000,000 deaths

4. Mongol Conquests

Location. Asia, Eastern Eu-
rope, Middle East
Between 30,000,000 and
60,000,000 deaths

5. An Lushan Rebellion

755 to 763

Location. China
Between 13,000,000 and
36,000,000 deaths

6. Qing dynasty conquest of the Ming Dynasty

1616 to 1662

Location. China
25,000,000 deaths

7. Conquests of Timur-e- Lang

1369 to 1405

Location. Middle East, In-
dia, Central Asia, Russia
Between 15,000,000 and
20,000,000 deaths



STALINGRAD: Regarded as one of the single largest and deadliest battles ever, it saw high losses on both sides.

opponents would often submit to them without a battle. But when Baghdad refused to surrender, the Mongols decided to make an example of them. The city fell after just 12 days. The Mongols then proceeded to destroy as much of the city and massacre as many locals as possible.

Casualties: 1,000,000

2. Battle of Stalingrad

(August 23, 1942 –
February 2, 1943)

The Battle of Stalingrad is often regarded as one of the single largest and bloodiest battles in the history of warfare.

It was marked by fierce close quarters combat, snipers, house to house combat, and assaults on civilians by air raids.

It was a costly defeat for the Germans and some say that Hitler lost the war the minute the Russians were able to declare victory at Stalingrad.

The Germans did have a chance to break out from Stal-

ingrad, but Hitler ordered that they stand their ground and “Fight to the last man and bullet.”

Almost 91,000 Germans were taken prisoner. Only about 5,000 of them ever saw Germany again.

Casualties: 1,857,000

1. Siege of Leningrad

(September 8, 1941 –
January 27, 1944)

The Siege of Leningrad began on September 8, 1941, when the last road to the city was severed. Although the Soviets managed to open a narrow land corridor to the city on January 18, 1943, the siege was only lifted on January 27, 1944, 872 days after it began.

It was one of the longest and most destructive sieges in history, and possibly the costliest in terms of casualties

Casualties: 4,016,000

Who are we?

This month we show you a cap or beret badge, or maybe a shoulder patch. You then tell us what unit or corps it is. And give yourself a bonus point if you can tell us which country they're from. We've modified two of the badges because they had the unit/corps name on them. Answers on page 47.

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



ARMA

ARMA 3 is an open world, military tactical shooter video game developed and published by Bohemia Interactive. It was released in September 2013.

ARMA 3's story line takes place in the mid-2030s during the fictional Operation Magnitude, a military operation launched by NATO forces fighting in Europe against "Eastern armies" referred to as Canton-Protocol Strategic Alliance Treaty (CSAT), led by a resurgent Iranian military with a coalition of other Middle Eastern and Asian nations.

First of all, what is an open world game? Well this means that it is not scripted. You don't have to follow certain paths or do things in a certain order. You can go anywhere you want and do anything you want.

ARMA 3 takes place on the Aegean islands of Altis and Stratis of Greece. The islands feature photo-realistic terrain and water environments. Altis is the largest official terrain in the ARMA series with ground area covering approximately 270 square kilometres. The smaller island, Stratis, expands over an area of 20 square kilo-

metres.

And when they talk about photo-realistic terrain they mean it. There are day/night cycles, moon patterns, and weather that can be anything from sunny to overcast, howling gale force wind, pouring rain to tropical thunderstorms. The grass will even sway in the breeze.

The maps feature different types of terrain from open plains to forests, thick bush to mountain ranges. There are farms, villages, towns and even large cities with an airport. And of course there are rivers and even open sea.

ARMA 3 comes with a single player campaign which is great for getting to grips with the game. You can also go online and play against other opponents.

One of the first things you should do in the game is attend Boot Camp. Here you will learn to use the controls and equipment. You will be shown how to walk, run, crouch, go prone, crawl, climb, etc. You will also learn how to fire and reload various weapons, as well as how to drive and fly various vehicles from civilian cars to tanks, helicopters to jets, and even how

Matt O' Brien *dons his Kevlar vest and steel helmet and heads for war yet again.*

to scuba dive. The last bit is necessary because you can now also make use of the underwater environment.

Creator Content

ARMA 3 has a massive modding community. These are people that create extra content for the game, most of which you can download for free. This content includes just about everything you can think of.

First up are characters. You can choose from a wide variety of characters, including facial features, hair, etc. Then you need to clothe your character. This can include pants, shirts, jackets, gloves, headgear, boots, body armour, webbing, backpack, etc.

