



Military Despatches

Vol 30 December 2019

Abandon ship

The sinking of the SAS President Kruger

Silent Night

**The day the guns
fell silent during
World War I**

Pork Chop Hill

The final battle of the Korean War

Dead giveaway

**How to spot someone that served in the
military**

For the military enthusiast



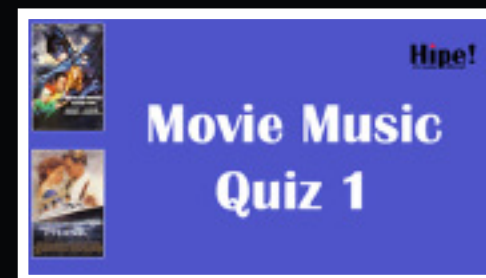
Click on any video below to view



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



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



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.



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



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



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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The military loves nicknames and slang. Here are a few questions about nicknames. See if you know the answers.



Editor's Sitrep

And so we come to that time of the year again. The Festive Season, or the Silly Season, depending on how you look at it.

Since my last Editor's Sitrep the Spingboks went on to win the Rugby World Cup (for the third time). Well done to the 'Boks.

November has been an interesting month. During my mis-spent youth I did a stint as an announcer on a radio show in Ireland and I really enjoyed it. In early November I began doing a show on Sunday mornings on Zone Radio 88.5 fm.

It's from 09h00 to 12h00 on Sundays and the best way to catch the show is via the Internet. Go to <http://zoneradio.co.za/> or click [here](#). Then click on "Listen Live" and there you go.

The station plays really good music from the 60s, 70s, 80s and early 90s - our kind of music. So tune in on a Sunday morning and give it a listen.

Regine Lord is not only a brilliant photographer, she is also the photo editor for Military Despatches.

She also has an affinity for

the military and you will often see her at memorial parades and military events, armed with her camera.

In recognition for the excellent work that she does, Regine (better known as Reggie) was presented with the Certificate of Good Comradeship by the Memorable Order of Tin Hats on Sunday 24 November.

The award is known as the 'C' badge or Blue Button and is not presented to non-members of the Order that often. Well done Reggie! We are proud of you and it's well deserved.

You may notice that the article 'Silent Night' was also in last December's issue of the magazine. Yet it is such an inspiring story that we will run it every year in December.

That's about it for this month. I'm trying to get as much of the January issue done so that I can take a two week break over Christmas.

Here's wishing you and your loved ones a peaceful Christmas and an excellent New Year.

Matt

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media

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Front Cover

Hey, even soldiers need to get into the Christmas spirit. Especially those deployed away from home.



Ten Horrifically Dangerous Weapons

Let's face it, most weapons are dangerous. After all, the purpose of a weapon is to cause death or injury. But these ten weapons take things to another level.

Humanity has spent almost its entire time as a species trying to figure out the optimal way to kill each other. And let's face it, they've become pretty good at it.

Most weapons are dangerous. After all, the purpose of a weapon is to cause death or injury. Even everyday objects can be used as weapons.

A pen can be used to stab someone and a hammer can be used to bash someone over the head. But they were not invented or designed to be used as weapons.

The following ten objects were not only designed to be weapons, they were designed to be deadly weapons.

10. Hollow Point bullets

The majority of military firearms make use of ball ammunition, often referred to as a full metal jacket bullet.

The projectile consists of a soft core (often lead) encased in a shell of harder metal, such as gilding metal, cupronickel, or, less commonly, a steel alloy.

Ball ammunition is designed to penetrate a target cleanly and will often pass through the target unless it strikes a bone. It is not uncommon for a bullet to pass through the target and hit a second target.

This is ideal in a combat situation, but not all that great in a

hostage situation or an aircraft hijacking. In cases such as these the bullet may hit a target, pass through them, and hit a hostage with the potential of wounding or even killing the hostage.

What was needed was a bullet that, when it hit the target, would expand and not exit the body. This led to the design of the hollow point bullet.

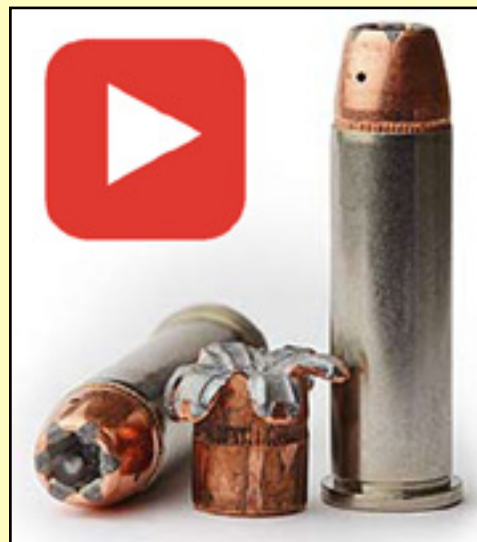
The first hollow-point bullets were marketed in the late 19th century as express bullets, and were hollowed out to reduce the bullet's mass and provide higher velocities. In addition to providing increased velocities, the hollow also turned out to provide significant expansion, especially when the bullets were cast in a soft lead alloy.

Hollow point bullets were produced at the British arsenal in Dum Dum, near Calcutta around 1890. This is why hollow point bullets are sometimes known as dum dum bullets.

When a hollow point bullet strikes a person it penetrates and then immediately expands. The bullet will not exit the body and it causes far worse internal damage than a normal ball round.

A hollow point bullet also delivers massive trauma to the body and will normally drop the target where it stands.

The Hague Convention of 1899, Declaration III, prohibit-



ed the use in international warfare of bullets that easily expand or flatten in the body.

It is a common misapprehension that hollow-point ammunition is prohibited by the Geneva Conventions, as the prohibition significantly pre-dates those conventions. The Saint Petersburg Declaration of 1868 banned exploding projectiles of less than 400 grams, along with weapons designed to aggravate injured soldiers or make their death inevitable.

NATO members do not use small arms ammunition that is prohibited by the Hague Convention and the United Nations. That is until the United States started issuing the new Sig-Sauer, M-17 9mm pistol, with the Winchester Arms company making a hollow point bullet for the new squad level pistol, and subsequently deploying soldiers with this ammunition.

Despite the ban on military

use, hollow-point bullets are one of the most common types of bullets used by civilians and police, which is due largely to the reduced risk of bystanders being hit by over-penetrating or ricocheted bullets, and the increased speed of incapacitation.

Watch the video on the left to compare the effects on a target hit by a ball round to one hit by a hollow point round.

9. AC-130 Spectre

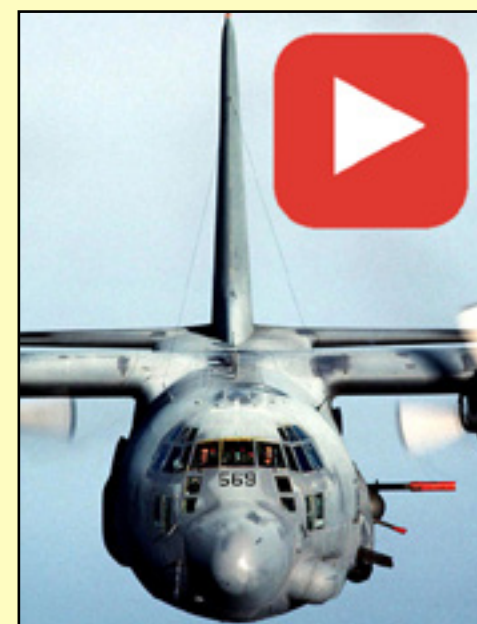
Most people that served in the South African Defence Force will remember the C-130 Hercules transport aircraft. They were used to fly troops to and from the border and were nicknamed 'Flossie'.

Now imagine a Flossie on steroids and with a serious attitude problem and you have the AC-130 Spectre.

The Lockheed AC-130 gunship is a heavily armed, long-endurance, ground-attack variant of the C-130 Hercules transport, fixed-wing aircraft. It carries a wide array of ground attack weapons that are integrated with sophisticated sensors, navigation, and fire-control systems.

Developed during the Vietnam War as "Project Gunship II", the AC-130 replaced the Douglas AC-47 Spooky, or "Gunship I". The Douglas AC-47 gunship was nicknamed "Puff the Magic Dragon".

The AC-130 has an unpresurised cabin, with the weaponry mounted to fire from the port side of the fuselage. During an attack, the gunship performs a



pylon turn, flying in a large circle around the target, therefore being able to fire at it for far longer than in a conventional strafing attack.

The AC-130 Spectre packs a powerful punch. It is armed with a single General Dynamics 25 mm GAU-12/U Equalizer 5-barreled rotary cannon. It is capable for firing 1,800 - 4,200 rounds per minute from a maximum range of 3,660 metres.

Then there is the 40 mm L/60 Bofors cannon. A popular anti-aircraft gun during World War II, it can fire 120 rounds per minutes from a maximum range of 7,160 metres.

Finally there is the 105 mm M102 howitzer, capable of firing a maximum of 10 rounds per minute. Any two of the weapons can be fired at the same time.

The AC-130 Spectre has a number of defensive counter-measures, including the BAE Systems AN/ALE-47 Countermeasure Dispensing System (CMDS) – chaff/flare dispenser.

8. Dragon's Breath

The name suggests that this is something that you would find in the popular television series 'Game of Thrones'. Yet that's not the case.

Dragon's breath is a shotgun round that can literally set you on fire.

Dragon's breath is a special type of incendiary-effect round for a 12 gauge) shotgun.

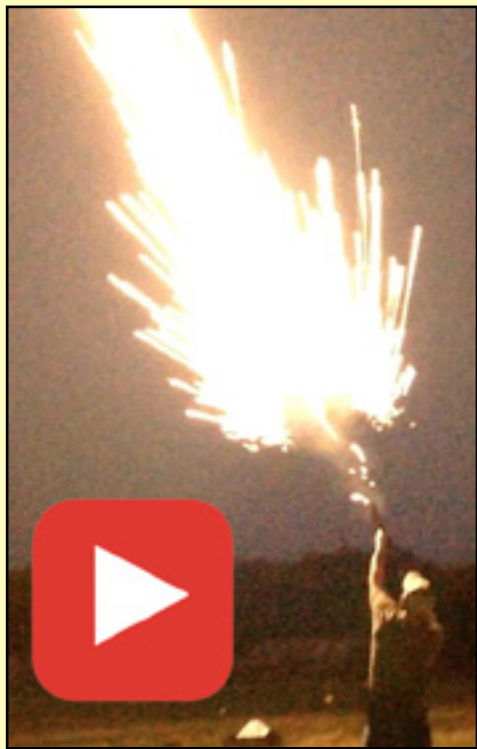
Dragon's breath consists primarily of magnesium pellets/shards. When the round is fired, sparks and flames can shoot out to about 30 metres, although, some sources claim it extends to 91 metres.

Dragon's breath is normally chambered in 12 gauge (18.5 mm × 69.9 mm) shot shell. The rounds are safe to fire out of an improved cylinder bore as well as a modified choke barrel, common on many shotguns.

While its combat or tactical usage remains undocumented, the visual effect it produces is impressive and entertaining, similar to that of a short-ranged flamethrower or fireworks.

Also undocumented, it has been claimed by enthusiasts that the rounds are often used as a distress signal, similar to a very short duration emergency flare gun, though some would argue a flare would be better suited for such.

It may also be used as a less-than-lethal option for self/home defence, although the less-than-lethal aspect and safety are disputed, as the magnesium shards burn at approximately 1,650 °C, which is more



than enough to light a person, or house, on fire.

Due to the shells being low-pressure charged rounds, it is not suited to be used in a semi-automatic shotgun as it does not produce enough recoil energy to cycle the automated action, causing the mechanism to fail to cycle.

7. Metal Storm

The highest rate of fire for a machine gun in service is the M134 Minigun. The weapon was designed in the late 1960s for helicopters and armoured vehicles. It fires 7.62 mm calibre rounds at a blistering rate of 6,000 rounds per minute, or 100 rounds per second - about ten times that of an ordinary machine gun. The Metal Storm makes the M134 Minigun seems like a toy.

The Metal Storm gun is a prototype 36 barrel weapons that can fire 1,000,000 9mm rounds

per minute. And no, that's not a typing error. It can fire 16,000 rounds per second.

It was developed in 1997 by Australian company 'Metal Storm'. The prototype managed to achieve a maximum rate of fire of 1.62 million rounds per minute as it fired 180 rounds in a 0.01 second burst. At its peak, it can send, almost literally, a wall of 24,000 9mm rounds moving at Mach 5 that can eat through any armour it faces.



6. Depleted Uranium Rounds

If your enemy is armed with depleted uranium rounds, the last place you would want to be is inside a tank.

Depleted uranium rounds, also known as DU rounds, were developed as ordnance that could penetrate armoured tanks and bounce around inside, burning and destroying them from within.

Ordinary shells contain detonating powders, which will explode on impact. Their purpose is to destroy steel-plated tanks from outside, but they are quite inefficient in terms of destructiveness.

Steel bullets can hit, punch a hole and penetrate materials softer than steel, but they are not destructive enough to pierce

armoured tanks, for they are not effective against bulky steel.

Most military use of depleted uranium has been as 30 mm ordnance, primarily the 30 mm PGU-14/B armour-piercing incendiary round from the GAU-8 Avenger cannon of the A-10 Thunderbolt II used by the United States Air Force. 25 mm DU rounds have been used in the M242 gun mounted on the U.S. Army's Bradley Fighting Vehicle and the Marine Corps's LAV-25.

The U.S. Marine Corps uses DU in the 25 mm PGU-20 round fired by the GAU-12 Equalizer cannon of the AV-8B Harrier, and also in the 20 mm M197 gun mounted on AH-1 Cobra helicopter gunships.

The United States Navy's Phalanx CIWS's M61 Vulcan Gatling gun used 20 mm armour-piercing penetrator rounds with discarding plastic sabots and a core made using depleted uranium, later changed to tungsten.

Another use of depleted uranium is in kinetic energy penetrators, anti-armour rounds such as the 120 mm sabot rounds fired from the British Challenger 1, Challenger 2, M1A1 and M1A2 Abrams.

Kinetic energy penetrator rounds consist of a long, relatively thin penetrator surrounded by a discarding sabot.

Staballoys are metal alloys of depleted uranium with a very small proportion of other metals, usually titanium or molybdenum. One formulation has a composition of 99.25% by mass



of depleted uranium and 0.75% by mass of titanium.

Staballoys are approximately 1.67 times as dense as lead and are designed for use in kinetic energy penetrator armour-piercing ammunition. The US Army uses DU in an alloy with around 3.5% titanium.

Depleted uranium is favoured for the penetrator because it is self-sharpening and flammable. On impact with a hard target, such as an armoured vehicle, the nose of the rod fractures in such a way that it remains sharp.

The impact and subsequent release of heat energy causes it to ignite. When a DU penetrator reaches the interior of an armoured vehicle, it catches fire, often igniting ammunition and fuel, killing the crew and possibly causing the vehicle to explode.

DU is used by the U.S. Army in 120 mm or 105 mm cannons employed on the M1 Abrams tank. The Russian military has used DU ammunition in tank main gun ammunition since the late 1970s, mostly for the 115 mm guns in the T-62 tank and the 125 mm guns in the T-64, T-72, T-80, and T-90 tanks.

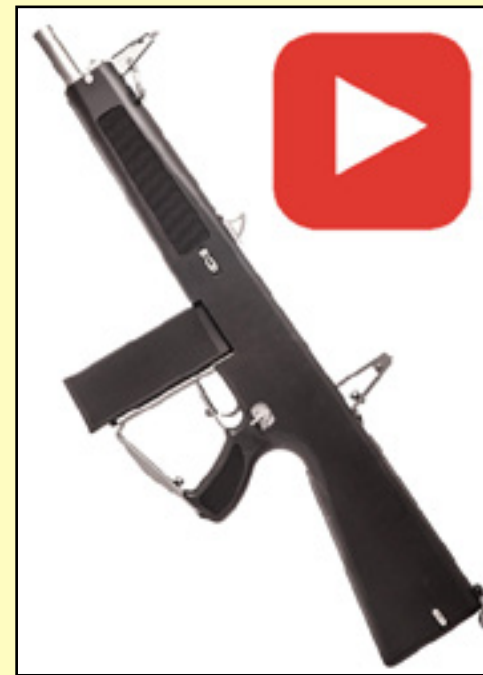
5. AA-12 Shotgun

The Auto Assault-12 (AA-12), originally designed and known as the Atchisson Assault Shotgun, is a gas-operated shotgun developed in 1972 by Maxwell Atchisson. The most prominent feature is reduced recoil. The current version has been developed over 18 years since the patent was sold to Military Police Systems, Inc.

What makes this weapon scary is the fact that it can fire up to 300 rounds per minute. And it can fire a large selection of ammunition ranging from buckshot to HE grenades.

And yes, you did read that last part correctly - it can fire HE grenades. So if a 32 round drum magazine was loaded with HE grenades, it would take just under seven seconds to deliver this payload onto target. This could really give you a bad day.

The weapon operates in fully automatic only. However, the relatively low cyclic rate of 300 rounds per minute allows the operator to fire one round at a time with brief trigger pulls. It is fed from either an 8-shell box magazine, or a 20- or 32-shell drum magazine.



4. Barrett M82

Sniper rifles are nothing new, but the Barrett M82, standardized by the U.S. military as the M107, is a recoil-operated, semi-automatic anti-materiel sniper system in a class of its own.

It fires a 12.7 × 99mm NATO (.50 BMG) round at a muzzle velocity of 853 m/s over an effective distance of 1,800 metres.

The size and speed of the bullet means that it can easily punch through a concrete wall with no problem, and still take out a target standing behind the wall.

The M82- also known as the SASR (Special Applications Scoped Rifle) is designed as a multi-role weapon system - capable of engaging lightly-armoured vehicle, detonating ordnance (such as IEDs) at safe ranges or engaging enemy personal (with dire results to the human target).

While the effective range is



1,500 metres, hits have been scored as far away as 2,500 metres. API (Armoured Piercing, Incendiary) rounds have proven effective against hardened targets such as buildings, trucks and parked aircraft.

The M82 has also been used to engage human targets through walls though anti-personnel work is not the primary application for the weapon.

3. Napalm

Napalm is an incendiary mixture of a gelling agent and a volatile petrochemical (usually gasoline (petrol) or diesel fuel).

The title is a portmanteau of the names of two of the constituents of the original thickening and gelling agents: co-precipitated aluminium salts of naphthenic and palmitic acids.

Napalm B is the more modern version of napalm (utilizing styrene derivatives) and, although distinctly different in its chemical composition, is often referred to simply as “napalm”.

Napalm burns at the same temperature as gasoline, and for a greater duration, as well as being more easily dispersed

and sticking tenaciously to its targets; these traits make it extremely effective (and controversial) in the anti-structure and anti-personnel role.

It has been widely used in both the air and ground role, with the largest used to date being via air-dropped bombs in World War II (most notably in the gruesomely effective incendiary attacks on Japanese cities in 1945), and later close air support roles in Korea and Vietnam.



Napalm became an intrinsic element of U.S. military action during the Vietnam War as forces made increasing use of it for its tactical and psychological effects. Reportedly about 388,000 tons of U.S. napalm bombs were dropped in the region between 1963 and 1973, compared to 32,357 tons used over three years in the Korean War, and 16,500 tons dropped on Japan in 1945.

A variant of napalm was produced in Rhodesia for a type of ordnance known as Frantan between 1968 and 1978 and was deployed extensively by the Rhodesian Air Force during that country's bush war. The South African Air Force fre-

quently deployed napalm from Atlas Impala strike aircraft during raids on guerrilla bases in Angola during the South African Border War.

Other instances of napalm's use include by France during the First Indochina War (1946–1954), the Algerian War (1954–1962), the Portuguese Colonial War (1961–1974), the Six-Day War by Israel (1967), in Nigeria (1969), India and Pakistan (1965 and 1971), Egypt (1973), by Morocco during the Western Sahara War (1975–1991), by Argentina (1982), by Iran (1980–88), by Iraq (1980–88, 1991), By IPKF (Indian Peace keeping force) in 1987 against Tamils (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, by Angola during the Angolan Civil War, and Yugoslavia (1991–1996).

Recently, Turkey has been accused of using Napalm in its war against Kurdish militias over Afrin. Turkey's General Staff, however, denies this.

When used as a part of an incendiary weapon, napalm can cause severe burns (ranging from superficial to subdermal), asphyxiation, unconsciousness, and death. In this implementation, napalm fires can create an atmosphere of greater than 20% carbon monoxide and fire storms with self-perpetuating winds of up to 110 kilometres per hour.

Napalm is effective against dug-in enemy personnel. The burning incendiary composition flows into foxholes, trenches and bunkers, and drainage and irrigation ditches and other

improvised troop shelters. Even people in undamaged shelters can be killed by hyperthermia, radiant heat, dehydration, asphyxiation, smoke exposure, or carbon monoxide poisoning.

One fire bomb released from a low-flying plane can damage an area of 2,100 square metres.

2. Kinetic bombardment

A kinetic bombardment or a kinetic orbital strike is the hypothetical act of attacking a planetary surface with an inert projectile, where the destructive force comes from the kinetic energy of the projectile impacting at very high speeds. The concept originated during the Cold War.

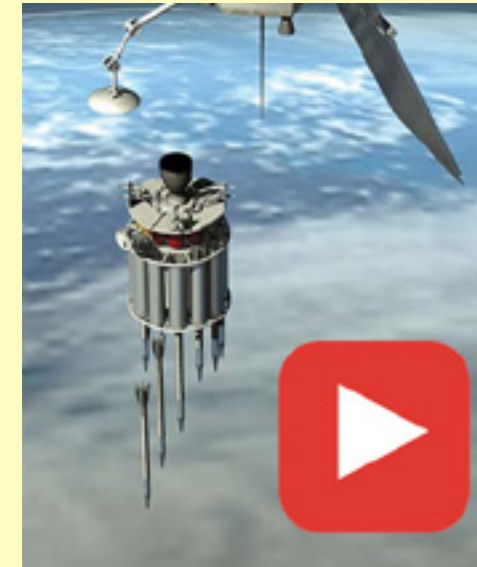
The typical depiction of the tactic is of a satellite containing a magazine of tungsten rods and a directional thrust system. When a strike is ordered, the launch vehicle would brake one of the rods out of its orbit and into a suborbital trajectory that intersects the target.

As the rod approaches periaapsis due to gravity, it picks up immense speed until it reaches terminal velocity shortly before impact. The rods would typically be shaped to minimize air resistance and maximize terminal velocity.

Kinetic bombardment has the advantage of being able to deliver projectiles from a very high angle at a very high speed, making them extremely difficult to defend against. In addition, projectiles would not require explosive warheads, and - in the simplest designs -

would consist entirely of solid metal rods, giving rise to the common nickname “Rods from God”.

In theory, a kinetic bomb would cause approximately the same damage as a nuclear weapon, but without the resulting radiation and fallout.



1. Thermobaric Weapons

A thermobaric weapon, aerosol bomb, or vacuum bomb, is a type of explosive that uses oxygen from the surrounding air to generate a high-temperature explosion, and in practice the blast wave typically produced by such a weapon is of a significantly longer duration than that produced by a conventional condensed explosive.

The fuel-air explosive (FAE) is one of the best-known types of thermobaric weapons.

Most conventional explosives consist of a fuel-oxidizer premix (gunpowder, for example, contains 25% fuel and 75% oxidizer), whereas thermobaric weapons are almost 100% fuel, so thermobaric weapons are significantly more energetic than con-

ventional condensed explosives of equal weight.

Their reliance on atmospheric oxygen makes them unsuitable for use underwater, at high altitude, and in adverse weather. They are, however, considerably more destructive when used against field fortifications such as foxholes, tunnels, bunkers, and caves - partly due to the sustained blast wave and partly by consuming the oxygen inside.

According to a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency study, “the effect of an FAE explosion within confined spaces is immense. Those near the ignition point are obliterated. Those at the fringe are likely to suffer many internal, and thus invisible injuries, including burst eardrums and crushed inner ear organs, severe concussions, ruptured lungs and internal organs, and possibly blindness.”

Another Defence Intelligence Agency document speculates that because the “shock and pressure waves cause minimal damage to brain tissue ... it is possible that victims of FAEs are not rendered unconscious by the blast, but instead suffer for several seconds or minutes while they suffocate”.



Special Forces - China

Part Ten of a series that takes a look at Special Forces units around the world. This month we look at the People's Republic of China.

China has the largest armed forces in the world, with some two million men and women serv-

ing with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) alone. They also have at their disposal a large number of special forces who are organised into spear-head units for large-scale assaults prior to the arrival of conventional forces.

The People's Liberation Army special operations forces (simplified Chinese: *pinyin*: Zhōng-

guó Rénmín Jiěfàngjūn tèzhōng bùduì) are the special forces of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA).

The size of the Special Operations Forces is estimated to be between 7,000 and 14,000 troops. The forces intended combat role is as rapid-response units in the event of a limited regional war under high-tech conditions. They also carry out commando, counter-terrorism, and intelligence gathering op-

erations.

The building up of China's special forces represents a shift in the country's operational thinking, from an army-dominated force structure to emphasizing integrated joint operations, with a flexible elite force.

Between the 1950s and 1980s, the PLA relied on specially trained reconnaissance units within its ground forces for some special missions. Each military region had a regiment-sized reconnaissance group directly organic to the military region headquarters (MRHQ).

Army corps and divisions also had their own subordinated reconnaissance units (usually battalion or company sized). Although these reconnaissance units were not 'special forces' using the modern definition, their missions covered the

spectrum of special operations tasking.

The Sino-Vietnam border conflicts that took place in 1979 and the 1980s were the first wake-up call to the PLA that it lacked a dedicated special forces capability. During the conflicts, the Vietnamese Special Forces operating in small groups caused the PLA considerable casualties and losses.

Towards the end of the conflicts, the PLA quickly learned from these lessons and began to send its own special forces units, most composed of personnel from army reconnaissance unit, to operate behind enemy lines for raiding, ambushing, kidnapping, reconnaissance and other special operations.

China created its elite special forces and Rapid Reaction Units (RRU) in the 1980s, starting with the Special Reconnaissance Group in 1988.

Modern Chinese special forces are modelled upon the Russian special forces pattern.

Although adept at guerrilla warfare and special missions, the PLA did not have a dedicated special forces component until the early 1990s when China underwent a doctrinal change from 'people's war' towards 'fighting a local war under high-tech conditions'.

Chinese Special Forces now consist of PLA Army SF, PLA Army aviation units, PLA Rocket Forces, PLA Navy Marine Corps, PLA Air Forces Airborne troops and the People's Armed Police Force units.

Initially, PLA Army Special Forces were under the command of one of seven Military Region HQs (replaced by five Theatre Commands) but, from around 2003, command transitioned to Group Armies (which are distributed among the Theatre Commands).

Special Operations Forces

- Beijing Military Region – "Oriental Sword". All 3,000 soldiers in this unit can complete all types of operations and are regarded as the elite arm of the country.
- Beijing Military Region Spe-



cial Forces Unit – “Arrow”. Established in the early 1990s, this unit is equipped with high-tech equipment including unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicles (UARVs), individual blast devices and handheld laser dazzling weapons. Every soldier from this unit must be able to run five kilometres bearing heavy equipment in under 25 minutes, complete a 400-meter obstacle course in under one minute and 45 seconds, perform 100 push-ups in a minute, and repeatedly throw grenades more than 50 metres.

- Guangzhou Military Region Special Forces Unit – “South Blade” or “South China Sword”. This unit was established in 1988 as the PLA’s first special reconnaissance group. It was expanded in 2000 to become the first PLA special operations unit to be capable of air-, sea-, and land-operations, similar to U.S. Navy SEALs. Basic training for this unit includes cross-country running, climbing, swimming and shooting. The soldiers must also be familiar with operating 15 advanced technologies including GPS navigation, night vision, and photo reconnaissance.
- Chengdu Military Region Special Forces Unit – Falcon. Established in 1992, this unit is specialized in target locating and indicating, airborne insertion, sabotage and offensive strikes, and emergency evacuation. The unit was also used by Chengdu Military Region

to experiment with new advanced concept equipment and tactics, including the digitized army soldier system and high-mobility land weapon platforms.

- Shenyang Military Region Special Forces Unit – “Siberian Tiger”. This unit is trained to complete missions on the ground and in the air and water, as well as surviving in the wilderness alone or in small groups. The unit is said to place special focus on survival skills; it often breaks protocol by increasing this training by two-thirds, forcing soldiers to spend three to four months in difficult environments such as forests, mountains, deserts and grasslands with no man-made shelter or food. Soldiers in the unit are trained on multiple transport vehicles for roads, railroads, waterways, and in the air. Individual members of the unit have reportedly completed parachute landings more than 5,000 times and logged scuba diving training of more than 1,000 hours.
- Nanjing Military Region Special Forces Unit – Flying Dragon. This is the special land force of east China’s Nanjing Military Region.
- Nanjing Military Region Special Forces Unit – Oscar.
- Lanzhou Military Region Special Forces Unit – Night Tiger. This unit has a long history, with its origins dating back to World War II. It is the home of China’s first counter-terrorism unit, established in 2000.
- Jinan Military Region Spe-



Special Forces shoulder flash

cial Forces Unit – Eagle. Soldiers from this unit are said to focus on training to enhance cardiovascular endurance, including being able to run at least 3,300 meters in under 12 minutes. They also reportedly engage in hand-to-hand combat training and the traditional Chinese health and martial arts practice of Qigong. Soldiers of the Eagle special force can complete sea-air-land operations, in a similar way to the U.S. Navy SEALs.

- Leishen (Thundergod) Commando Airborne Force is trained for reconnaissance operations for the PLA’s airborne units. It is capable of performing strategic deterrence, combat assault, and task operations under IT-based conditions. Members of this unit recently attended the Golden Owl-2015 International Competition of Special Forces held in Kazakhstan, and won first place. Representatives also attended the Russia International Army Games in 2015

Special Forces Weapons



5.8×21 mm QSW-06 pistol



5.8×21mm QCW-05 submachine gun



5.8×42 mm QBZ-95B assault rifle



5.8×42 mm QBZ-95 LSW LMG

where they took first place in the Airborne Platoon competition. Ten teams, from Kazakhstan, Belarus, China, Russia, Indonesia and Singapore, attended the competition.

- Sea Dragon is the People’s Liberation Army Navy commando force. Members of this force are equipped with black uniforms. Its first publicly known mission was to accompany three Chinese warships in protecting and escorting commercial ships against Somali pirates in December 2008, in cooperation with other nations as part of a UN mandate. Since then, the unit has participated in anti-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden for over 300 days. Sea Dragon’s Jiaolong Assault Team helped evacuate 225 foreign nationals and almost 600 Chinese citizens from Yemen’s southern port of Aden during late March 2015, during the Yemeni Civil War.
- The Southwest China Falcon special force is known as Leopard.

Operations

Although China is very secretive about the role of its special forces and their operations over the past few decades, it is known that they have mounted a number of low-key operations in neighbouring countries for reconnaissance and intelligence-gathering purposes.

Units of the Special Warfare Group were also tasked with guarding the US Orion spy-plane that was forced to land in China following a collision

with a Chinese fighter aircraft in 2001.

This incident led to a serious political crisis, which at one stage threatened to lead to military action, as China refused to release the captured American aircrew. The crisis was eventually resolved peacefully following intense diplomatic negotiations that secured the release of both the aircraft and its crew.

Chinese nationals have also been seen in Afghanistan, observing the operations of both British and American forces. When questioned about their presence in the region, the men stated that they were journalists reporting on the war.

However, it is generally believed that they were members of a Chinese special forces reconnaissance unit sent to gather intelligence on Western forces operating in the region because a small number of Chinese nationals were known to be fighting for the Al Qaeda/Taliban forces.

Such an operation is no different to those carried out by both British and American special forces during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the late 1980s.

Training

The major focus of much Chinese media coverage about SOF training is on the physical toughness of SOF personnel, insertion methods, weapons qualification and close combat skills.

Individuals and small units frequently demonstrate their skills in internal PLA and international special operations competitions, where they dis-



JOINT EXERCISE: SANDF Special Forces training with Chinese Special Operations Forces in China in 2017.

play their technical competence. PLA SOF personnel and units have participated in numerous training exercises with foreign countries, including militaries from Russia, Pakistan, Thailand, Indonesia and Jordan. They have also sent personnel for training in Israel, Turkey, Estonia and Venezuela.

SOF units frequently are integrated into combined arms and joint training exercises in conjunction with conventional force manoeuvre and assault, often conducting reconnaissance, raids or sabotage behind enemy lines after helicopter insertion.

The Queshan Combined Arms Training Base has been designated specifically for special operations training.

However, employment of SOF units is still considered in the exploratory phase, and some infantry or armoured commanders have been judged not to have used them properly in training.

Special Operations Unit

The Special Operations Unit (SOU) was formed in the mid-1980s and operates from out of a base in the Beijing Military Region. The SOU is very similar to the US Delta Force in structure and composition, and is tasked with conducting similar missions – namely counter-terrorism, light strike, hostage rescue, POW rescue, hit-and-run, search and rescue, and anti-piracy attacks.

Selection and training standards for the SOU are comparable to those of Western special forces units and indeed have a similar drop-out rate, reportedly 50-90 percent. Recruits are generally selected from the best units within the PLA and undergo training in parachuting (static line, free fall, and use of powered chutes), heliborne insertions and extraction, sniping, rappelling, scuba diving, boat skills, martial arts, reconnaissance, and foreign languages.

The military does Christmas

Throughout time those that have served in the military have often spent Christmas away from their home, family and loved ones. Yet it doesn't mean that they don't celebrate the fact.

Christmas is usually a time for being home with family, friends and loved ones. Yet for those in the military this is not always possible.

Many soldiers may find themselves on duty on Christmas Day, or they may be on deployment far from home. There is always a possibility that they many caught up in a war. Wars do not stop and take a break just because it's Christmas (except on rare occasions such as in December 1915).

Yet that doesn't mean that those in the military don't celebrate the fact that it is Christmas. Over the years many units and regiments have developed their own Christmas traditions. One way of celebrating is through the medium of song.

In this article we will look at just a few songs and videos that have become popular with those serving in the military. Click on the blue underlined links to view a video of the song.

Stop The Cavalry

Set in the trenches of the First World War, Stop The Cavalry by British singer Jona Lewie, was released in 1980 and is now heard as a Christmas song.

Lewie said that the song was never intended as a Christmas hit, and that it was a protest song.

Christmas 1915

Celtic Thunder is an Irish singing group and stage show known for its eclectic, theatrical style show.

Their song Christmas 1915 is based on the famous Christmas truce during World War I.

Baba Yetu

This song was composed as the theme song for the 2005 video game Civilization IV. It is the Lord's Prayer in Swahili.

It has since become a popular song, especially over Christmas. Here it is performed by the United States Navy Band.

So This Is Christmas

Made popular by Céline Dion, this is a version done by the Trinidad Armed Forces.

All I Want For Christmas

When the Royal Navy amphibious assault ship HMS Ocean was on deployment in the Middle East over Christmas 2011, the crew decided to make a video.

It was uploaded to YouTube and since then has been viewed more than five million times.

I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday

Not to be outdone, the Royal Navy Type 23 'Duke' class frigate HMS Argyll made their own video while on deployment in the Far East over Christmas 2018.

White Christmas

This evergreen Christmas favourite was one of Bing Crosby's signature songs.

Here it is performed by the US Navy Band.

Bluegrass Christmas Medley

The popular US Army Band performs a medley of Christmas hits in a bluegrass style.

We Are The World

Released in 1985 to raise money for charities, We Are The World was performed by USA for Africa, a group made up of some of America's top singers and musicians. In 2014 the Norwegian Army did their own cover version of the song.

It was clear that none of them should give up their military careers.

Battle Hymn Of The Republic

This song is popular throughout the year, including Christmas. Here it is performed by the US Army Field Band.

Hallelujah

Sailor Jerri is a US Navy Veteran. She started playing guitar and singing for the long term care at the VA, and in veteran support groups.

This is her version of Hallelujah, the hit song written and performed by Leonard Cohen.

Silent Night

The First World War had been raging for nine months and countless lives had already been lost. Yet on 24 December 1914 the guns along the Western Front fell silent. It was the first Christmas of the war and the opposing soldiers were determined to celebrate the fact.

It was called the 'Great War' or 'The War to end all Wars'. It had begun in April 1914 and by the time it ended in November 1918 more than 10 million lives would be lost. Yet in 1939, a mere 21 years later, the world was at war once

again. This new conflict would become known as World War II and the 'Great War' of 1914-18 would be renamed World War I.

By December 1914 the war had become static. An elaborate trench system had been constructed by both the Germans and the Allies. In some places troops faced each other with less than 100m of 'no-man's

land' between them. December 1914 would also see the first Christmas of the war.

A few months earlier Pope Benedict XV had begged the warring governments to declare a truce for Christmas, "that the guns may fall silent at least upon the night the angels sang." The Germans gave it serious consideration but the British

angrily denounced the Pope. On 24 December 1914, Christmas Eve, German troops in the region of Ypres, Belgium, began decorating the area around their trenches by placing candles on trees. The British troops watched with a mixture of confusion and more than a little suspicion.

Then the Germans began to sing *Stille Nacht*. While





FIRE: British guns fire at a German position. During the Battle of the Somme 1,738,000 shells were fired at the Germans. During this battle the British took over 60,000 casualties on the first day of the battle.

the words may have been unfamiliar the British troops could recognise the tune of *Silent Night*. The British troops responded by singing English carols.

The two sides began shouting Christmas greetings to each other. Many of the Germans had worked or studied in Britain and could speak English fluently.

There were calls for the two sides to meet in no-man's land. Tentatively, in ones and twos, troops began leaving the trenches on both sides. Normally if you showed the slightest part of your body above a trench it would be hit by a bullet within seconds. Now people were climbing out of trenches, exposing themselves to the other side.

It must have been a strange feeling for those involved. Earlier that day they had been trying to kill each other, as they had for the past nine months.

Now they were standing face to face with the enemy, shaking hands and greeting one another. Troops began to exchange small gifts such as whisky, jam, cigarettes, cigars and chocolate. The artillery in the region fell silent that night and, for the rest of the night, an eerie silence fell over the Western Front.

Mourning the dead

Early on Christmas morning troops began meeting in no-man's land again. Both sides took the opportunity to bury the many dead that lay in no-man's land. Proper burials were held and in many instances soldiers from both sides mourned the dead together and paid their respects.

In more than one sector informal football matches were arranged in no-man's land.

In many sectors, the truce lasted through Christmas night, but in some areas, it continued

until New Year's Day.

While the troops at the front may have been enjoying the break, the higher commands on both sides, especially the British, were furious. They ordered the artillery to open fire and gave orders for attacks to take place. After all, this was a war.

British commanders Sir John French and Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien vowed that no such truce would be allowed again, although both had left command before Christmas 1915. In all of the following years of the war, artillery bombardments were ordered on Christmas Eve to ensure that there were no further lulls in the combat.