Then you will need to arm your character. And there are a vast array of weapons to choose from. Assault rifles, sub-machine gun, pistols, sniper rifles and more.

Now while the original game comes with a limited amount of content, it is the creator content that makes ARMA 3 unique.

When it comes uniforms you can find a staggering amount of content. While ARMA 3 may be set a few years into the future, you will find uniforms and equipment that go all the way



back to World War II.

Many armies and units have been created. There is one modding group that specialise in South African and African content. So you will find all the uniforms, weapons and equipment of the old South African Defence Force (SADF) there, as well as the current SANDF.

And as I've already mentioned, the amount of content is staggering. Take headgear for instance. There are helmets, berets, peak caps, beanies, bandanas, and more.

When you select your character you also have to choose your loadout. As in real life, you can only carry a certain amount of ammunition and equipment.

The weapons in ARMA 3 handle almost the same as in real life. For example if you're using a sniper rifle you can't just line someone up in your crosshairs and pull the trigger. You need to take into account distance to target, wind speed and allow for bullet drop.

Another great thing about the weapons and vehicles is that they sound realistic. An AK-47 will sound like an AK-47.

You can also drive a host of vehicles from a bicycle to a civilian car or truck, a APC to a main battle tank. You can also take to the air in helicopters, prop driven planes, jets or large transport planes such as the C-130. And you will also find just about anything that goes on or under the water.

Creator content also features a wide variety of maps. One person has actually done a map of the entire continent of Australia. It is mind blowing in size and scale.

While it is fun to play online as part of a team, I find the most enjoyment playing single player against the AI (Artificial Intelligence). Creators have created scenarios and campaigns that you can play.

You can also use the Eden Editor that comes with the game to create your own scenarios.

ARMA 3 is an excellent game. You can play the game in 1st person mode (where you look through the eyes of your character) or 3rd person mode (where you view your character from behind).

And, unlike a lot of games,

it's realistic. Take a bullet in the right spot and you're dead. Get hit in the leg and you can't run. Hell, sometimes you will have to crawl.

ARMA 3 is a great game and I recommend it.



Publisher - Bohemia Interactive

Genre - RTS

Platform - PC

Score - 8.5/10

Price - R599

A Bridge Too Far

Directed by Richard Attenborough, *A Bridge Too Far* is a 1977 British-American war film based on the 1974 book of the same name by Cornelius Ryan.

The film tells the story of Operation Market Garden, a bold plan by the Allies during World War II to break through German lines and seize several bridges in the occupied Netherlands, including one at Arnhem, with the main objective of outflanking German defences in order to end the war by Christmas of 1944.

The name for the film comes from an unconfirmed comment attributed to British Lieutenant-General Frederick Browning, deputy commander of the First Allied Airborne Army, who told Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, the operation's architect, before the operation: "I think we may be going a bridge too far", in reference to the intention of seizing the Arnhem bridgehead over the Rhine river.

The plan sees 35,000 men being flown 480 kilometres from air bases in England and dropped behind enemy lines in the Netherlands. Two divisions of U.S. paratroopers, the 82nd and 101st Airborne, are responsible for securing the road and bridges as far as Nijmegen. A British division, the 1st Airborne, under Major-General Roy Urquhart, is to land near Arnhem and hold both sides of the bridge there, backed by a brigade of Polish paratroop-

ers under General Stanisław Sosabowski. XXX Armoured Corps are to push up the road over the bridges captured by the American paratroopers and reach Arnhem two days after the drop.

Speed is the vital factor. Arnhem's is the crucial bridge, the last means of escape for the German forces in the Netherlands and an excellent route to Germany for Allied forces. The road to it, however, is only a single highway linking the various key bridges - trucks and tanks have to squeeze to the shoulder to pass. The road is also elevated, causing anything moving on the road to stand out.

The British are told that resistance at Arhem will consist entirely of "Hitler Youth or old men on bicycles". They are wrong. The 9th and 10th SS Panzer Divisions have been withdrawn from the front and placed near Arnhem for rest and refitting.

The ground forces are held up when Son bridge is blown up by the Germans just before the 101st Airborne secures it.

Meant to capture and hold the bridges at Arnhem for just two days, the British paratroopers hold out for nine days before the outgunned troops are captured or forced to withdraw.

A great movie with a remarkable cast.