Troops were also rotated through various sectors of the front to prevent them from becoming overly familiar with the enemy.



THANK YOU FRITZ: British and German soldiers met in no-man's land, exchanged greetings and gifts, and in some sectors even organised a game of soccer.

Celebrated and retold

The Christmas truce of 1914 has been celebrated and retold in songs (such as *Christmas 1914* by Mike Harding; *Christmas in the Trenches* by John McCutcheon; *Belleau Wood* by Garth Brooks; *Pipes of Peace* by Paul McCartney) film (*Joyeux Noel* and *Oh What a Lovely War*) and has also been the subject of a number of books.

In the final episode of *Blackadder Goes Forth*, the protagonists discuss events of the past that led them to their current situation, including the Christmas Truce. Captain Edmund Blackadder (Rowan Atkinson) was apparently still sore over being ruled offside during a football game with the Germans. He also cynically muses that "Both sides advanced further during one Christmas piss-up than they did in the next two-and-a-half years of war."

During the final episode Blackadder tries to fake insanity to get himself sent back to

England. It doesn't work.

As they are about to go over the top, Private Baldrick tells Blackadder he has a plan to get them out.

"At the signal, company will advance! Well, I'm afraid it'll have to wait," Blackadder says.

"Whatever it was, I'm sure it was better than my plan to get out of this by pretending to be mad. I mean, who would have noticed another madman around here? Good luck, everyone. Charge!!!"

On 7 November 2006, Irish singer Chris de Burgh paid £14,400 at Bonham's auction house for an original 10 page letter from an unknown British soldier that records events and incidents with the Germans on that night describing "the most memorable Christmas I've ever spent".

The letter begins:

This will be the most memorable Christmas I've ever spent or likely to spend: since about tea time yesterday I don't

think there's been a shot fired on either side up to now. Last night turned a very clear frost moonlight night, so soon after dusk we had some decent fires going and had a few carols and songs. The Germans commenced by placing lights all along the edge of their trenches and coming over to us-wishing us a Happy Christmas etc.

They also gave us a few songs etc. so we had quite a social party. Several of them can speak English very well so we had a few conversations. Some of our chaps went over to their lines. I think they've all come back bar one from 'E' Co. They no doubt kept him as a souvenir. In spite of our fires etc. it was terribly cold and a job to sleep between look out duties, which are two hours in every six.

First thing this morning it was very foggy. So we stood to arms a little longer than usual. A few of us that were lucky could go to Holy Communion early this morning. It was celebrated in a ruined farm about 500 yds behind us.

I unfortunately couldn't go. There must be something in the spirit of Christmas as to day we are all on top of our trenches running about. Whereas other days we have to keep our heads well down. We had breakfast about 8.0 which went down alright especially some cocoa we made. We also had some of the post this morning.

I had a parcel from B. G's Lace Dept containing a sweater, smokes, under clothes etc. We also had a card from the

On 21 November 2005, the last remaining Allied veteran of the truce, Alfred Anderson died in Newtyle, Scotland at the age of 109.

Queen, which I am sending back to you to look after please. After breakfast we had a game of football at the back of our trenches! We've had a few Germans over to see us this morning. They also sent a party over to bury a sniper we shot in the week. He was about a 100 yds from our trench. A few of our fellows went out and helped to bury him.

About 10.30 we had a short church parade the morning service etc. held in the trench. How we did sing. 'O come all ye faithful. And While shepherds watched their flocks by night' were the hymns we had. At present we are cooking our Christmas Dinner! so will finish this letter later.

Dinner is over! and well we enjoyed it. Our dinner party started off with fried bacon and dip-bread: followed by hot Xmas Pudding. I had a mascot in my piece.

Next item on the menu was muscatels and almonds, oranges, bananas, chocolate etc followed by cocoa and smokes. You can guess we thought of the dinners at home.

Just before dinner I had the pleasure of shaking hands with several Germans: a party of them came 1/2 way over to us so several of us went out to them. I exchanged one of my balaclavas for a hat. I've also got a



HELLO: Descendants of Great War veterans, in contemporary uniform, shake hands at the 2008 unveiling of a memorial to the truce.

button off one of their tunics. covered with ice... There are plenty of huge shell holes in front of our trenches, also pieces of shrapnel to be found. I never expected to shake hands with Germans between the firing lines on Christmas Day and I don't suppose you thought of us doing so. So after a fashion we've enjoyed? our Christmas. Hoping you spend a happy time also George Boy as well. How we thought of England during the day. Kind regards to all the neighbours.

The last living veteran of World War I was Florence Green, a British citizen who served in the Allied armed forces, and who died 4 February 2012, aged 110. The last combat veteran was Claude Choules who served in the British Royal Navy and died 5 May 2011, aged 110.

With much love from Boy.

On 11 November 2008, the first official Truce memorial was unveiled in Frelingheim, France, the site of a Christmas

Truce football game in 1914.

On 21 November 2005, the last remaining Allied veteran of the truce, Alfred Anderson died in Newtyle, Scotland at the age of 109.

Counting the cost

Nearly 8.5 million soldiers lost their lives during World War I. Germany suffered the highest loss with 1,773,700 followed by Russia with 1,700,000. France suffered 1,357,800 casualties and the British Empire, which included Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa, suffered 908,371. The United States of America, who entered the war in 1916, lost 116,516 men.

During World War II the casualty figures were even higher. More than 30 million

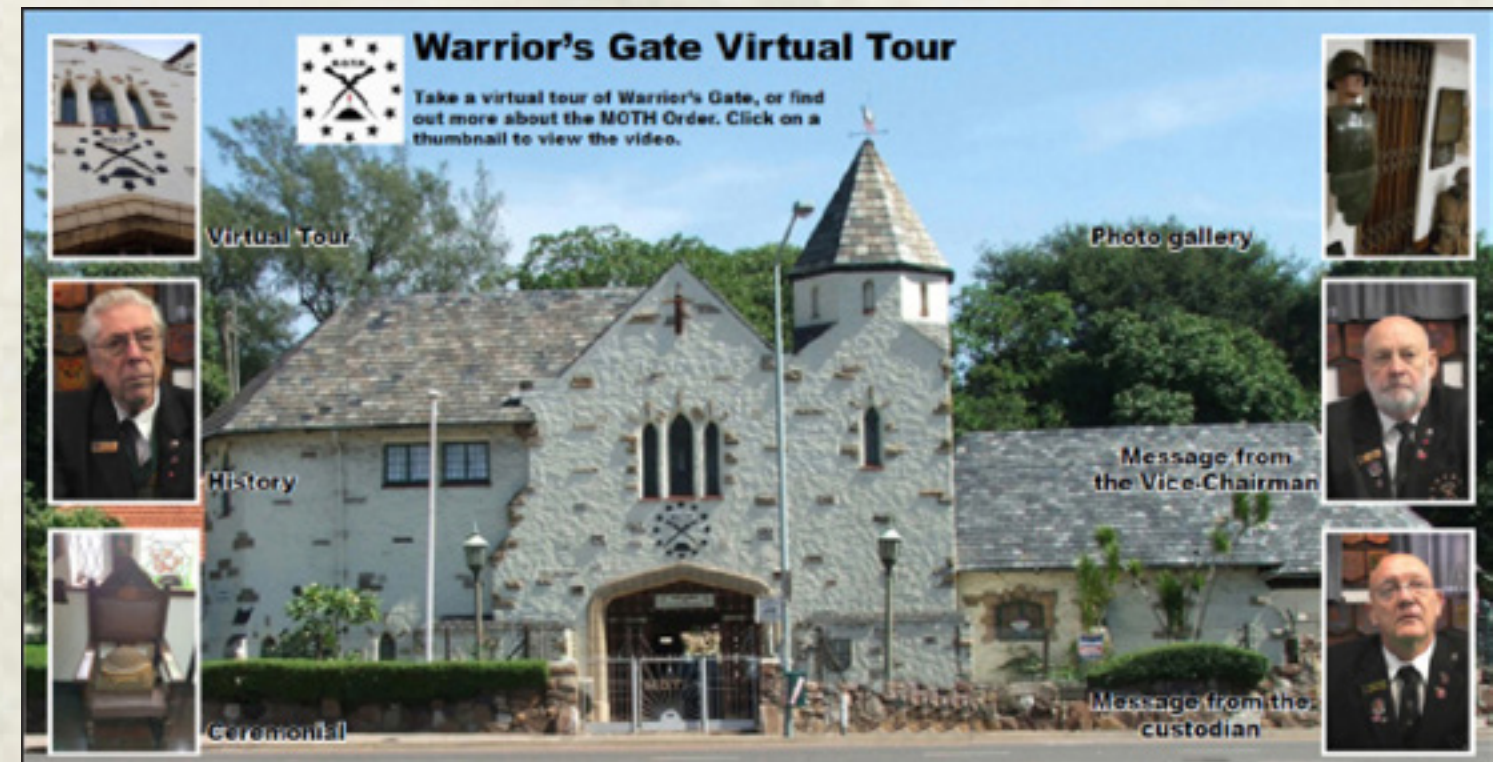
soldiers died, as did millions of civilians. The Russians alone lost more than 13 million troops.

Let us remember the spirit of the Christmas Truce and pray that our generation and generations to come never have to experience a war and that we never have to calculate the cost of World War III.

In closing I would like to quote the words of the Memorable Order of Tin Hats (MOTH) Credo, as it is very fitting.

They shall grow not old,
As we who are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them,
Nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun,
And in the morning,
We will remember them.

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



Abandon Ship

On the morning of 15 February 1982, the South African Navy flagship SAS President Kruger sank after a collision with the SAS Tafelberg. WO 1 (GI) Andre van Breda (Retired) was on board the PK on that fateful morning.

On the morning of 15 February 1982 two President-class Type 12 frigates - SAS President Kruger (PK), SAS President Pretorius (PP), the replenishment ship SAS Tafelberg, and the submarine SAS Emily Hobhouse - sailed to carry out the first anti-submarine exercises for the year. The weather conditions were good, except that the South East Wind had begun to blow.

On the evening of the 17 February, during the First Watch the weather conditions deteriorated to Sea State Five and the upper deck was placed out of bounds

to all except those on watch.

I was the Petty Officer watch and was instructed to rig life lines on the upper deck. Back then exercises were not cancelled because of weather conditions.

On the morning of 18 February 1982, President Kruger was conducting anti-submarine exercises for the Submarine Officer Commanding Course.

The high-intensity exercises progressed from 06:00 to 23:00 over several days, with different candidate submarine captains being given an opportunity of executing a mock attack against Tafelberg.

The rest of the day, the ships followed a narrow zig-zag course that allowed the submarine repeated opportunities to engage the surface ships in lower-intensity exercises while the bulk of the crew rested.

The frigates too were using the opportunity to carry out anti-submarine exercises, with each ship given a patrol sector ahead of Tafelberg. The escorts were expected to patrol their areas in a random fashion 1,800 - 4,600 metres from Tafelberg.

President Kruger's station was on Tafelberg's port side between 10 and 330 degrees and President Steyn had a station on

the starboard side.

Shortly before 04h00 the whole formation had to change direction by 154 degrees, a near complete reversal in direction, to stay within their training area.

The frigates had to change direction first to maintain their protective positions ahead of Tafelberg on the new heading. President Kruger's options were to turn 200 degrees to port, or 154 degrees to starboard.

While the latter turn was smaller and tactically sound, it was more dangerous as it involved turning towards the other two ships. Critically, the inexperienced officer of the watch (OOV) elected to turn to starboard, and initiated a turn with 10 degrees of rudder rather than the standard 15-degree turn. A 10-degree turn had a larger radius and would take longer to execute than a 15-degree turn, thereby allowing Tafelberg more time to close on the ship turning in front of her.

Shortly after beginning the turn, an argument ensued between the OOV and the principal warfare officer (PWO) over the proper amount of wheel to apply.

About two-thirds of the way through the turn, the operations room lost radar contact with Tafelberg in the clutter because the high-definition navigation radar was broken and the ship was using the less-precise search radar. The OOV was unable to recover the situation, and Tafelberg's bow impacted President Kruger on her port side. The force of the collision buckled the plates and crushed

ger where the Petty Officers sleeping quarters was located, killing or trapping those inside.

The time was 03h50 and the PK was 76 nautical miles from Cape Point. The Ship's Company went to emergency stations and the damage control teams to their positions.

At the time of the collision, I was asleep in mess two which was for'd of the 4.5 Gun Turret. During the collision I was thrown out of my bunk and landed on the mess table damaging my left leg.

My twin brother, Servaas, was also a member of the South African Navy. At the time he was at home, fast asleep. He woke, clutching his left leg and screaming with pain. My father ran to his assistance and was informed by Servaas, "My brother is in danger!"

When I reached the Flight Deck via the Captain's Cabin flat, the damage to the PK was visible even in the dark.

At the top of the hangar on the port side, it looked like somebody tore the side open with a can opener. There was also a 'V' shaped cut in the centre of the flight deck.

At approximately 04h10 the decision was made to abandon ship as there was, no way, the flooding could be contained and the ship had started listing to port.

When this order was executed and the rafts released, I could not believe that these events were taking place, as we were faced with the reality of leaving the safety of the ship in adverse conditions.

It was dark and the only light we had was that on our life

jackets and that on top of the rafts. At the time PK was lying broadside in the storm with the starboard life rafts floating together. As the PK was listing to port only the starboard life rafts could be used.

I left the ship from the Quarter Deck, which was under water and swam to the nearest Raft. With the PK listing to port one of the rafts was damaged by the stabiliser and the occupants swam to the raft that I was on.

Later we did a head count and we learnt that we were 40 inside sitting waist deep in water and 14 hanging on the outside. The only time the rafts could be blown clear of PK was when she rolled on her side.

At the time when PK's ships company took to the rafts, PP positioned herself at a safe distance for fear of PK's boilers exploding, at the same time shining her 20 inch signal lanterns on us to give us more light.

Whilst in the water a Shackleton from the Maritime Squadron flew low over the rafts, this seemed to have a calming effect on everyone.

Only when there was no danger from PK's boilers exploding did PP start the grim task of picking up the survivors. Only when Tafelberg had sorted out the damage caused from the collision, was she able to join PP in picking up survivors.

After approximately four hours of being in the water the personal in the raft that I was in were picked up by the PP.

I held onto the scrambling net keeping the raft next to PP's side while everyone climbed aboard PP. I took the Weapons Electrical Officer over my shoulder.



He was suffering badly from seasickness and was unable to help himself. I climbed up the scrambling net, and because of his weight, I just threw him on the deck.

The first person I can remember looking at was CPO Joe de Jager, and just threw my arms around him and hugged him. This was when the reality of what had happened hit me.

After the Mayday signal was sent a massive Air/Sea rescue Operation was launched. The Strike Craft SAS Jim Fouche was the first to sail at approximately 06h00, followed by MCM Squadron and the SAS Fleur.

At Cape Point the ships of the MCM Squadron and Fleur had to return to Simon's Town because of the weather conditions.

SAS Protea was in dry-dock at the time. The dry-dock was flooded and she sailed at approximately 11h00. Shortly after the Mayday signal a Shackleton aircraft was scrambled.

At first light the Super Frelon helicopters arrived with a refuelling point set up at Cape Point and the salvage tug Wolraad Woltemade sailed.

Two Military Hospital also went into a state of emergency

directing all other patients to other Sick Bays.

Only two men made it out of Mess 12, which was the point of impact, alive. WO Mac, who was then a Petty Officer, found himself between the bows of the Tafelberg and the side of the PK.

He managed to find a piece of drift wood, which kept him afloat. He was the first survivor to be picked up by the PP. Personal on board the PP said that he was like a champion surfer paddling on a surfboard.

PO Roodt was dragged out through hole in the side, and was one of the members who landed up in the intensive care at 2 Military Hospital.

If it was not for our high morale, discipline and training I feel more lives would have been lost. We were lucky that only 16 of the ships were lost in this collision.

Even though it has been nearly 38 years since that fateful morning, I can still remember those tragic events as if they happened a few days ago.

Often I still hear that loud bang that woke me and threw me out of my bunk as the collision took place.



SAS President Kruger Roll of Honour

In memory of those lost at sea.

- CPO Johannes Petrus Booyesen
- CPO Hartmut Wilfried Smit
- CPO Willem Marthinus Gerhardus Van Tonder
- CPO Donald Webb
- PO Stephanus Petrus Bothma
- PO Graham Alexander Frank Brind
- PO Robin Centlivre Bulterman
- PO Granville Williams De Villiers
- PO Evert Koen
- PO Hjalmar Lotter
- PO Roy Anthony McMaster
- Petty Officer Roy Frederick Skeates
- PO William Russel Smith
- PO Michael Richard Bruce Whiteley
- PO Coenraad Johannes Wium
- Able Seaman Gilbert Timothy Benjamin



SEA STATE FIVE: A photograph taken from the bow of the President Kruger on the afternoon before the accident.

We apologise for the quality of the photographs. They were, however, taken by one of the survivors using a small Instamatic camera.



ABOVE AND BELOW: Crew from the President Kruger are rescued by the President Pretorius.



SERIOUS DAMAGE: The damage to the bows of the SAS Tafelberg. This is where she hit into the side of the President Kruger.



SAS Tafelberg

The origin of 'Taps'

At military funerals, memorials and services you will hear the Last Post being sounded. Yet in America you will hear the sound of 'Taps'. Why is this, and where did Taps originate?

The sound of a lone bugler playing the Last Post has become one of the most distinctive sounds in the world. Eerie and evocative, it exists beyond all the usual barriers of nation, religion, race and class, charged with the memory of generations of the fallen. But it wasn't always like this.

The Last Post was first published in the 1790s, just one of the two dozen or so bugle calls sounded daily in British Army camps. The soldier's day started with the call of Reveille, and came to a close with the First Post.

This indicated that the duty officer was commencing his inspection of the sentry-posts on the perimeter of the camp. The inspection would take about 30 minutes, and at the end there would be sounded the Last Post, the name referring simply to the fact that the final sentry-post had been inspected.

During the 1850s when a soldier died in a foreign land, there was often no music available to accompany him on his final journey. The regimental bugler would sound the Last Post over the grave.

The symbolism was simple and highly effective. The Last Post now signalled the end not merely of the day but of this earthly life.

As the practice developed it was then followed by few moments of silent prayer and by the sounding of Reveille, the first call of the day, to signify the man's rebirth into eternal life.

In America, the Last Post is not played at military funerals, memorials and services. Instead they play a tune known as 'Taps'.

It all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain El-

licombe heard the moan of a soldier who lay mortally wounded on the field.

Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention.

Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment. When the captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The captain lit a lantern. Suddenly, he caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, he had enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status.

His request was partially granted. The captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for the son at the funeral.

That request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. Out of respect for the

father, they did say they could give him only one musician.

The captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of his dead son's uniform. This wish was granted. This music was the haunting melody we now know as "Taps" that is used at all military funerals.

A very touching and moving story, except for one small thing. There was no dead son, Confederate or otherwise; no lone bugler sounding out the dead boy's last composition.

There is no record of any man named Robert Ellicombe holding a commission as captain in the Army of the Potomac during the Peninsula Campaign.

The only thing remotely true about the story above is the fact that Taps' was composed in July 1862 at Harrison's Landing in Virginia.

The tune is a variation of an earlier bugle call known as the "Scott Tattoo", which was used in the U.S. from 1835 until 1860, and was arranged in its present form by the Union Army Brigadier General Daniel Butterfield, an American Civil War general and Medal of Honour recipient who commanded the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Division in the V Army Corps of the Army of the Potomac.

It was while at Harrison's Landing, Virginia, in July 1862 that he wrote the song to replace a previous French bugle call used to signal "lights out".