Click on the poster to see the movie trailer.

Cast

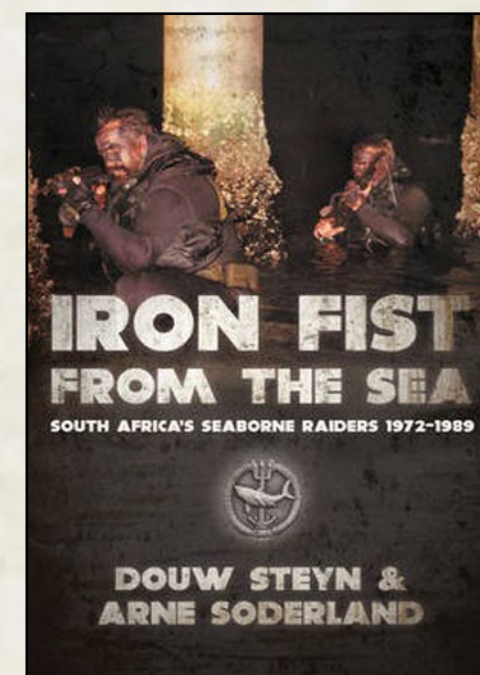
Dirk Bogarde - Lieutenant-General Frederick "Boy" Browning
James Caan - Staff Sergeant Eddie Dohun
Michael Caine - Lieutenant-Colonel J.O.E. Vandeleur
Sean Connery - Major General Roy Urquhart
Edward Fox - Lt. Gen. Brian Horrocks
Elliott Gould - Col. Robert Stout
Gene Hackman - Maj. Gen. Stanisław Sosabowski
Anthony Hopkins - Lt. Col. John Frost
Hardy Krüger - Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Karl Ludwig
Ryan O'Neal - Brig. Gen. James Gavin
Laurence Olivier - Dr. Jan Spaander
Robert Redford - Maj. Julian Cook
Maximilian Schell - General der Waffen-SS Wilhelm Bittrich



Iron Fist From The Sea

Let's face it. You're not going to find two men more suitable to write this book than Lt Col Daniel (Douw) Steyn, HC, SM, MMM, PSN and Rear Admiral (JG) Arnè Söderlund, PS, SM, MMM, SANR.

After all, Steyn was the operational commander of the Raiding Group of 4 Reconnaissance



Commando and Söderlund was the Commander Task Group of the SA Navy. He is also an accomplished author and a historian of note.

Iron Fist From The Sea gives a detailed account of the clandestine seaborne operations undertaken by South Africa's elite 4 Reconnaissance Commando (later 4 Reconnaissance Regiment).

These operations saw the clandestine reconnaissance of harbours, the sinking of enemy shipping and the destruction of shore installations in Angola and Mozambique.

With unparalleled access to previously secret material, the authors, both of whom worked to develop 4 Recce's operating capabilities, trace the origins of the Regiment back to the 1970's when the South African's determined the need for a maritime force projection capability.

They relate how maritime doctrine was developed within South Africa's wider Special Forces capability and how joint operational approaches were configured with the South African Navy.

This saw the development of a range of swimmer, reconnaissance, diving and boat operator training courses, along with the design of specialist raiding craft and amphibious assault platforms, which were originated to operate from the Navy's existing shipping and submarines.

This book is a must read for anyone interested in special forces operations.

The great news is that an abridged edition of the book will be released soon and will be available in both English and Afrikaans.

We'll bring you more details as soon as they are available.

Who are we - Quiz Answers

1. Royal Marines (Great Britain)
2. French Foreign Legion (France)
3. Navy Seals (United States)
4. Special Forces Brigade - Green Berets (United States)
5. Special Air Service (Great Britain)
6. Royal Ghurka Regiment (Great Britain)
7. United States Marine Corps (United States)
8. Selous Scouts (Rhodesia)
9. Royal Air Force (Great Britain)
10. Waffen SS (Nazi Germany)
11. South African Infantry (South Africa)
12. GSG-9 (Germany)
13. Royal Corps of Signals (Great Britain)
14. 101st Airborne Division (United States)
15. Parachute Regiment (Great Britain)

8



12



Potty Humour

In the bush there were no hot showers, flushing toilets or running water. When answering the call of nature troops often had to make use of very basic facilities, sometimes with amusing results.

Anyone that served in the military will have memories of the toilet facilities at bush bases. Most of the time they were very basic to say the least. This was especially true for troops that served in the old South African Defence Force.