Butterfield's bugler, Oliver Wilcox Norton, was the first to sound the new call. Within months "Taps" was used by

both Union and Confederate forces. It was officially recognized by the United States Army in 1874.

"Taps" concludes many military funerals conducted with honours at Arlington National Cemetery and elsewhere in the United States.

The tune is also sounded at many memorial services in Arlington's Memorial Amphitheatre and at grave sites throughout the cemetery. It is also regularly played at the American Cemetery in Normandy, France, to commemorate the sacrifice made, at & around that site, by United States servicemen in WWII, during the allied effort to liberate Europe from the Nazis.

Captain John C. Tidball, West Point Class of 1848, started the custom of playing "Taps" at military funerals. In early July 1862 at Harrison's Landing, a corporal of Tidball's Battery A, 2nd U.S. Artillery, died.

He was, Tidball recalled later, "a most excellent man". Tidball wished to bury him with full military honours, but, for military reasons, he was refused permission to fire seven rifles three times - a 21-shot salute - over the grave.

Tidball later wrote, "The thought suggested itself to me to sound taps instead, which I did. The idea was taken up by others, until in a short time it was adopted by the entire army and is now looked upon as the most appropriate and touching part of a military funeral."

As Tidball proudly proclaimed, "Battery A has the honour of having introduced this custom into the service, and

it is worthy of historical note."

It became a standard component to U.S. military funerals in 1891.

"Taps" is sounded during each of the military wreath ceremonies conducted at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier every year, including the ones held on Memorial Day. The ceremonies are viewed by many people, including veterans, school groups, and foreign officials. "Taps" also is sounded nightly in military installations at non-deployed locations to indicate that it is "lights out", and often by Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Girl Guides to mark the end of an evening event such as a campfire.

"Taps" is a bugle call - a signal, not a song. As such, there is no associated lyric. Many bugle calls had words associated with them as a mnemonic device but these are not lyrics. A Horace Lorenzo Trim wrote a set of words intended to accompany the music.

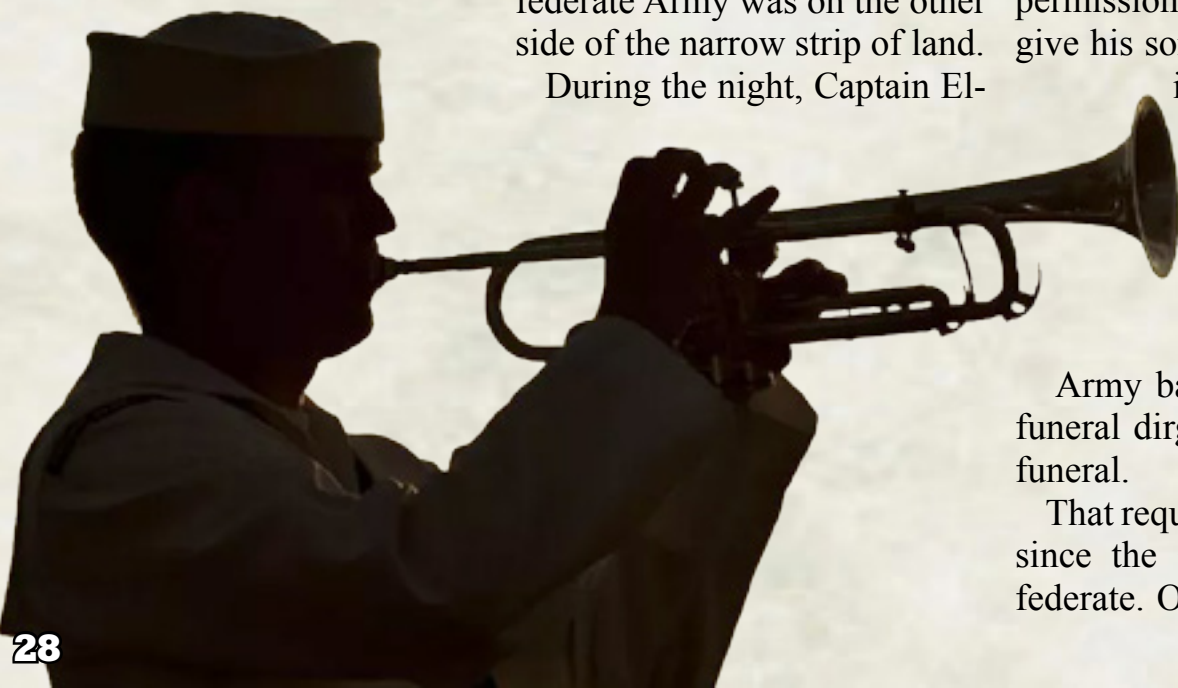
If there is no bugler or trumpeter available then the first verse of the song is normally sung *a capella*.

First verse of Taps

Day is done, gone the sun,
From the lake, from the hills,
from the sky;
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.



Click on the button to listen to 'Taps'.



Signs that someone served in the military

Want to know if someone is a military veteran? Matt Tennyson looks at some signs that are a dead give-away that someone served in the military.

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.

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 sixteen. Once you had completed your schooling or decided to leave school, the South African Defence Force required your services.

Initially, national service was for a period of eight months. This was later increased to one year and then to two years.

The initial full-time service was followed by twelve years service in the citizen force, divided into six two-year cycles. In each cycle a maximum of 120 days service was performed, of which no more than 90 days could be imposed during one year. A total, therefore, of 720 days.

After completion of service in the citizen force, there followed a further five years in the active citizen force reserve. During this period there was no

formal service obligation, other than what could be imposed by the Minister of Defence in the light of SA Defence Force operational requirements.

After five years in the active citizen force reserve, members were liable for service in the commando force until their 55th year, with a maximum service obligation of 12 days a year.

It can clearly be seen that the SADF didn't mess around. They wanted a fairly hefty chunk of your life and you were given no choice in the matter. You either reported for national service at the time and place specified on your call up papers or you faced prosecution and detention for up to 36 months.

Then there were those that served in the Permanent Force. These were men, and women, that had decided to make the South African Defence Force their career.

Shortly before September 1993 a decision was taken at cabinet level to do away with national service. Those that were currently busy with national service were told "Thank you, but you can go home now."

Many people that served in the South African Defence Force between 1966 and 1989 were involved in the Border War, and a lot of them saw combat action.

Today the youngest men that did national service would now be in the late 40s. Those that took part in the Border War would be in their 50s, 60s and 70s.

And even though most of these veterans served a long time ago, many of them still display mannerisms that were ingrained in them during the time they served in the military.

These signs are not unique to those that served in the South African Defence Force. During my time as a conflict journalist I had the opportunity to meet people that had served in other military forces such as Britain, America, Israel, France, Germany and more.

What was interesting to note that most of them had mannerisms that gave away the fact that they had served in the military at some stage - no matter which country they were from.

Nine times out of ten someone who was a soldier will recognise another person that served in the military, without a word being spoken.

For those that never served in the military, these signs may not be so easy to recognise. There are, however, a few things that you can look for which will usually be a good indication. Here are some of them you should be able to spot.



NAP TIME: Most soldiers will develop the knack to sleep anywhere at any time.

Ability to sleep anywhere

If you're the type of person that finds it essential to get eight hours sleep a night, then the military is probably not the right option for you.

Soldiers often have to go without sleep for long periods of time. So they will grab any opportunity to get even a few minutes sleep.

They will also develop the ability anywhere. When in the field, beds are not a luxury afforded to soldiers. So any piece of floor or ground will serve as a place to sleep. Even long after they have left the military they will be able to lie down on the lounge carpet and be asleep in minutes.

Grant did his national service during 1978 and 1979. He served in the South African Signals Corps and spent nearly a year in the operational area.

"I was a radio operator and spent nine months at a place called Okalongo," Grant says.

"There were three of us signallers and it was our job to man the radios in the ops room. We would take it in turns working a nine hour shift. This meant that you spent nine hours on duty and then 18 hours off. This meant that we didn't have to work the same shift all the time.

"Our accommodation consisted of a hole dug into the ground which was covered by the roof of a tent. We didn't have beds or mattresses. You put your sleeping bag on the floor, climbed into it, and slept.

"When I did the night shift from midnight to 10h00 I would sit in the chair in front of the radios, put the headset on, put my chin on my chest, and sleep like a baby for about four or five hours.

"It's funny, but when I went home on my seven-day pass, I couldn't sleep comfortably in my own bed. The first night I woke up after about three hours with backache. I grabbed my pillow, lay down on the floor,

and slept like a baby for the rest of the night. To this day I have no problem with sleeping on the floor, although I must admit that I prefer a comfortable bed these days."

Masters of the iron

Creased or crumpled uniforms are not acceptable in the military, unless they are creases intentionally ironed into trousers and shirts.

This is especially true during basic training or on any parades. Soldiers know from experience how to use an iron.

Dave spent nine years as a member of the permanent force and, even 35 years after leaving the military, he still prefers his clothes ironed in a specific way.

"I was 17 when I joined the army and before that I had never even used an iron," Dave recalls. "But I learnt to become a master at ironing very quickly."

"The first time I tried to iron my shirt it was a disaster. I had no choice but to learn how to iron, and learn quickly. The army doesn't accept any excuses. Even now I still iron my own clothes."

Distinctive gait

Soldiers don't walk anywhere - they march. The average marching speed is 120 steps per minute and each step is about 76 cm in length. The back is kept straight as is the head. When the left foot is forward, the right arm is swung forward at the same time, and vice-versa.

Johan did two years national service and was a member of the citizen force for ten years after that. His wife pointed out

something that he finds most interesting.

“My wife always complains that I never walk, I march,” says Johan. “She also asked me why I always step off with my left foot first.”

“To be honest I had never thought about it. I realised that she was right. Whenever I am standing still and start to walk, I always step off on my left foot. Maybe it’s normal and everybody does that. But I think that it’s maybe because in the army, when you march, you always step off with the left foot first.”

Colin spent 16 years in the permanent force and ended his career as a sergeant major. He also has very strong thoughts

about marching.

“I can’t stand people that dawdle or slouch when they are walking,” Colin says. “It irritates the hell out of me. I want to walk right over them.”

Colin also pointed out another habit that he finds impossible to shake.

“Whenever I’m walking together with an old army mate we always seem to fall into step. It’s not something that we consciously do, it just tends to happen.”

Military time

Ask a former military man or woman what time something is happening, they will normally give you the answer in military time.

If, for example, something is happening at three o’clock they will not say 3.00 pm or three o’clock or at three this afternoon. They will tell you

that it is happening at 15h00. And

that is pronounced as fifteen hundred hours.

That’s

they way time is given in the military and

many, if not most, former military members will use that method of giving time.

Stand easy

Soldiers standing at attention will often be given the command, “Stand at ease!”

This is not an instruction to relax, but rather a command to move from standing at attention with

the feet together and the arms at the sides to one with the feet shoulder width apart and the hands clasped behind the back.

The command given to adopt a more relaxed posture is “Stand easy”.

It is basically the same posture as stand at ease, but the back and head are more relaxed. Plenty of former military people will instinctively stand easy when they are standing relaxing.

Robert is a member of his church choir and he finds that he always stand in this position when singing.

“There’s about 20 of us, male and female, in the choir. When we sing most of the choir will stand with their hands at their sides or clasped in front of them. I always stand with my hands clasped behind my back. Force of habit, I guess.”

Always first to finish eating

In the military there is no such thing as a long, leisurely meal. Soldiers tend to eat as quickly as possible.

This was usually because the quicker you ate, the more time you had to do other things.

Martin recalls that it all started during basic training.

“We had to stand room inspection every morning,” he says. “Not only did all your personal kit have to be cleaned, polished or ironed, but beds had to be made perfectly and the entire room, including the toilets, had to shine.”

“If you did bother to go for breakfast, then you wolfed your food down as quickly as possible so you could get back to the bungalow to finish preparing



KNIFE HAND: Soldiers have a tendency to point using the entire hand and not just a single finger.

for inspection.

“Later on when I did Junior Leader’s Course we would get 45 minutes for lunch. We still stood inspection every morning which, as far as I’m concerned, were even stricter than during basics. So breakfast was always a rush.

“I was always tired because we would often get to bed late. This was because there was so much to do for inspection the next morning. So at lunch time I would try and finish my lunch in 15 minutes. Then I would go outside and lie under the trees and take a 20-25 minute nap.

“To this day it’s a habit that I still have. I eat far quicker than anyone else in my family. This is especially true when it comes to breakfast. My wife is forever telling me to eat slower.”

Using military jargon

The military has always had its own language, with jargon and slang that is unique.

For instance someone that served in the SADF will never suffer from diarrhoea, they will have gypo-guts.

Those that served in the navy will never use a toilet, they use

the ‘heads’. They will also refer to a kitchen as a galley.

You will often hear them using terms such as “copy that” or they will say “negative” rather than no.

Someone that is keen or enthusiastic is known as someone that is “GV”. It can be frustrating for those not familiar with the jargon or slang.

Foul language

Most soldiers swear - a lot. They will often continue to use colourful language even once they’ve left the military.

Craig admits that before he went into the army he rarely used bad language.

“Damn or bloody was probably the strongest words I had ever used in my life,” Craig says. “Then when I was called up for national service I soon found that within a few weeks I was ‘effing and blinding with the best of them.”

“It’s not like we swore just for the sake of using bad language. It was more of a habit and just about everyone did it. I even heard our unit padre use a four-letter word on the odd occasion.

“When I finished national service it took me a good few months to get out of the habit of swearing. I can tell you that my language didn’t go down to well with the church youth group that I was involved with.

“I’ve now been married for some time and have two children in their late teens. I never swear in front of them or in front of my wife. I do, however, belong to a military veterans organisation and we meet once a month. After the meeting we have a few drinks and it’s not long before I’m once again using language that would make your average sailor blush.”

Saluting

In almost every military, saluting is the accepted method of paying respect to a senior officer.

During basic training recruits are taught to salute everything that moves and, if it doesn’t move, salute it anyway - just in case.

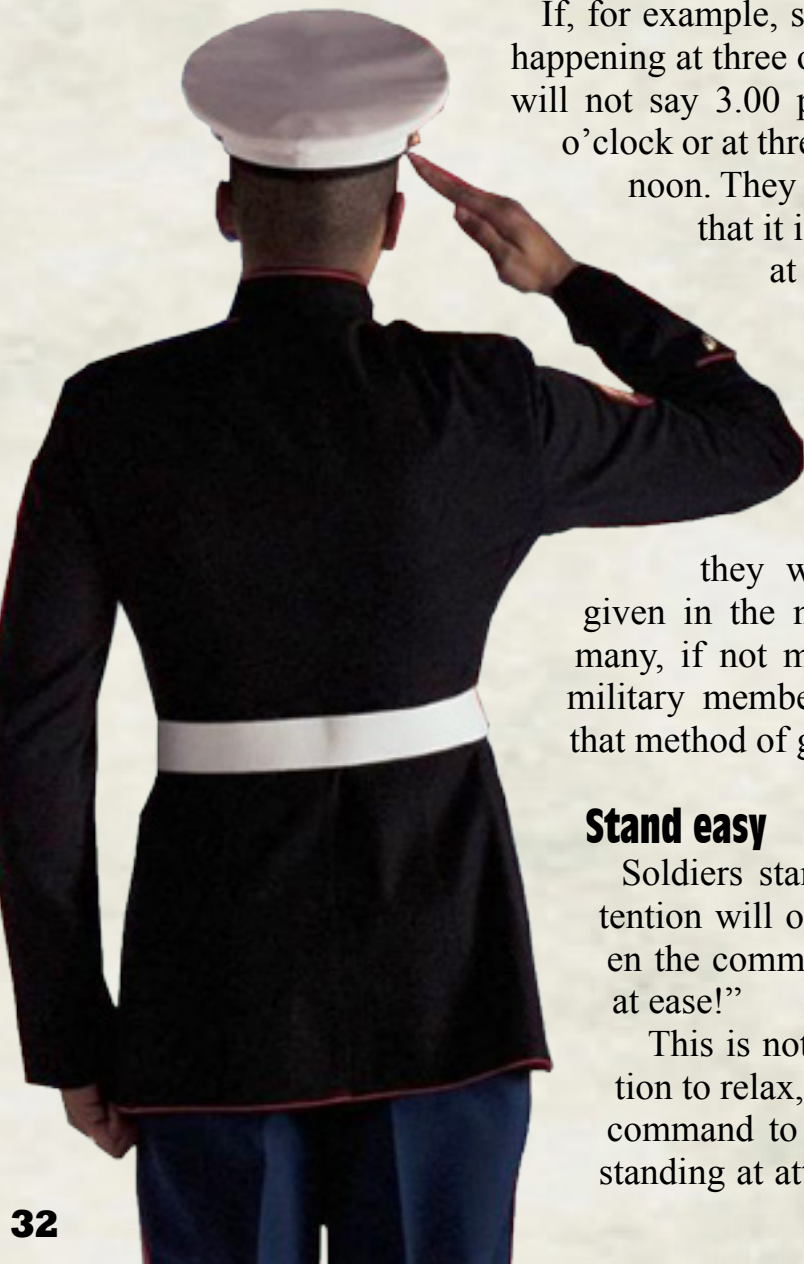
Many military veterans will still use the salute as a form of greeting, even long after they have left the military.

“I still get together with a few of the guys that I served with in the army,” says Frank. “We always salute each other. It’s not a real salute of course. It’s more just raising the hand to the forehead.”

Knife hand

Soldiers will hardly ever point at someone or something by using a single finger. They point using the entire hand. This is known as a knife hand and it serves a number of purposes.

It can be used to emphasis a



point, to indicate direction, or to point at a specific person or object.

Instructors will often use the knife hand as a form of intimidation with recruits undergoing training.

Peter did his basic training in the infantry and according to him his basic training corporal was a master at using the knife hand.

"If you did something wrong our corporal would call you to attention," Peter remembers. "Then he would come and stand in front of you with his face only centimetres from yours. He would shove his pointed fingers a few centimetres from your face, but without ever touching you, and then tell you your fortune in a very loud voice. And heaven help you if you tried to move back even a millimetre. It used to scare the crap out of me."

Dirty old men

When back in base, soldiers are required to be washed, clean shaved, and wear clean, ironed clothes and polished boots.

Yet when out in the field, fresh clothes and water to wash are a luxury not always available.

This is probably why many of those that served in the field have no problem with wearing the same clothes for two or three days.

Andy spent nearly a year on the border during his two years of national service. He explains further.

"Our company base was situated a few kilometres from the actual Angolan border," he says.

"We had no running water in our camp. We had a water tanker and it had to drive about 30



POWER SHOWER: Israeli Army troops take the opportunity to grab a quick shower while in the field.

kilometres to the police station and fill up. This was done every morning.

"Our showers were set up in the one corner of the camp and had wooden pallets for a floor and it was surrounded by canvas. Eight guys could shower at a time. The water for the shower was supplied from a large metal tank which was filled from the water tanker. Of course we would always have to take cold showers. You would only be allowed to shower for a certain amount of time because if the water ran out, you had to wait until the next morning."

That wasn't to much of a problem when they were in base but, as Andy explains, it was a different story when they were out on patrol.

"When it came to patrols we had a set routine. We would go out on patrol for eight days and then return to our base for four days," Gary says.

"When you went out on patrol you would have to carry everything needed for eight days

with you. The three main priorities were water, ammunition and rations.

"Most of us would carry eight one litre water bottles. That water was used for drinking and cooking. There wasn't enough to bother with things like washing. Anyway, you've never used soap, shampoo or even toothpaste when out on patrol because you could smell it from a good distance. Most of us, myself included, would wear the same shirt, pants, socks and underpants for the entire eight days. Maybe, if there was room in your kit, you would take a change of underwear and socks.