Can you remember the first time you saw a 'lilly' tube and wondered what the hell it was? Or the first time you had to use a 'gokart' or thunderbox.

Who can forget the pleasure of sharing a cigarette with five of your mates and enjoying a pleasant conversation - all while taking your morning constitutional together.

Owen Bradshaw did his national service in 1977 and spent four months of that time in Owamboland. He recalls an amusing incident that happened while he was there.

"I can remember a number of really amusing incidents that happened when I did my national service. But there is one particular incident that I will never forget for the rest of my life.

"When we went to the border my company was stationed at a place called Okalongo. It was a only a few kilometres from the Angolan border and was nothing more than a collection of

tents. Our toilet was a joke.

"A deep pit was dug and over this was placed a 20 man toilet, or go-cart as it was known. The area was then surrounded by hessian sacking.

"A toilet like this obviously needed daily maintenance or else it would have quickly become a health hazard.

"We had a medic whose name was Tim something or other and he was responsible for the toilet.

"Every morning at about six o'clock he would inspect the toilet and pour this white powder over the pit. I think it was quick lime or something like that. It was supposed to kill the germs and also stop the smell.

"On the one occasion he ran out of quick lime and he had to order more from our HQ that was situated at a place called Ngongo. They told him that they would send some through the following afternoon.

"That morning Tim decided that because there was no quick lime left, he would pour some petrol into the pit. He figured that this would kill the germs as well as the smell.

"Just before seven that morning our company sergeant major arrived at the toilet to take his morning constitutional - just as he did every morning at the same time. He was a creature of

habit was our sergeant major.

"He undid his pants and plonked himself down on a toilet. Then he took out his pipe, stuck it between his teeth and lit a match. He lit his pipe and then threw the match between his legs into the pit. You can imagine what happened next.

"Raw sewage gives off methane gas and this had mixed with the petrol fumes. The resulting explosion was heard all over the camp. Those who were close enough to witness it said that the flames shot about 20 feet into the air. When I think about it now I realise how serious it could have been. The sergeant major could have been killed, but hell, it was funny.

"Everyone rushed to the toilet to find the sergeant major still sitting on the bog, his pipe still in his mouth, and blackened from the waist up. He had his backside burnt rather badly and spent about two weeks in hospital. Our poor medic never lived that one down.

Bruce was also at a base where they used pit latrines. He tells us this rather dirty story.

"We had a pit latrine at our base with the normal 20 man toilet. We used it call it the thunder box.

"After we had used the thing



SPENDING A PENNY: A typical bush toilet set up. Thunderboxes and lillies. The lilly was given its name during World War II in the Western desert. The troops would refer to the urinal tubes as "lillies of the desert."

for about two months it was starting to get a bit full. Our medic, who was in charge of hygiene for the base, decided that the pit had to be filled in and a new pit was to be dug.

"Two troops were given the pleasant duty of filling in the old pit and digging the new one. One of the troops assigned to the task was a guy who I'm sure was not altogether there. He was not the sharpest pencil in the box.

"He and his mate began shovelling sand over the sewage in the old pit and had only thrown in about six inches of sand when his bush hat blew off and landed in the pit.

"No problem to his moron, he jumped in to pick up his hat and immediately sank chest deep.

The medic had to inject him for just about every disease known to man including tetanus and hepatitis.

"Although he showered immediately afterwards, I swear that for the next few weeks you could always smell when this guy was around.

Steve was a corporal with an

infantry battalion. He recalls an incident at a training base that left him in stitches.

"We had a tented camp set up in the bush and we used it for field training. We would train our troops at this camp before they went to the border.

"One morning my company sergeant major called me and told me that a party from the Southern Cross Fund would be visiting the camp that afternoon.

"Now the Southern Cross Fund was a group of women who did a hell of a lot for national servicemen. They were a voluntary organisation who raised funds that were used to purchase sports and leisure equipment.

"Every Christmas they would ensure that every soldier who was serving on the border would get a Christmas parcel. They were really a good-hearted group of people and they were appreciated by most of us. We used to call them the 'Dankie Tannies' (Thank you aunties)."

The sergeant major and I made sure that the camp was as

clean as possible and we briefed the troops. We told them that they had to be properly dressed in their browns and were not to walk around without shirts. They were to refrain from using foul language while the ladies were visiting the camp.