"So when we arrived back at base after an eight day patrol we were unshaven and smelt a bit high. The first thing we would do is have a good shower and wash our hair. Then we would have to shave. After that we would wash our clothes, by hand of course.

"That, of course, was many years ago. But I still have no problem with wearing the same pair of jeans and tee-shirt for two

days in a row. My wife goes nuts when I do and tells me to put on clean clothes. I try and tell her that they are still clean enough to wear and she gets all upset."

No explanation

In the military, when you are told to do something it is an order. It doesn't come with an explanation. At best you may be given a briefing, but that's it.

In the military you don't get to ask why something has to be done. You just get on with it. It's not something that is open to debate.

When asked or told to do something, ex-soldiers will seldom ask for an explanation as to why it has to be done. They will normally just get on with the job. They don't require you to explain why. At most they may ask you for a briefing as to how you want the job done.

Quick showers

When a soldier takes a shower they will normally do it as quickly as possible. It is not common practice to take a long, leisurely shower. You jump into the shower, wash, rinse yourself off, and get out. And it's often something they will continue to do, even when they are no longer in the military.

"When I shower it takes me less than five minutes, and that includes washing my hair," says Conrad. "When my wife or daughter take a shower they spend at least 20 minutes in the shower. If they take a shower before me then there is no hot water left. And neither of them can explain why it takes them so long."

Short hair

In the majority of armed forces, soldiers are required to keep their hair short and many armies have regulations as to exactly how the hair has to be cut.

Many former soldiers will still keep their hair relatively short, even years after they have left the military.

Mark was 17 when he joined the permanent force and he served for just over seven years.

"I joined the army straight after finishing school. So I never really had the chance to grow my hair," says Mark.

"I left the army in 1982 and in the 37 years since then I've never grown my hair long. I get my hair cut at least once a month. If it gets too long it really irritates me.

"I'm a member of a veteran's organisation and we have a meeting once a month and about 30 people attend. We also have our own pub and it's open every Friday night. A few months ago it struck me that not one person there has long hair. I don't know if it's because all of them served in the military, but it does make you think."

Stand in line

Anyone that served in the military is no stranger to standing in line. You stand in line to get issued with kit. You stand in line to be paid. You stand in line to be served meals. And you don't moan about it. It's just something that you learn to accept.

"I have no problem standing in a queue," says Cobus. He spent ten years in the military.

"My wife, on the other hand, is another story. When we go shopping she gets really irritated

if we have to queue for too long. The longer we have to wait, the more irritable she gets. She even gets mad at me because of the fact that I'm not irritated. She would never have coped in the military."

Polished shoes

There is not such thing as dirty or unpolished boots and shoes in the military.

During inspections or parades, boots often have to be 'boned'. Soldiers will sometimes spend hours polishing and buffing their boots until they shine. It's something that many ex-soldiers will continue to do even after they have left the military.

"I have no problem wearing sneakers or sandals. In fact I enjoy wearing them," says Marcus. "But if I'm wearing more formal shoes then they have to be polished and shined."

Sharing experiences

Many soldiers that saw combat during their service are reluctant to talk about it.

Bruce served for 12 years in the army and was involved in combat numerous times. It's not something that he talks about.

"Whenever I talk about my military experience I always talk about the funny things that happened," says Bruce. "But I won't talk about what happened in combat. I won't even talk about it to my wife. Unless they were there, people will never understand. The only time I will ever open up is when I'm talking to fellow veterans that also saw combat. They understand where I'm coming from because they went through the same thing."

Straight Shooting

Every month we will feature two to four modern firearms that are used by the world's counter-terrorist units. This month we feature the Beretta 92SB, SIG Sauer P220, and the M1911A1.

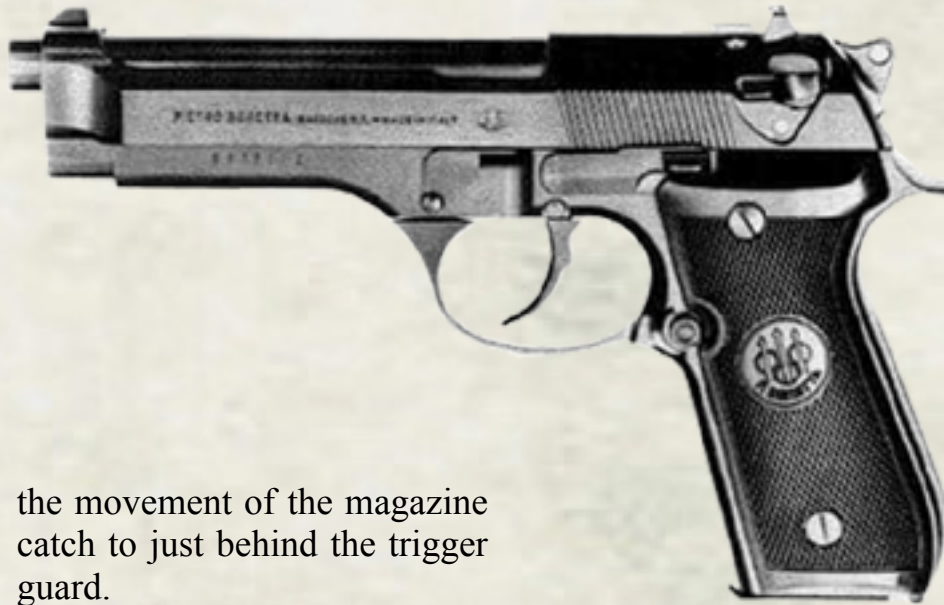
Beretta 92SB

The Beretta 92 pistol evolved from earlier Beretta designs, most notably the M1923 and M1951. From the M1923 comes the open slide design, while the alloy frame and locking block barrel, originally from Walther P38, were first used in the M1951.

The grip angle and the front sight integrated with the slide were also common to earlier Beretta pistols. What were perhaps the Model 92's two most important advanced design features had first appeared on its immediate predecessor, the 1974 .380 calibre Model 84.

These improvements both involved the magazine, which featured direct feed; that is, there was no feed ramp between the magazine and the chamber (a Beretta innovation in pistols). In addition, the magazine was a "double-stacked" design, a feature originally introduced in 1935 on the Browning Hi-Power.

This is a modified version of the Beretta M92 and was submitted to the US trials for a new service pistol for the US military. The principal changes are the additions of a safety catch on the slide (both sides), which locks the firing pin and



the movement of the magazine catch to just behind the trigger guard.

With these modifications, the M92SB is seeing excellent commercial sales and wide usage. The M92SB is used by the Italian military.

A compact version with a shortened barrel and slide and 13-round magazine capacity known as the 92SB Compact was manufactured from 1981 to 1991.

A number of countries have produced their own copies of the Beretta. South Africa produced the Z-88 pistol for the South African Police.

In 1992 Denel Land Systems (DLS) produced the Vektor SP1, an improved version of the Z-88. The SP-1 pistol is currently in service with the South African National Defence Force and the South African Police Service.

- Designer: Carlo Beretta
- Designed: 1975
- Manufacturer: Fabbrica d'Armi Pietro Beretta
- Weight unloaded: 970 g
- Weight loaded: 1.158 kg
- Length: 217 mm
- Barrel length: 125 mm
- Cartridge: 9×19 mm Parabellum
- Action: Double action
- Rate of fire: 45 rounds per minute
- Muzzle velocity: 381 m/s
- Type of fire: Semi-automatic
- Feed system: 15 or 20 round detachable box magazine
- Sights: Front blade, rear square notch
- Sight radius: 15,5 cm

SIG Sauer P220



J.P. Sauer & Sohn are properly known as SIG Sauer pistols.

In 1975, Switzerland became the first nation to officially adopt the P220 as the "Pistole 75" (P75) chambered in 9 mm Parabellum. Other nations to adopt it for military use include Japan (general issue) and Denmark (which has the earlier P210 in general issue) only to special forces. It was followed by the SIG Sauer P226, incorporating a double stack magazine.

Upon completion of their military service, all soldiers can obtain ownership of their ordinance weapon for a nominal fee; in particular commissioned officers and soldiers of the medical forces of the Swiss armed forces can obtain ownership of their P220 service pistols by paying an administrative fee of thirty Swiss francs.

In the United States this handgun was originally sold in a modified form as the Browning BDA from 1977 to 1980.

This is a Swiss design made in West Germany to avoid the strict Swiss export regulations. The weapon is made to the most modern requirements with the extensive use of precision metal stampings keeping the individual cost relatively low.

It is currently in service with the Swiss military.

The SIG Sauer P220 is a semi-automatic pistol. Designed in 1975 by the SIG Arms AG division of Schweizerische Industrie Gesellschaft (now SIG Holding AG), and produced by J. P. Sauer & Sohn, in Eckernförde; it is currently manufactured by both SIG Sauer companies: SIG Sauer GmbH, of Eckernförde, Germany; and SIG Sauer, Inc., of Exeter, NH, USA.

Not to be confused with SIG P210 series, which licensed the Petter-Browning system from SACM of France in 1938, the SIG Sauer P220 was developed for release in 1975 for the Swiss Army as a replacement for the SIG P210, which had been developed during World War II; in service it is known as "Pistole 75" (P75). For the commercial production and distribution of the P220, SIG partnered with J.P. Sauer & Sohn of Germany, thus, the P220 and all subsequent pistols from SIG and

- Designer: Walter Ludwig, Hanspeter Sigg, Eduard Brodbeck
- Designed: 1975
- Manufacturer: SIG Sauer
- Weight unloaded: 750 g
- Weight loaded: 918 g
- Length: 196 mm
- Barrel length: 112 mm
- Cartridge: 9×19 mm Parabellum
- Action: Locked Breech, Short Recoil
- Rate of fire: 40 rounds per minute
- Muzzle velocity: 345 m/s
- Type of fire: Semi-automatic, Double action
- Feed Seven round detachable box magazine
- Sights: Fixed, non-adjustable iron
- Sight radius: 16 cm

M1911A1

The M1911, also known as the Colt Government or “Government”, is a single-action, semi-automatic, magazine-fed, recoil-operated pistol chambered for the .45 ACP cartridge.

It served as the standard-issue sidearm for the United States Armed Forces from 1911 to 1986. It was widely used in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The pistol’s formal designation as of 1940 was Automatic Pistol, Calibre .45, M1911 for the original model of 1911 or Automatic Pistol, Calibre .45, M1911A1 for the M1911A1, adopted in 1924. The designation changed to Pistol, Calibre .45, Automatic, M1911A1 in the Vietnam War era.

The U.S. procured around 2.7 million M1911 and M1911A1 pistols in military contracts during its service life. The M1911 was replaced by the 9 mm Beretta M9 pistol as the standard U.S. sidearm in October 1986, but due to its popularity among users, it has not been completely phased out. Modernized derivative variants of the M1911 are still in use by some units of the U.S. Army Special Forces and the U.S. Navy.

Designed by John Browning, the M1911 is the best-known of his designs to use the short recoil principle in its basic design. The pistol was widely copied, and this operating system rose to become the pre-eminent type of the 20th century and of nearly all modern centrefire pistols.



It is popular with civilian shooters in competitive events such as USPSA, IDPA, International Practical Shooting Confederation, and Bullseye shooting.

Compact variants are popular civilian concealed carry weapons in the U.S. because of the design’s relatively slim width and the stopping power of the .45 ACP cartridge.

After World War II, the M1911 continued to be a mainstay of the U.S. Armed Forces in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. It was used during Desert Storm in specialized U.S. Army units and U.S. Navy Mobile Construction Battalions (Seabees), and has seen service in both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, with U.S. Army Special Forces Groups and Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance Companies.

- Designer: John Browning
- Designed: 1924
- Manufacturer: Colt Manufacturing Company
- Weight unloaded: 1,046 kg
- Weight loaded: 1,271 kg
- Length: 219 mm
- Barrel length: 128 mm
- Cartridge: .45 ACP
- Action: Short recoil
- Rate of fire: 35 rounds per minute
- Muzzle velocity: 252 m/s
- Type of fire: Semi-automatic, single action
- Feed system: Seven round detachable box magazine
- Sights: Fixed, non-adjustable iron
- Sight radius: 16,5 cm



Nicknames

The military loves nicknames and slang. Here are a few questions about nicknames. See if you know the answers.
Answers on page 106.

1. What nickname was given to the M3 Stuart tank?
2. Which World War II German fighter ace had the nickname ‘Dolfo’?
3. By what nickname was US Civil War General Thomas J. Jackson better known?
4. Which World War II American tank was known as the ‘Ronson’ by the British and the ‘Tommycooker’ by the Germans?
5. Who earned the nickname ‘Butcher of the Somme’?
6. Which German weapon did American GI’s nickname ‘Screaming Mimi’?
7. What aircraft was better known as the ‘Stuka’?
8. Who was known as ‘Blood-n-Guts’?
9. Which American unit is nickname ‘Screaming Eagles’?
10. What as the nickname given to the leading fighter ace of World War II, Erich Hartmann?
11. What was the BM-13 Katyusha better known as?
12. What was the nickname given to the America M3 sub-machine gun?
13. Which former British officer and mercenary leader was nicknamed ‘Mad Mike’?
14. Which South African fighter ace was nicknamed ‘Sailor’?
15. What was the nickname given to members of the South African Corps of Signals?
16. What nickname did the Russians give to Finish sniper Simo Häyhä?
17. What did the Allies call the German Stielhandgranate.
18. What was a ‘Chicago Type-writer’?
19. What was the nickname given to the Royal Air Force 617 Squadron?
20. What nickname was given to the South African Vali-kri 127 mm multiple rocket launcher?
21. To Allies he was known as the ‘Red Baron’. But what nickname did the Germans give Manfred von Richthofen?
22. By what name were the British Home Guard known during World War II?
23. What was the nickname given to the British Parachute Regiment?
24. Who or what was a ‘Noddy Car’?
25. What derogatory nickname did German General Erich von Manstein give to Adolf Hitler?
26. Which American general had the nickname ‘Stormin’ Norman’.



Welcome on board

The Western Cape Sea Cadets are running a fundraising campaign in order to purchase T shirts for the cadets. **Anthony-Glenn von Zeil** tells us more.

The Sea Cadets and South African Navy have had a close bond since the inception of Naval Cadets in 1905. The name changed to Sea Cadets, as it is known internationally, in 1969 when the Navy League incorporated school units. This close relationship has been maintained during the past 25 years since the advent of democracy continuing to provide youth with opportunities, professional instructors and skills. There are currently 14 Training Ships (Units) located around the country.

As the Sea Cadets provides youth aged 13 to 17 with maritime and nautical skills it is the logical place for them to start exploring a maritime career, whether in the SA Navy or merchant navy, fishing fleet, ship building or related industries. Their activities appeal to school going boys and girls from Grade 6 to Grade 12 who enjoy having "Serious Fun" whilst learning leadership, self-discipline and maritime orientated skills.

Their motto "Honour and Skill" is proudly displayed under their badge. These words embody the values of Respect, Honesty, Loyalty, Co-operation and Service which are instilled in the Sea Cadets via their training and interaction with competent instructors.

The land based Training Ships located around the country provide a safe space with competent instructors at which training can

take place. Training takes place on Friday nights or Saturdays with school vacation leadership camps scheduled during the school holidays. The highlight of the year is the annual camp hosted by the SA Navy.

"Action Centred Learning" allied to a practical "Outcome Based Competency Assessment" is the approach which the Instructors follow. This ensures that Sea Cadets are able not only skilled to "Do" but also to know "Why" they do it and how to "Use" available resources.

Each Training Ship is staffed by competent volunteers, many of whom are themselves ex Sea Cadets or parents of Cadets, others who have followed careers within the maritime industry, SA Navy or have the skills that are needed to be imparted practically.

Three Sea Cadet Units are located in the Western Cape and can accommodate + 150 Sea Cadets in each. They are:

- **TS Birkenhead** – Hawston (W01 Noel Dreyer – noelmdreyer@gmail.com)
- **TS Saldanha** - Saldanha Bay (Cdr (SAN) Luigi Le Roux – luigi_leroux@yahoo.com)
- **TS Woltemade** - Lakeside, Cape Town (Lt Cdr (SCC) Paul Jacobs – pauljacobs15@gmail.com)

These Units recruit a diverse group of high school children from the local communities. Maths and science are advisable for entry to maritime industry

and where possible these scholars are assisted.

This fund raising initiative intends to raise funds to provide at a minimum cost a Sea Cadet T shirt for each Sea Cadet as well as to create a fund to assist Sea Cadets on a case by case basis as well as projects.

The Sea Cadets is a registered Non-Profit Organisation (NPO - 057-289) and as a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO – 9753846147 / 930039234). All funds raised are deposited in the national account managed by the National Treasurer, Andrew Ward (andrew@envronplastics.co.za). An 18A donation tax certificate is available on request for donations over R1000.

The current Western Cape fund raising initiative aims at:

1. Providing each Western Cape Sea Cadet with a T Shirt with the Sea Cadet logo on the front left breast and "See Cadets having Searious Fun" on the back. There is space on the sleeves for a company logos. Please contact me should you be interested.

The cost per item is around R180 and the intent is to provide subsidised T shirts on a sliding scale depending on family income.

500 x T Shirts X R180 =
R90,000

2. Any funds recouped would assist with a similar project each year as well as act to support those Sea Cadets whose families are unable to meet the annual

cost of the subscription and / or any camps / specialised training, transport to events, etc. These Sea Cadets will be assisted on a case by case basis and depending on the project.

It would be appreciated if you would consider contributing towards this Western Cape fund raising initiative by depositing directly into the account above. This will greatly assist the Sea Cadets establish a physical presence and for the Sea Cadets to have non uniform items to wear while out and about.

ACCOUNT NAME: South African Sea Cadets

BANK: First National Bank (FNB)

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 6209-9559-901

BRANCH CODE: 210-050

REFERENCE: WCAPE (funds will be set aside for Western Cape initiatives)

Should you be able to assist the Sea Cadets in the Western Cape in any way please do contact me.

The South African Ship's Society (NPO 229-122), through Chairman George Henry, has been helpful in opening membership to the Western Cape Sea Cadets and providing opportunities.

Thank you for assisting Sea Cadets in the Western Cape.



Where the music does the talking

Listen Live

Catch Military Despatches editor **Matt Tennyson** on the **Sunday Breakfast Zone** from 09h00 to 12h00 every Sunday morning on **Zone Radio 88.5 fm**.

Matt brings you hits from the 60s, 70s, 80s and early 90s - the hits we love and remember. And you can WhatsApp your requests through.

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Rank Structure - China

Over the next few months we will be running a series of articles looking at the rank structure of various armed forces. This month we look at the Peoples Liberation Army.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) is the armed forces of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and of its founding and ruling political party, the Communist Party of China. The PLA consists of five professional service branches: the Ground Force, Navy, Air Force, Rocket Force, and the Strategic Support Force. Units around the country are assigned to one of five theatre commands by geographical location.

The PLA is the world's largest military force and constitutes the second largest defence budget in the world. China is one of the fastest modernising military powers in the world and has been termed as a potential military superpower, with significant regional defence and rising global power projection capabilities. The PLA is the world's third-most powerful military. The PLA is under the command of the Central Military

Commission (CMC) of the CPC. It is legally obliged to follow the principle of civilian control of the military, although in practical terms this principle has been implemented in such a way as to ensure the PLA is under the absolute control of the Communist Party. Its commander in chief is the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (usually the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China).

People's Liberation Army Ground Forces

NCO's & Warrant Officer



Private



Private First Class



Corporal



Sergeant



Staff Sergeant



Warrant Officer

Officers (Collar insignia)



Junior Lieutenant



2nd Lieutenant



1st Lieutenant



Captain



Major



Lieutenant Colonel



Colonel



Colonel Commandant



Major General



Lieutenant General



General



General of the Army



Marshal of the PRC



Generalissimo of the PRC

People's Liberation Army Air Force

NCO's & Warrant Officer



Airman



Airman First Class



Senior Airman



Staff Sergeant



Technical Sergeant



Warrant Officer

Officers



Junior Lieutenant



2nd Lieutenant



1st Lieutenant



Captain



Major



Lieutenant Colonel



Colonel



Senior Commandant



Major General



Lieutenant General



General



General of the Air Force

People's Liberation Army Air Force

NCO's & Warrant Officer



Private



Private 1st Class



Corporal



Sergeant



Staff Sergeant



Sergeant First Class



Master Sergeant



First Sergeant



Sergeant Major



Captain



Major



Lieutenant Colonel



Colonel



Senior Commandant



Major General

Officers



Cadet Officer



2nd Lieutenant



1st Lieutenant



Lieutenant General



General

A matter of survival - Christmas gifts

Instead of our normal article on survival tips, we're looking at a few gift ideas that are idea for those spending time in the great outdoors. Next month it will be back to normal.

Tactical - All in One Survival Kit

What's in the box

- 1 x Tactical torch Flashlight
- 1 x Survival Paracord Bracelet
- 1 x Foldable Tactics Military Knife
- 1 x Compass
- 1 x Emergency thermal blanket
- 1 x Flintstone, Whistle
- 1 x Water Bottle Clip
- 1 x Tactical Camo Pouch
- 1 x roll Plaster
- 1 x roll bandage



BioLite Wood Burning Camp Stove

You're out in the bush and your cellphone or tablet dies. What if the heat from your campfire could be used to generate electricity to give you unlimited access to power?

The BioLite CampStove 2 uses a thermoelectric generator to convert the heat from your fire back into reusable electricity so that you can charge out to your handheld devices. Access that power right away or store it for later with its integrated battery. Using only twigs, pine combs or brush as fuel, this portable smokeless camping stove can boil a litre of water in under five minutes. The LED dashboard gives real-time feedback on fire strength, fan speed, and power output, making it super easy and convenient to use.



TACT Bivvy Survival Sleeping Bag

The TACT Bivvy is an ingenious light-weight emergency sleeping bag that fits in size of your hand.

The TACT Bivvy is made from heat-reflecting Mylar and coated with a unique material called Heatsheets. This material is highly durable, resistant to tearing, and stretches so it can be used over and over again.

It will keep both rain and wind off of you, while keeping you warm in temperatures below zero.



11-in-1 Survival Gear Kit

What's in the box

- 1 X Professional Flashlight (Battery not included)
- 1 X Heavy-Duty Tungsten-Pen with Carbide Tip
- 1 X Compact Wood Cutter
- 1 X Emergency Blanket
- 1 X 11-IN-1 Multi-Function Pocket Card
- 1 X Large Ferrocerium rod flint
- 1 X Paracord Bracelet
- 1 X Compact Water Proof Durable Carrying Case
- 1 X Water Bottle Clip
- 1 X Carabiner
- 1 X Military Knife



Gerber Dime Multi-Tool

If you're going to use a multi-tool then you can't go wrong with Gerber.

This model includes 10 tools: Needle nose spring-loaded pliers, Wire cutter, Fine edge blade, Retail package opener, Scissors, Medium flat screwdriver, Crosshead screwdriver, Bottle opener, Tweezers, File.



LifeStraw Steel Personal Water Filter

This is something that can save your life in a survival situation. Put the straw into almost any water, no matter how polluted, and drink.

Stainless steel LifeStraw water filter features 2-stage filtration system that eliminates contaminants as well as odours and tastes

Durable and compact food-grade stainless steel straw meets FDA standards and is ideal for hiking, camping, backpacking, travel, and outdoor survival

Removes minimum 99.9999% of water-borne bacteria and 99.9% of water-borne protozoan parasites, and filters to 0.2 microns; surpasses EPA filter standard

Replaceable carbon capsule provides 2-stage filtration that reduces chlorine, organic chemicals, odours and bad tastes

Filters up to 1,000 litres and does not require batteries, pumping, or chemicals



Military Strength

In the sixth of a series of articles, we examine the sniper and anti-materiel rifles used by the ten strongest current military forces.

Last month we looked at military forces. This month we are going to take a look at the sniper and anti-materiel rifles that each of these forces use.



10. Germany

Total military personnel – 210,305

Accuracy International AWM

The Accuracy International AWM (Arctic Warfare Magnum or AI-Arctic Warfare Magnum) is a bolt-action sniper rifle manufactured by Accuracy International designed for magnum rifle cartridges.

- Manufacturer: Accuracy International
- Weight: 6.9 kg

Heckler & Koch G28

The G28 was developed for the German *Bundeswehr* (Federal Army) deployment to the War in Afghanistan.

The G28 features STANAG 4694 NATO Accessory Rails that are backwards-compatible with the STANAG 2324/MIL-STD-1913 Picatinny rails.

- Manufacturer: Heckler & Koch
- Weight: 5.15 kg



- Length: 1,200 mm
- Cartridge: .300 Winchester Magnum
- Action: Bolt-action
- Effective firing range: 1,100 metres
- Feed system: 5 round detachable box magazine



- Length: 1,082 mm stock extended; 965 mm stock collapsed
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO
- Action: Gas-operated short-stroke piston, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 600 rpm
- Effective firing range: 600 metres
- Feed system: 10 or 20 round detachable box magazine

The dictionary defines ‘sniper’ as “A marksman who shoots at people from a concealed place”.

G82/G82A1

The G82/G82A1 is the German name for the Barrett M82 recoil-operated, semi-automatic anti-materiel sniper system.



- Manufacturer: Barrett Firearms Manufacturing
- Weight: 13.5 kg
- Length: 1,200 mm
- Cartridge: 12.7×99 mm NATO

- Action: Recoil-operated rotating bolt
- Effective firing range: 1,800 metres
- Feed system: 10 round detachable box magazine

G29

The G29 is the sniper rifle medium range of the *Bundeswehr*. It is to replace the G22 at the command Special Forces and Special Forces of the Navy.



- Manufacturer: CG Haenel
- Weight: 7.54 kg
- Length: 1,275 mm
- Cartridge: 8.6 × 70 mm (.338 Lapua Magnum)
- Action: Not known
- Effective firing range: Not known
- Feed system: 10 round box magazine.



9. Turkey

Total military personnel – 891,300

The Turkish Land Forces make use of no fewer than 12 different types of sniper rifles.

JNG-90

Standard issue sniper rifle. Development of the weapon first started back in 2004 to 2008. Its nickname is Bora and it is currently being offered for export.



- Manufacturer: MKEK
- Weight: 6.4 kg
- Length: 1,165 m

- Cartridge: 7.62×51mm NATO
- Action: rotary bolt action
- Rate of fire: 1,000-1,300 rpm
- Max firing range: 1,200 metres
- Feed system: 10 round detachable box magazine

Accuracy International AWM

The AWM variant is used by *Özel Kuvvetler Komutanlığı* (Special Forces Command), nicknamed the Maroon Berets because of their distinctive service headgear

- Manufacturer: Accuracy International
- Weight: 6.9 kg
- Length: 1,200 mm
- Cartridge: .300 Winchester Magnum
- Action: Bolt-action
- Effective firing range: 1,100 metres
- Feed system: 5 round detachable box magazine



Barrett M82

The Barrett M82 recoil-operated, semi-automatic anti-materiel sniper system is used by Special Forces Command.

- Manufacturer: Barrett Firearms Manufacturing
- Weight: 13.5 kg
- Length: 1,200 mm
- Cartridge: 12.7×99 mm NATO
- Action: Recoil-operated rotating bolt
- Effective firing range: 1,800 metres
- Feed system: 10 round detachable box magazine



SVD

The Dragunov sniper rifle is the standard issue DMR. Mostly captured from PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party).

- Manufacturer: Kalashnikov Concern
- Weight: 4.68 kg
- Length: 1,225 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×54 mm R
- Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 3–30 rpm
- Effective firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 10 round detachable box magazine



Most deadly sniper in history

Simo Häyhä was a Finnish marksman said to be the most deadly sniper in history. His weapon of choice was the Finnish M/28-30 rifle, which he used in the Winter War (1939). He has been credited with a remarkable 505 reported kills, which is actually the highest number of confirmed sniper kills in history for any major war. Häyhä was nicknamed 'White Death' because of the white camouflage he used in the snow.



8. United Kingdom

Total military personnel – 157,500

L118A1 AWC

The Covert system is essentially an AWS with a folding stock with a 305 mm long barrel/suppressor. It is supplied in a small suitcase which houses the rifle with the stock folded and the barrel/suppressor combination detached. It is used exclusively by the SAS (Special Air Service).



- Manufacturer: Accuracy International
- Weight: 6.9 kg
- Length: 1,200 mm
- Cartridge: .300 Winchester Magnum
- Action: Bolt-action
- Effective firing range: 1,100 metres
- Feed system: 5 round detachable box magazine

L115A3

Now regarded as the primary precision rifle for all British military trained snipers.

- Manufacturer: Accuracy International
- Weight: 6.9 kg
- Length: 1,200 mm
- Cartridge: .300 Winchester Magnum
- Action: Bolt-action
- Effective firing range: 1,100 metres
- Feed system: 5 round detachable box magazine



AI AX50

The AX50 is a sniper rifle developed by British firearms manufacturer Accuracy International. Devised as an upgrade, it is the latest iteration of the AW50 rifle and is built to withstand sustained, heavy usage.

- Manufacturer: Accuracy International
- Weight: 12.5 kg
- Length: 1,370 mm, 1,115 mm folded
- Cartridge: 12.7×99 mm NATO
- Action: Bolt-action
- Effective firing range: 2,500 metres
- Feed system: 5 round detachable box magazine



L135A1 LRPAS
The British Army uses the M82A1 under the L135A1 Long Range Precision Anti Structure Rifle designation.

- Manufacturer: Barrett Firearms Manufacturing
- Weight: 13.5 kg
- Length: 1,200 mm
- Cartridge: 12.7×99 mm NATO
- Action: Recoil-operated rotating bolt
- Effective firing range: 1,800 metres
- Feed system: 10 round detachable box magazine



7. Republic of Korea
Total military personnel – 3,699,000

S&T Motiv K14
The K14 is the only sniper rifle used by the Republic of Korea Armed Forces that is made locally in South Korea.

- Manufacturer: S&T Motiv
- Weight: 5.5 kg
- Length: 1,150 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×54 mm R
- Action: Bolt action
- Rate of fire: 3–30 rpm
- Effective firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 5 or 10 round detachable box magazine



SIG Sauer SSG 3000
The SSG 3000 was developed by SIG Sauer GmbH in Germany and is well renowned for its high quality.

- Manufacturer: SIG Sauer
- Weight: 5.44 kg
- Length: 1,180 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO
- Action: Bolt action
- Effective firing range: 900 metres
- Feed system: 5-round detachable internal magazine



MSG90
The MSG90 is a militarized variant of the PSG1 that is both strengthened and lightened while less expensive.

- Manufacturer: Heckler & Koch
- Weight: 6.3 kg
- Length: 1,230 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO
- Action: Roller-delayed blowback
- Effective firing range: 1,000 metres
- Feed system: 5 or 20 round magazine



Accuracy International AWM
The Accuracy International AWM is used by Special Forces.

- Manufacturer: Accuracy International
- Weight: 6.9 kg
- Length: 1,200 mm
- Cartridge: .300 Winchester Magnum
- Action: Bolt-action
- Effective firing range: 1,100 metres
- Feed system: 5 round detachable box magazine



6. Japan
Total military personnel – 310,457

M24
The M24 Sniper Weapon System (SWS) is the military and police version of the Remington Model 700 rifle, M24 being the model name assigned by the United States Army after adoption as their standard sniper rifle in 1988.

- Manufacturer: Remington Arms
- Weight: 7.3 kg
- Length: 1,092 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO
- Action: Bolt action
- Effective firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 5-round detachable internal magazine

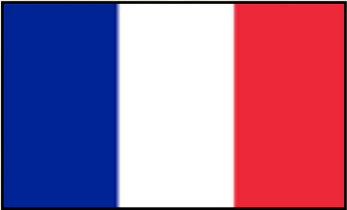


Howa Type 64 Sniper Rifle

This is an adaptation of standard Type 64 rifle. No longer used as sniper rifle, still used extensively as infantry marksman's rifle.



- Manufacturer: Howa
- Weight: 4.4 kg
- Length: 990 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm
- Action: Gas-operated tilting bolt
- Effective firing range: 400 metres
- Feed system: 20 round detachable box magazine



5. France

Total military personnel – 426,265

FR F2 sniper rifle

The FR F2 has been the standard sniper rifle of the French military since 1986. It is designed for shooting at point targets at distances up to 800 metres.



- Manufacturer: GIAT Industries
- Weight: 5.1 kg
- Length: 1,138 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO
- Action: Bolt action
- Effective firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 10 round detachable box magazine

PGM Ultima Ratio

The PGM Ultima Ratio is a French-designed and manufactured sniper rifle. It uses the 7.62×51 mm NATO cartridge but depending on the barrel variant can also be chambered for several other cartridges.



- Manufacturer: PGM Précision
- Weight: 7.39 kg
- Length: 1,158 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO
- Action: Bolt action
- Effective firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 5 or 10 round detachable box magazine

MSG90

The MSG90 is a militarized variant of the PSG1 that is both strengthened and lightened while less expensive.



- Manufacturer: Heckler & Koch
- Weight: 6.3 kg
- Length: 1,230 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm
- Action: Roller-delayed blowback
- Effective firing range: 1,000 metres
- Feed system: 5 or 20 round magazine

PGM Hécate II

The Hécate II is the standard heavy sniper rifle and anti-materiel rifle of the French Army, sometimes known as the FR-12.7.



- Manufacturer: PGM Précision
- Weight: 13.8 kg
- Length: 1,380 mm
- Cartridge: 12.7×99 mm NATO
- Action: Bolt action
- Effective firing range: 1,800 metres
- Feed system: 7 round detachable box magazine



4. India

Total military personnel – 2,598,921

The Indian Army make use of no fewer than 12 different types of sniper rifles. It is interesting to note that they have bought a small number of Denel NTW-20 anti-material rifles manufactured by Denel Mechem in South Africa. It can fire a 20 mm round.

SIG Sauer SSG 3000

The SSG 3000 was developed by SIG Sauer GmbH in Germany and is well renowned for its high quality.



- Manufacturer: SIG Sauer
- Weight: 5.44 kg
- Length: 1,180 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO
- Action: Bolt action
- Effective firing range: 900 metres
- Feed system: 5-round detachable internal magazine

Steyr SSG 69
Standard bolt action sniper rifle of the Indian Army.

- Manufacturer: Steyr Mannlicher
- Weight: 4 kg
- Length: 1,140 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO



- Action: Bolt action
- Effective firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 5 round rotary magazine

PSG1
The PSG1 is a semi-automatic sniper rifle designed and produced by the German company Heckler & Koch of Oberndorf am Neckar.

- Manufacturer: Heckler & Koch
- Weight: 6.3 kg
- Length: 1,230 mm



- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO
- Action: Roller-delayed blowback
- Effective firing range: 1,000 metres
- Feed system: 5 or 20 round magazine

IMI Galil 7.62 Sniper
This is used by Indian Army Special Forces snipers.

- Manufacturer: Israel Military Industries
- Weight: 6.4 kg
- Length: 1,112 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO



- Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt
- Effective firing range: 500 metres
- Feed system: 25 round box magazine

World War I

During World War I, snipers appeared as deadly sharpshooters in the trenches. At the start of the war, only Imperial Germany had troops that were issued scoped sniper rifles. Although sharpshooters existed on all sides, the Germans specially equipped some of their soldiers with scoped rifles that could pick off enemy soldiers showing their heads out of their trench. At first the French and British believed such hits to be coincidental hits, until the German scoped rifles were discovered.

During World War I, the German army received a reputation for the deadliness and efficiency of its snipers, partly because of the high-quality lenses that German industry could manufacture. The Germans did not have a term for sniper. They were instead called *Scharfschütze* or sharp shooters.



3. China
Total military personnel – 2,545,000

The People’s Liberation Army make use of no fewer than 25 different types of sniper and anti-material rifles.

QBU-88
Standard service designated marksmen rifle

- Manufacturer: Norinco
- Weight: 4.1 kg
- Length: 920 mm
- Cartridge: 5.8×42 mm DBP87
- Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt



- Effective firing range: 1,000 metres
- Feed system: 10 round box magazine

M305
Designated marksmen rifle that is a direct copy of the American M14.

- Manufacturer: Norinco
- Weight: 4.1 kg
- Length: 1,126 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO
- Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt



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

Type 79
The Type 79 is the Chinese copy of the Russian Dragunov SVD semi-automatic sniper rifle.

- Manufacturer: Norinco
- Weight: 4.68 kg
- Length: 1,135 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×54 mm R
- Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt



- Effective firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 10 round detachable box magazine

QBU-10
The Type 79 is the Chinese copy of the Russian Dragunov SVD semi-automatic sniper rifle.

- Manufacturer: Norinco
- Weight: 13.3 kg
- Length: 1,380 mm
- Cartridge: 12.7×108 mm
- Action: Semi-automatic,
- Feed system: 5 round de-
- Effective firing range: 1,000 metres
- Gas operated
- detachable box magazine



2. Russia
Total military personnel – 3,586,128

SV-98
In 2003 special operations troops were armed with the 7.62 mm 6S11 sniper system comprising the SV-98 sniper rifle (index 6V10) and 7N14 sniper enhanced penetration round.

- Manufacturer: Izhmash/ Kalashnikov Concern
- Weight: 7.8 kg
- Length: 1,375 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×54 mm R
- Action: Bolt Action
- Effective firing range: 1,000 metres
- Feed system: 10 round detachable box magazine



VSS Vintorez
It is issued primarily to *Spetsnaz* units for undercover or clandestine operations, a role made evident by its ability to be stripped down for transport in a specially fitted briefcase.

- Manufacturer: Tula Arms Plant
- Weight: 2.6 kg
- Length: 894 mm
- Cartridge: 9x39 mm
- Action: Gas operated
- Effective firing range: 400 metres
- Feed system: 10 or 20 round detachable box magazine



ASVK 12.7
The ASVK is currently used by units of the Southern, Eastern and Western Military Districts and Northern Fleet.

- Manufacturer: Degtyarev plant
- Weight: 12 kg
- Length: 1,120 mm
- Cartridge: 12.7×108 mm
- Action: Bolt Action
- Effective firing range: 1,500 metres
- Feed system: 5 round de-
- detachable box magazine



1. United States
Total military personnel – 4,397,128

M110A1 CSASS
A copy of the HK417, it replaced the Mk 14 EBR.

- Manufacturer: Heckler & Koch
- Weight: 4.23 kg
- Length: 1,085 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO
- Action: Gas-operated
- Effective firing range: 800 metres
- Feed system: 10 or 20 round detachable box magazine
- short-stroke piston, rotating bolt



M2010 Enhanced Sniper Rifle
The M2010 Enhanced Sniper Rifle (ESR), formerly known as the XM2010.

- Manufacturer: Remington Arms
- Weight: 5.5 kg
- Length: 1,1880 mm
- Cartridge: .300 Winchester Magnum
- Action: Bolt action
- Effective firing range: 1,200 metres
- Feed system: 5 round de-
- detachable box magazine



Mk 21 PSR

The Modular Sniper Rifle, or MSR is a precision sniper rifle. It was introduced in 2009, and was designed to meet specific United States Army and USSO-COM Precision Sniper Rifle requirements.