"Now I don't want to hear any bad #&%*!ing language while the Dankie Tannies are here, the sergeant major told us. "If I hear you using any bad #&%*!ing words I will #&% you up. You know how much I #&%*!ing hate bad #&%*!ing language." He had a way with words our sergeant major did.

"We also had a number of urinal tubes, or piss lilies, at various points around the camp. Under no circumstances were the troops allowed to use these while the ladies were in camp.

"A group of about 20 ladies arrived on an army bus that afternoon and were duly shown around the camp. They were all dressed in their Sunday best and they had a royal time walking around and talking to the troops.

"Everything was going fine until just before they left. One of them spotted a piss lily and asked what it was.

"My sergeant major thought for a moment and then came out with a real beauty.

"You see lady," he told her, "those are breathing vents."

"Breathing vents?" she said. "Why are they there?"

"Well you see," lied the sergeant major through his teeth, "we have an underground operations room here and it is manned 24 hours a day by some of my men. Those tubes carry fresh air down to them."

"The ladies were fascinated by this and immediately asked if they could go down and visit the operations room. The sergeant major told them that unfortunately it was strictly off limits to unauthorised personnel and he would have to contact Pretoria to get special permission for them to enter the operations room.

"This seemed to satisfy them and we breathed a collective sigh of relief. Then, to our horror, one of the ladies walked straight up to the piss lily and stuck her face into the tube.

"Hello down there boys!" she shouted. "We just want to let you know that we're thinking about you and we appreciate everything you are doing."

"She stood up with a strange look on her face. The stench of urine must have been overpowering. She gasped for air a few times and then let out a weak smile. I avoided looking at the sergeant major because if I had I would have lost control of myself. I was biting the inside of my lips to stop from laughing.

"As soon as the ladies had boarded the bus and left, the sergeant major and I collapsed. Until that time I had never seen the sergeant major laugh, or even smile for that matter. But now we were rolling around on the floor with laughter.

"It later became a standing joke that every time one of the troops would walk past a piss lily they would shout, 'Hello down there boys!'"

While this story is not about the bush per se, it is still damn funny.

Frikkie did his national ser-

vice at 1 South African Infantry Battalion. He went on Junior Leader's Course and, according to Frikkie, there were a number of people on the course that did not want to be there.

They tried everything under the sun to get themselves thrown off the course. He tells this story of one of his comrades who did not wish to be on the course.

"I did my national service at 1 SAI in Bloemfontein. I was selected for an officer's training course that was very strict and many of the guys quickly realised that they did not want to be on this course.

"Some of them asked for a transfer, while others were thrown off the course. Some even developed 'medical problems' to ensure their removal from the course.

"Rifleman Paans decided that he was insane. In this way they would surely throw him off the course. The instructors, however, were not impressed and were very suspicious of Paans' sudden slide into insanity. So the instructors decided to keep an eye on Paans just to make one hundred percent sure that he was actually crazy and not just trying to fake it.

"Three months later, Paans was still with us, and still acting as mad as a hatter. He saw that his plan was not working and so came up with a last desperate effort.

"Every Friday we had the Company Commander's inspection and it was Paans' responsibility to ensure that the toilets in our bungalow were clean.

"Minutes before the Major entered the bungalow for inspection, our corporal did a fi-

nal check on everything to make sure it was clean, including the toilets.

"As the corporal left the toilets, Paans slipped in. He had taken crunchy peanut butter and shaped an object that was a perfect copy of something that looked as if it belonged in a toilet. He placed this object into one of the toilet bowls and then hurried back to stand next to his bed.

"When the Major eventually walked into the toilets to inspect them, he exploded with anger.

"What the devil is going on here corporal! Who is responsible for cleaning the toilets? Call him immediately!" screamed the Major.

"Rifleman Paans," bellowed the corporal, "Come here!"

Paans walked into the toilet with an innocent look on his face and came to a neat halt in front of the Major.

"And what the hell do you think this is," shouted the Major, pointing at the brown object in the toilet bowl.

"Paans carefully approached the toilet, peering inside. Then he put his hand into the bowl and broke a piece of the offending object off. He put it into his mouth and began to chew with a thoughtful expression.

"I think it's a turd Major", said Paans with a frown.

"Needless to say, Rifleman Paans was deemed as medically unfit to complete the course and spent the rest of his national service classified as a 'light duty'.

And that's it for this month's "On the lighter side" section. Trust you enjoyed it.

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