- Manufacturer: Remington Arms
- Weight: 7.7 kg



- Length: 1,200 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51 mm NATO
- Action: Bolt action
- Effective firing range: 1,200 metres
- Feed system: 5 or 10 round detachable box magazine

Mk 21 ASR

The Barrett MRAD or multi-role adaptive design is an advanced sniper rifle. It is used by the U.S. Special Operations Command

- Manufacturer: Barrett Firearms Company
- Weight: 6.9 kg
- Length: 1,250 mm
- Cartridge: .338 Lapua Mag-



- num
- Action: Bolt action
- Effective firing range: 1,500 metres
- Feed system: 10 round detachable box magazine

M107

Despite its designation as an anti-materiel rifle, it is used by some armed forces as an anti-personnel system. The M107 variant is also called the Light Fifty

- Manufacturer: Barrett Firearms Manufacturing
- Weight: 13.5 kg
- Length: 1,200 mm



- Cartridge: 12.7×99 mm NATO
- Action: Recoil-operated rotating bolt
- Effective firing range: 1.800 metres
- Feed system: 10 round detachable box magazine

Longest sniper kill

The current record holder for the longest kill range of any sniper in history is an anonymous sniper from the Joint Task Force 2, a unit of the Canadian Forces who managed a successful sniper kill at a range of 3,539 metres in May 2017 during the Iraq Civil War.



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

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

Manfred von Richthofen

Manfred von Richthofen, also known as the "Red Baron", was a fighter pilot with the German Air Force during World War I. He is considered the ace-of-aces of the war, being officially credited with 80 air combat victories.

He remains one of the most widely known fighter pilots of all time, and has been the subject of many books, films and other media.

Originally a cavalryman, Richthofen transferred to the Air Service in 1915, becoming one of the first members of fighter squadron Jagdstaffel 2 in 1916.

He quickly distinguished himself as a fighter pilot, and during 1917 became leader of Jasta 11 and then the larger fighter wing unit Jagdgeschwader 1, better known as "The Flying Circus" or "Richthofen's Circus" because of the bright colours of its aircraft, and perhaps also because of the way the unit was transferred from one area of allied air activity to another – moving like a travelling circus, and frequently setting up in tents on improvised airfields.

By 1918, Richthofen was regarded as a national hero in Germany, and respected by his enemies.

He would go on to become the top fighter pilot of World War I.

Richthofen was a *Freiherr* (literally "Free Lord"), a title of nobility often translated as "baron". This is not a given name nor

strictly a hereditary title, since all male members of the family were entitled to it, even during the lifetime of their father.

Richthofen painted his aircraft red, and this combined with his title led to him being called "The Red Baron", both inside and outside Germany. During his lifetime, he was more frequently described in German as *Der Rote Kampfflieger*, variously translated as "The Red Battle Flyer" or "The

Red Fighter Pilot". This name was used as the title of Richthofen's 1917 autobiography.

Early Life

Manfred Freiherr von Richthofen was born in Kleinburg, near Breslau, Lower Silesia (now part of the city of Wrocław, Poland), on 2 May 1892 into a prominent Prussian aristocratic family. His father was Major Albrecht Philipp Karl Julius Freiherr von Richthofen and his mother was Kunigunde von Schickfuss und Neudorff. He had an elder sister, Ilse, and two younger brothers.

When he was four years old, Manfred moved with his family to nearby Schweidnitz (now Świdnica, Poland). He enjoyed riding horses and hunting as well as gymnastics at school. He excelled at parallel bars and won a number of awards at school.

He and his brothers, Lothar and Bolko, hunted wild boar, elk, birds, and deer.

After being educated at home he attended a school at Schweidnitz before beginning military training when he was 11.

After completing cadet

training in 1911, he joined an Uhlan cavalry unit, the *Ulanen-Regiment Kaiser Alexander der III. von Russland* (1. Westpreußisches) Nr. 1 ("1st Emperor Alexander III of Russia Uhlan Regiment (1st West Prussian)") and was assigned to the regiment's 3. *Eskadron* ("No. 3 Squadron").

Early war service

When World War I began, Richthofen served as a cavalry reconnaissance officer on both the Eastern and Western Fronts, seeing action in Russia, France, and Belgium; with the advent of trench warfare making traditional cavalry operations outdated and inefficient, Richthofen's regiment was dismounted, serving as dispatch runners and field telephone operators.

Disappointed and bored at not being able to directly participate in combat, the last straw for Richthofen was an order to transfer to the army's supply branch.

His interest in the Air Service had been aroused by his examination of a German military aircraft behind the lines, and he applied for a transfer to *Die Fliegertruppen des deutschen Kaiserreiches* (Imperial German Army Air Service), later to be known as the *Luftstreitkräfte*.

He is supposed to have written in his application for transfer, "I have not gone to war in order to collect cheese and eggs, but for another purpose."

In spite of this unmilitary at-

titude, and to his own surprise, his request was granted. Manfred joined the flying service at the end of May 1915.

From June to August 1915, Richthofen served as an observer on reconnaissance missions over the Eastern Front with *Feldflieger Abteilung 69* ("No. 69 Flying Squadron").

On being transferred to the Champagne front, he is believed to have shot down an attacking French Farman aircraft with his observer's machine gun in a tense battle over French lines. He was not credited with the kill, since it fell behind Allied lines and therefore could not be confirmed.

At the controls

It was a chance meeting with German fighter ace Oswald Boelcke which led to Richthofen entering training as a pilot.

The following month, Manfred joined *Kampfgeschwader 2* ("No. 2 Bomber Squadron") flying a two-seater Albatros C.III. Initially, he appeared to be a below-average pilot. He struggled to control his aircraft, and he crashed during his first flight at the controls.

Despite this poor start, he rapidly became attuned to his aircraft. He was over Verdun on 26 April 1916 and fired on a French Nieuport, shooting it down over Fort Douaumont, although he received no official credit.

A week later, he decided to ignore more experienced pilots' advice against flying through

a thunderstorm. He later noted that he had been "lucky to get through the weather" and vowed never again to fly in such conditions unless ordered to do so.

Richthofen met Oswald Boelcke again in August 1916, after another spell flying two-seaters on the Eastern Front. Boelcke was visiting the east in search of candidates for his newly formed *Jasta 2*, and he selected Richthofen to join this unit, one of the first German fighter squadrons.

Boelcke was killed during a mid-air collision with a friendly aircraft on 28 October 1916, and Richthofen witnessed the event.

Richthofen scored his first confirmed aerial victory in the skies over Cambrai, France, on 17 September 1916.

His autobiography states, "I honoured the fallen enemy by placing a stone on his beautiful grave."

He contacted a jeweller in Berlin and ordered a silver cup engraved with the date and the type of enemy aircraft.

He continued to celebrate each of his victories in the same manner until he had 60 cups, by which time the dwindling supply of silver in blockaded Germany meant that silver cups could no longer be supplied. Richthofen discontinued his orders at this stage, rather than accept cups made from base metal.

His brother Lothar (who ended the war with 40 victories) used risky, aggressive tactics,



but Manfred observed a set of maxims known as the “Dicta Boelcke” to assure success for both the squadron and its pilots.

He was not a spectacular or aerobatic pilot like his brother or Werner Voss; however, he was a noted tactician and squadron leader and a fine marksman. Typically, he would dive from above to attack with the advantage of the sun behind him, with other pilots of his squadron covering his rear and flanks.

On 23 November 1916, Richthofen shot down his most famous adversary, British ace Major Lanoe Hawker VC, described by Richthofen as “the British Boelcke”.

The victory came while Richthofen was flying an Albatros D.II and Hawker was flying the older DH.2. After a long dogfight, Hawker was shot in the back of the head as he attempted to escape back to his own lines.

After this combat, Richthofen was convinced that he needed a fighter aircraft with more agility, even with a loss of speed. He switched to the Albatros D.III in January 1917, scoring two victories before suffering an in-flight crack in the spar of the aircraft’s lower wing on 24 January, and he reverted to the Albatros D.II or Halberstadt D.II for the next five weeks.

Richthofen was flying his Halberstadt on 6 March in combat with F.E.8s of 40 Squadron RFC when his aircraft was shot through the fuel tank, quite possibly by Edwin Benbow, who was credited with a victory



THE RED BARON: Richthofen in the cockpit of his famous *Rotes Flugzeug* (“Red Aircraft”) with other members of Jasta 11, including his brother Lothar (sitting, front), 23 April 1917.

from this fight.

Richthofen was able to force land without his aircraft catching fire on this occasion. He then scored a victory in the Albatros D.II on 9 March, but his Albatros D.III was grounded for the rest of the month so he switched again to a Halberstadt D.II.

He returned to his Albatros D.III on 2 April 1917 and scored 22 victories in it before switching to the Albatros D.V in late June.

Richthofen flew the celebrated Fokker Dr.I triplane from late July 1917, the distinctive three-winged aircraft with which he is most commonly associated - although he did not use the type exclusively until after it was re-issued with strengthened wings in November.

Only 19 of his 80 kills were made in this type of aircraft, de-

spite the popular link between Richthofen and the Fokker Dr. I. It was his Albatros D.III Serial No. 789/16 that was first painted bright red, in late January 1917, and in which he first earned his name and reputation.

Richthofen championed the development of the Fokker D.VII with suggestions to overcome the deficiencies of the current German fighter aircraft. He never had an opportunity to fly the new type in combat, as he was killed before it entered service.

The Flying Circus

Richthofen received the *Pour le Mérite* in January 1917 after his 16th confirmed kill, the highest military honour in Germany at the time and informally known as “The Blue Max.”

That same month, he assumed command of *Jasta 11* which ul-

timately included some of the elite German pilots, many of whom he trained himself, and several of whom later became leaders of their own squadrons. Ernst Udet belonged to Richthofen’s group and later became *Generaloberst* Udet.

When Lothar joined, the German high command appreciated the propaganda value of two Richthofens fighting together to defeat the enemy in the air.

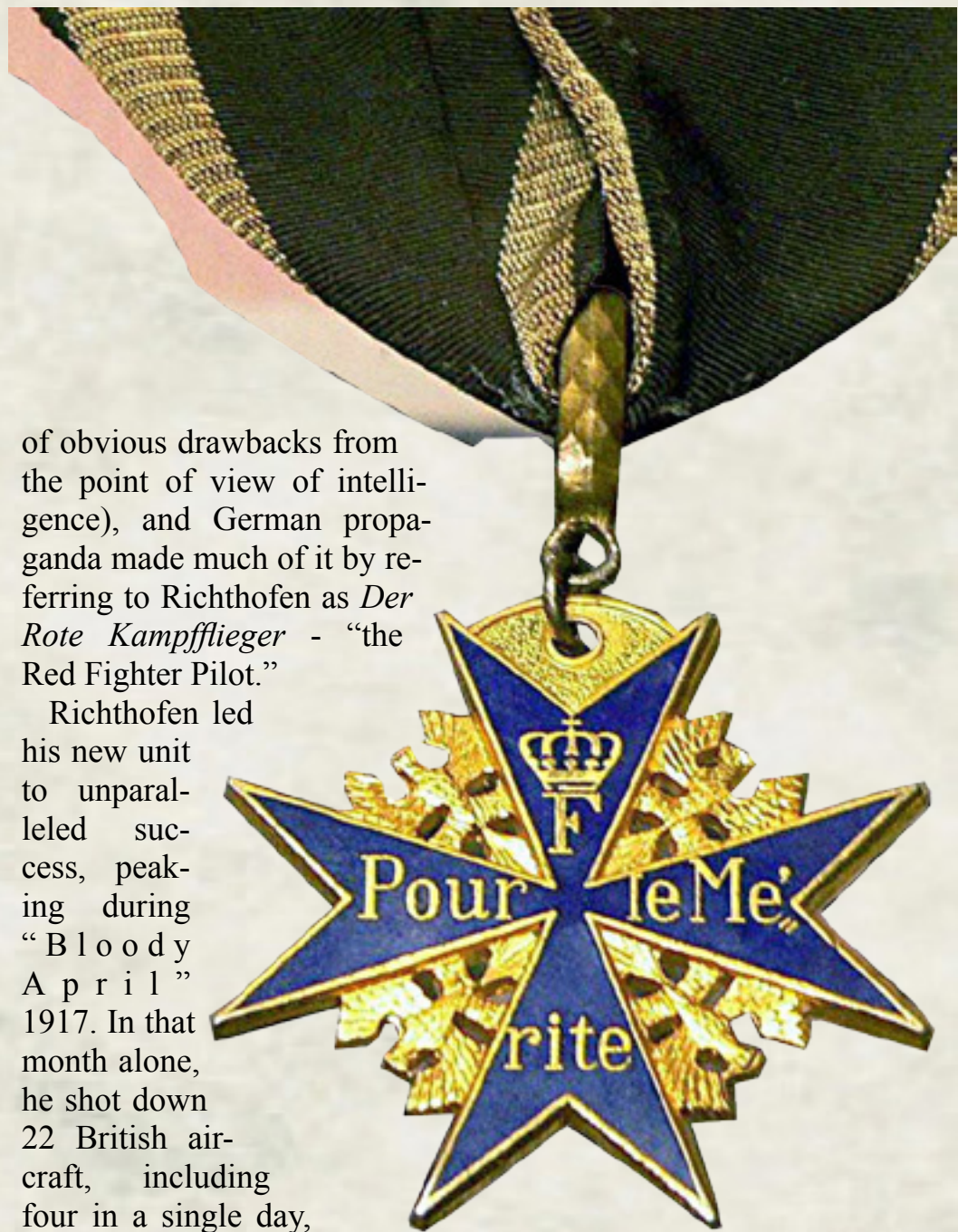
Richthofen took the flamboyant step of having his Albatros painted red when he became a squadron commander.

His autobiography states, “For whatever reasons, one fine day I came upon the idea of having my crate painted glaring red. The result was that absolutely everyone could not help but notice my red bird. In fact, my opponents also seemed to be not entirely unaware [of it].”

Thereafter he usually flew in red-painted aircraft, although not all of them were entirely red, nor was the “red” necessarily the brilliant scarlet beloved of model - and replica-builders.

Other members of *Jasta 11* soon took to painting parts of their aircraft red. Their official reason seems to have been to make their leader less conspicuous, to avoid having him singled out in a fight. In practice, red colouration became a unit identification. Other units soon adopted their own squadron colours, and decoration of fighters became general throughout the *Luftstreitkräfte*.

The German high command permitted this practice (in spite



of obvious drawbacks from the point of view of intelligence), and German propaganda made much of it by referring to Richthofen as *Der Rote Kampfflieger* - “the Red Fighter Pilot.”

Richthofen led his new unit to unparalleled success, peaking during “Bloody April” 1917. In that month alone, he shot down 22 British aircraft, including four in a single day, raising his official tally to 52.

By June, he had become the commander of the first of the new larger “fighter wing” formations; these were highly mobile, combined tactical units that could move at short notice to different parts of the front as required.

Richthofen’s new command, Jagdgeschwader 1, was composed of fighter squadrons No. 4, 6, 10, and 11. J.G. 1 became widely known as “The Flying

Circus” due to the unit’s brightly coloured aircraft and its mobility, including the use of tents, trains, and caravans, where appropriate.

Richthofen was a brilliant tactician, building on Boelcke’s tactics. Unlike Boelcke, however, he led by example and force of will rather than by inspiration.

He was often described as distant, unemotional, and rather humourless, though some col-

leagues contended otherwise. He taught his pilots the basic rule which he wanted them to fight by: "Aim for the man and don't miss him. If you are fighting a two-seater, get the observer first; until you have silenced the gun, don't bother about the pilot."

Richthofen was now performing the duties of a lieutenant colonel (a wing commander in modern Royal Air Force terms), although he remained a captain. The system in the British army was for an officer to hold the rank appropriate to his level of command, if only on a temporary basis, even if he had not been formally promoted.

In the German army, it was not unusual for a wartime officer to hold a lower rank than his duties implied; German officers were promoted according to a schedule and not by battlefield promotion. It was also the custom for a son not to hold a higher rank than his father, and Richthofen's father was a reserve major.

Wounded in action

Richthofen sustained a serious head wound on 6 July 1917, during combat near Wervicq against a formation of F.E.2d two seat fighters of No. 20 Squadron RFC, causing instant disorientation and temporary partial blindness.

He regained his vision in time to ease the aircraft out of a spin and execute a forced landing in a field in friendly territory. The injury required multiple operations to remove bone splinters

from the impact area.

The air victory was credited to Captain Donald Cunnell of No. 20, who was killed by German anti-aircraft fire a few days later on 12 July 1917 near Wervicq, Belgium; his observer Lt. A. G. Bill successfully flew the aircraft back to base.

The Red Baron returned to active service against doctor's orders on 25 July, but went on convalescent leave from 5 September to 23 October.

His wound is thought to have caused lasting damage; he later often suffered from post-flight nausea and headaches, as well as a change in temperament. There is a theory linking this injury with his eventual death.

Author, hero and legend

During his convalescent leave, Richthofen completed an autobiographic sketch, *Der rote Kampfflieger* (The Red Fighter Pilot, 1917). Written on the instructions of the "Press and Intelligence" (propaganda) section of the *Luftstreitkräfte* (Air Force), it shows evidence of having been heavily censored and edited.

By 1918, Richthofen had become such a legend that it was feared that his death would be a blow to the morale of the German people.

He refused to accept a ground job after his wound, stating that "every poor fellow in the trenches must do his duty" and that he would therefore continue to fly in combat.

Certainly he had become part of a cult of officially encour-

aged hero-worship. German propaganda circulated various false rumours, including that the British had raised squadrons specially to hunt Richthofen and had offered large rewards and an automatic Victoria Cross to any Allied pilot who shot him down.

Passages from his correspondence indicate he may have at least half-believed some of these stories himself.

Death

Richthofen received a fatal wound just after 11:00 am on 21 April 1918 while flying over Morlancourt Ridge near the Somme River. At the time, he had been pursuing a Sopwith Camel at very low altitude, piloted by novice Canadian pilot Lieutenant Wilfrid "Wop" May of No. 209 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

May had just fired on the Red Baron's cousin Lt. Wolfram von Richthofen. On seeing his cousin being attacked, Manfred flew to his rescue and fired on May, causing him to pull away. Richthofen pursued May across the Somme.

The Baron was spotted and briefly attacked by a Camel piloted by May's school friend and flight commander, Canadian Captain Arthur "Roy" Brown. Brown had to dive steeply at very high speed to intervene, and then had to climb steeply to avoid hitting the ground. Richthofen turned to avoid this attack, and then resumed his pursuit of May.

It was almost certainly during



PAYING RESPECT: No. 3 Squadron AFC officers were pallbearers and other ranks from the squadron acted as a guard of honour during the Red Baron's funeral on 22 April 1918.

this final stage in his pursuit of May that a single .303 bullet hit Richthofen, damaging his heart and lungs so severely that it must have caused a quick death.

In the last seconds of his life, he managed to retain sufficient control to make a rough landing in a field on a hill near the Bray-Corbie road, just north of the village of Vaux-sur-Somme, in a sector defended by the Australian Imperial Force (AIF).

There were several witnesses, including Gunner Ernest W. Twycross, Gunner George Ridgway, and Sergeant Ted Smout of the Australian Medical Corps. Each of these men later claimed to have been the first to reach the triplane, and each reported various versions of Richthofen's last words, generally including the word "kaputt".

His Fokker Dr.I 425/17 was not badly damaged by the

landing, but it was soon taken apart by souvenir hunters. No. 3 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps was the nearest Allied air unit and assumed responsibility for the Baron's remains.

The RAF credited Brown with shooting down the Red Baron, but it is now generally agreed that the bullet which hit Richthofen was fired from the ground and that it was a bullet from an anti-aircraft machine gun that killed the Red Baron.

Burial

In common with most Allied air officers, Major Blake, who was responsible for Richthofen's body, regarded the Red Baron with great respect, and he organised a full military funeral, to be conducted by the personnel of No. 3 Squadron Australian Flying Corps.

The body was buried in the cemetery at the village of Ber-

tangles, near Amiens, on 22 April 1918. Six of No. 3 Squadron's officers served as pallbearers, and a guard of honour from the squadron's other ranks fired a salute.

Allied squadrons stationed nearby presented memorial wreaths, one of which was inscribed with the words, "To Our Gallant and Worthy Foe".

In the early 1920s the French authorities created a military cemetery at Fricourt, in which a large number of German war dead, including Richthofen, were re-interred.

In 1925 von Richthofen's youngest brother, Bolko, recovered the body from Fricourt and took it to Germany. The family's intention was for it to be buried in the Schweidnitz cemetery next to the graves of his father and his brother Lothar von Richthofen, who had been killed in a post-war air crash in 1922.

The German Government requested that the body should instead be interred at the Invalidenfriedhof Cemetery in Berlin, where many German military heroes and past leaders were buried, and the family agreed. Richthofen's body received a state funeral.

During the Cold War, the Invalidenfriedhof was on the boundary of the Soviet zone in Berlin, and the tombstone became damaged by bullets fired at attempted escapees from East Germany. In 1975 the body was moved to a Richthofen family grave plot at the Südfriedhof in Wiesbaden.

Fokker Dr.I

Often known simply as the Fokker Triplane, the Dr.I saw widespread service in the spring of 1918. It became famous as the aircraft in which Manfred von Richthofen gained his last 19 victories, and in which he was killed on 21 April 1918.

According to the Smithsonian Institution and *Fédération Aéronautique Internationale* (FAI), on 17 December 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright made four brief flights at Kitty Hawk with their first powered aircraft. The Wright brothers had invented the first successful airplane.

Just eight years later, in 1911, powered aircraft were first used in war by the Italians against the Turks near Tripoli,

But it was not until the Great War of 1914–18 that their use became widespread. At first, aircraft were unarmed and employed for reconnaissance, serving basically as extensions of the eyes of the ground commander.

Soon, however, the need to

deny such reconnaissance to the enemy led to air-to-air combat in which each side tried to gain superiority in the air. Fighter planes were armed with fixed, forward-firing machine guns that allowed the pilot to aim his entire aircraft at the enemy, and the effective range of these weapons (no more than about 180 metres) meant that the first aerial combat took place at very short range.

By the second year of the war fighter tactics emerged on all sides emphasizing basic concepts that, with modification, remained applicable through the jet age.

Both the Allies and the Germans made use of biplanes, fixed-wing aircraft with two

main wings stacked one above the other.

In December 1915 the Fokker E.III *Eindecker* (literally meaning “one deck”) entered service on the Western Front. It was

the first single wing aircraft to enter combat and enjoyed limited success.

In early 1917 the British Sopwith Triplane entered service. It was the first military triplane to see operational service and was immediately successful. It was nevertheless built in comparatively small numbers and was withdrawn from active service as Sopwith Camels arrived in the latter half of 1917.

The Germans noted the success of the Sopwith Triplane and decided that it was time to come up with a triplane of their own design.

Design and Development

Despite its single Vickers machine gun ar-

mament, the Sopwith swiftly proved itself superior to the more heavily armed Albatros fighters then in use by the *Luftstreitkräfte* (Imperial German Air Service).

In April 1917, Anthony Fokker viewed a captured Sopwith Triplane while visiting Jasta 11. Upon his return to the Schwinerlin factory, Fokker instructed Reinhold Platz to build a triplane, but gave him no further information about the Sopwith design.

Platz responded with the V.4, a small, rotary-powered triplane with a steel tube fuselage and thick cantilever wings, first developed during Fokker’s government-mandated collaboration with Hugo Junkers. Initial tests revealed that the V.4 had unacceptably high control forces resulting from the use of unbalanced ailer-

ons and elevators.

Instead of submitting the V.4 for a type test, Fokker produced a revised prototype designated V.5. The most notable changes were the introduction of horn-balanced ailerons and elevators, as well as longer-span wings.

The V.5 also featured interplane struts, which were not necessary from a structural standpoint, but which minimized wing flexing.

On 14 July 1917, Idflieg issued an order for 20 pre-production aircraft. The V.5 prototype, serial 101/17, was tested to destruction at Adlershof on 11 August 1917.

Operational history

The first two pre-production triplanes were designated F.I, in accord with Idflieg’s early class prefix for triplanes. These aircraft, serials 102/17 and 103/17, were the only machines to receive the F.I designation and



could be distinguished from subsequent aircraft by a slight convex curve of the tailplane's leading edge.

The two aircraft were sent to Jastas 10 and 11 for combat evaluation, arriving at Markebeeke, Belgium on 28 August 1917.

Richthofen first flew 102/17 on 1 September 1917 and shot down two enemy aircraft in the next two days. He reported to the Kogenluft (Kommandierender General der Luftstreitkräfte) that the F.I was superior to the Sopwith Triplane.

Richthofen recommended that fighter squadrons be re-equipped with the new aircraft as soon as possible. The combat evaluation came to an abrupt conclusion when Oberleutnant Kurt Wolff, Staffelführer of Jasta 11, was shot down in 102/17 on 15 September, and Leutnant Werner Voss, Staffelführer of Jasta 10, was killed in 103/17 on 23 September.

The remaining pre-production aircraft, designated Dr.I, were delivered to Jasta 11. Idflieg issued a production order for 100 triplanes in September, followed by an order for 200 in November.

Apart from the straight leading edge of the tailplane, these aircraft were almost identical to the F.I. The primary distinguishing feature was the addition of wingtip skids, which proved necessary because the aircraft was tricky to land and prone to ground looping. In October, Fokker began delivering the Dr.I to squadrons within Richthofen's Jagdgeschwader I.

Compared with the Albatros

and Pfalz fighters, the Dr.I offered exceptional manoeuvrability. Though the ailerons were not very effective, the rudder and elevator controls were light and powerful.

Rapid turns, especially to the right, were facilitated by the triplane's marked directional instability. Vizefeldwebel Franz Hemer of Jasta 6 said, "The triplane was my favorite fighting machine because it had such wonderful flying qualities. I could let myself stunt – looping and rolling – and could avoid an enemy by diving with perfect safety. The triplane had to be given up because although it was very manoeuvrable, it was no longer fast enough."

As Hemer noted, the Dr.I was considerably slower than contemporary Allied fighters in level flight and in a dive. While initial rate of climb was excellent, performance fell off dramatically at higher altitudes because of the low compression of the Oberursel Ur.II, a clone of the Le Rhône 9J rotary engine.

As the war continued, chronic shortages of castor oil made rotary operation increasingly difficult. The poor quality of German ersatz lubricant resulted in many engine failures, particularly during the summer of 1918.

The Dr.I suffered other deficiencies. The pilot's view was poor during take off and landing. The cockpit was cramped and furnished with materials of inferior quality. Furthermore, the proximity of the gun butts to the cockpit, combined with inadequate crash padding, left the pilot vulnerable to serious head injury in the event of a

crash landing.

Wing failures

On 29 October 1917, Leutnant der Reserve Heinrich Gontermann, Staffelführer of Jasta 15, was performing aerobatics when his triplane broke up. Gontermann was fatally injured in the ensuing crash landing.

Leutnant der Reserve Günther Pastor of Jasta 11 was killed two days later when his triplane broke up in level flight. Inspection of the wrecked aircraft showed that the wings had been poorly constructed. Examination of other high-time triplanes confirmed these findings. On 2 November, Idflieg grounded all remaining triplanes pending an inquiry.

In response to the crash investigation, Fokker improved quality control on the production line, particularly varnishing of the wing spars and ribs, to combat moisture. Fokker also strengthened the rib structures and the attachment of the auxiliary spars to the ribs.

Existing triplanes were repaired and modified at Fokker's expense. After testing a modified wing at Adlershof, Idflieg authorized the triplane's return to service on 28 November 1917. Production resumed in early December.

By January 1918, Jastas 6 and 11 were fully equipped with the triplane. Only 14 squadrons used the Dr.I as their primary equipment. Most of these units were part of Jagdgeschwadern I, II, or III. Frontline inventory peaked in late April 1918, with 171 aircraft in service on the Western Front.

Despite corrective measures,

the Dr.I continued to suffer from wing failures. On 3 February 1918, Leutnant Hans Joachim Wolff of Jasta 11 successfully landed after suffering a failure of the upper wing leading edge and ribs.

On 18 March 1918, Lothar von Richthofen, Staffelführer of Jasta 11, suffered a failure of the upper wing leading edge during combat with Sopwith Camels of No. 73 Squadron and Bristol F.2Bs of No. 62 Squadron. Richthofen was seriously injured in the ensuing crash landing.

Postwar research revealed that poor workmanship was not the only cause of the triplane's structural failures. In 1929, National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) investigations found that the upper wing carried a higher lift coefficient than the lower wing – at high speeds it could be 2.55 times as much.

The triplane's chronic structural problems destroyed any prospect of large-scale orders. Production eventually ended in May 1918, by which time only 320 had been manufactured.

The Dr.I was withdrawn from frontline service as the Fokker D.VII entered widespread service in June and July. Jasta 19 was the last squadron to be fully equipped with the Dr.I.

Surviving triplanes were distributed to training and home defence units. Several training aircraft were re-engined with the 75 kW (100 hp) Goebel Goe.II.

At the time of the Armistice, many remaining triplanes were assigned to fighter training schools at Nivelles, Belgium,

and Valenciennes, France. Allied pilots tested several of these triplanes and found their handling qualities to be impressive.

Postwar

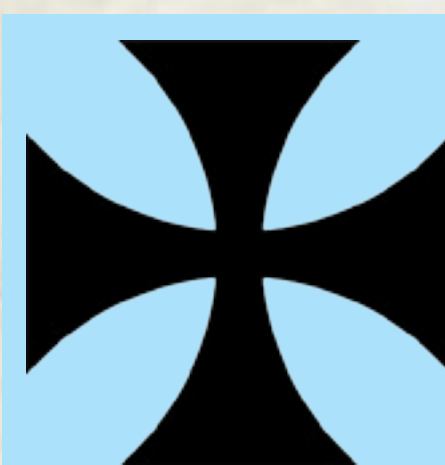
Three triplanes are known to have survived the Armistice. Serial 528/17 was retained as a testbed by the *Deutschen Versuchsanstalt für Luftfahrt* (German Aviation Research Institute) at Adlershof.

After being used in the filming of two movies, 528/17 is believed to have crashed sometime in the late 1930s. Serial 152/17, in which Manfred von Richthofen obtained three victories, was displayed at the Zeughaus museum in Berlin. This aircraft was destroyed in an Allied bombing raid during World War II.

In 1932, Fokker assembled a Dr.I from existing components. It was displayed in the Deutsche Luftfahrt-Sammlung in Berlin. In 1943, the aircraft was destroyed in an Allied bombing raid. Today, only a few original Dr.I artifacts survive in museums.

Replicas

Large numbers of replica and reproduction aircraft have been built for both individuals and museums. Bitz Flugzeugbau GmbH built two Dr.I replicas for use in Twentieth Century Fox's 1966 film *The Blue Max*. Because of the expense and scarcity of authentic rotary engines, most airworthy replicas are powered by a Warner Scarab or Continental R-670 radial engine. A few, however, feature vintage Le Rhône 9J or reproduction Oberursel Ur.II rotary engines.



Fokker Dr.1

General characteristics

- Crew: 1
- Length: 5.77 metres
- Upper wingspan: 7.19 metres
- Height: 2.95 metres
- Wing area: 18.7 m² Aspect ratio: 4.04
- Empty weight: 406 kg
- Gross weight: 586 kg
- Powerplant: 1 × Oberursel Ur.II 9-cylinder air-cooled rotary piston engine, 82 kW (110 hp)
- Propellers: Two-bladed fixed-pitch wooden propeller

Performance

- Maximum speed: 160 km/h at 2,600 metres
- Stall speed: 72 km/h
- Range: 300 km
- Service ceiling: 6,100 metres
- Rate of climb: 5.7 m/s
- Zero-lift drag coefficient: 0.0323
- Frontal area at zero-lift drag coefficient: 0.62 m²

Armament

- Guns: 2 × 7.92 mm Maschinengewehr 08 "Spandau" machine guns

During the negotiations of 1953 in the Korean War, hill battles became a test of wills. Every hill won by the communists made them more stubborn. This meant that Pork Chop Hill assumed a wider political significance than purely military.

On 23 June 1951 the Soviet Union suggested truce talks in Korean and many in the West thought that the war would soon be over.

Yet it took two years of argument, threat and counter-threat and more recrimination before the armistice was finally signed.

In the intervening two years the Chinese and the UN forces were considerably enhanced and their front line positions became fortified where World War I veterans would have felt at home. Yet battles were initiated by both sides.

These battles had the aim of weakening the resolve of the enemy, seizing ground in order to improve the local tactical situation or acquiring a bargaining counter to be used in the ceasefire talks.

One particular piece of ground became the centre of much attention and strenuous efforts by both sides. Pork Chop Hill (so named because of its shape) assumed an importance in tactical, political and even strategic terms that far outweighed its geographical significance.

The hill stood in no-man's land on 1 US Corps front and quite close to a boundry with IX Corps. It was approximately 1,5 km forward of the American positions on the Main Line of Resistance (MLR) itself, and about 80 km north of Seoul.

The communists occupied a hill roughly level with Pork Chop and to its west some 1,3 km. From this hill (known as Old Baldy) the Chinese could observe the American supply route from the MLR to Pork Chop Hill.

Background

The 300 meters-high hill was first seized by the US 8th Cavalry Regiment in October 1951. It was taken again in May 1952 by I Company of the US 180th Infantry Regiment. The 1st Battalion of the 21st Thai Regiment attached to the US 2nd Infantry Division defended the position in November 1952.

From 29 December 1952, it became part of the US 7th Infantry Division's defensive sector. Pork Chop Hill was among several exposed hill outposts along the UN Main line of resistance (MLR) that were defended by a single company or platoon positioned in sand-bagged bunkers connected with trenches.

Opposing the 7th Infantry Division were two divisions of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA): the 141st Division of the 47th Army and the 67th Division of the 23rd Army. These were veteran, well-trained units expert in night infantry assaults, patrolling, ambushes, and mountain warfare.

Both armies (Corps-equivalent units) were part of the 13th Field Army commanded by General Deng Hua, who was also deputy commander of PVA forces in Korea.

The opposing forces in this sector were roughly equal in size, the 7th Division (Major General Arthur Trudeau, commanding) totalling 11 infantry battalions (including attached battalions from Colombia and Ethiopia), a battalion of armour, and 6 battalions of artillery, while the PVA forces totalled 12 infantry, 10 artillery, and the equivalent of one tank battalion.

Both the UN and the PVA had used military operations to gain

leverage or make political statements relevant to the armistice negotiations since early 1952.

The first battle on Pork Chop Hill occurred near Operation Little Switch, the exchange of ill and injured prisoners-of-war scheduled for 20 April.

The PVA command authorized the April attack to demonstrate that agreement in contentious negotiations did not equal unwillingness to continue fighting, if necessary.

First battle 16–18 April

In a surprise night attack on 23 March 1953, a battalion of the PVA 423rd Regiment, 141st Division seized Old Baldy (Hill 266) an outpost near Pork Chop Hill and quickly overwhelmed B Company of the 31st Infantry's Colombian Battalion, commanded by Lt. Colonel Alberto Ruiz Novoa, during its relief in the Fifth Battle for Old Baldy.

The regimental commander, Colonel William B. Kern, had ordered C Company of the Colombian Battalion to relieve B Company despite the Colombian commander's protest. The attack caught both companies amidst the rotation.

Two days of stiff resistance by the maimed and battered B and C Companies failed in retaking the hill due to the failure of the 31st Regiment Command to send reinforcements, causing the UN to order its abandonment. This preliminary fight exposed Pork Chop to three-sided attack, and, for the next three weeks, PVA patrols probed it nightly.

On the night of 16 April Company E, 31st Infantry (1st Lt.

Thomas U. Harrold) manned Pork Chop Hill. Shortly before midnight, an artillery barrage foreshadowed a sudden infantry assault by a battalion of the PVA 201st Regiment; Pork Chop Hill was quickly overrun, although pockets of US soldiers defended isolated bunkers. Elsewhere in the sector, other positions were attacked, ensuring the entire 7th Division.

31st Infantry counter-attack

Company K (1st Lt. Joseph G. Clemons) and Company L (1st Lt. Forrest J. Crittendon), 31st Infantry, in reserve behind the MLR, were ordered to counter-attack and began their attack at 04h30 on 17 April.

By dawn they reached the main trenches on top of the hill but suffered almost 50% casualties, and half of Company L's troops had not been able to leave the trenches of an adjacent outpost, Hill 200.

Lt. Clemons, in tactical command of the assault, requested reinforcement. 2nd Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment was already attached to the 31st Infantry and its Company G (1st Lt. Walter B. Russell Jr., who was Clemons's brother-in-law) was immediately sent forward, linking up with Company K at 08h30.

All three companies were subjected to almost continuous shelling by PVA artillery as they cleared bunkers and dug in again.

Through a series of radiocommunications between command echelons, Division headquarters ordered Russell's company to withdraw at 15h00 after they too had suffered heavy losses,

and did not realize the extent of casualties among the other two companies.

By the time the situation was clarified the companies of the 31st Infantry were down to a combined 25 survivors. Maj. Gen. Trudeau, by then on scene, authorized Col. Kern to send in a fresh company to relieve all elements on Hill 255 and placed him in tactical command with both the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 17th Infantry attached and at his direction.

17th Infantry counter-attack

Kern sent forward Company F, 17th Infantry (Captain Monroe D. King), which started up the hill at 21h30 under heavy artillery fire but reached the trenches at 22h00, suffering 19 killed in the process. Kern at 23h00 then ordered Company E, 17th Infantry (1st Lt. Gorman C. Smith), to move up to reinforce Company F. Smith, to avoid the bulk of the artillery fire, moved around the right flank of the hill and up the side facing the PVA positions.

Company K, 31st Infantry had incurred 125 casualties, including 18 killed, of its original 135 men. After twenty hours of steady combat the remaining seven members started off the hill singly just after midnight of 17/18 April and withdrew without further losses. Several of Company L's survivors remained with the relief troops to familiarize them with the layout of the hill defences.

During the early morning of 18 April, the PVA 201st Regiment renewed its attack at 01h30 and again inflicted heavy losses on the defenders, near-

ly overrunning Company F in battalion strength. The timely counter-attack by Company E, 17th Infantry caught the PVA by surprise on their flank and ended the organized assault. The 141st Division renewed attacks in company strength at 03h20 and 04h20, but did not gain further ground.

At dawn on 18 April, an additional US rifle company (Company A, 17th Infantry) climbed the hill to reinforce the 2nd Battalion companies. Together the three companies spent the bulk of the day clearing the trenches and bunkers of all hiding PVA and securing the hilltop. The battle ended that afternoon.

UN artillery had fired over 77,000 rounds in support of the three outposts attacked, including nearly 40,000 on Pork Chop Hill alone on 18 April; the PVA expended a similar amount.

Tactics and losses

Both the PVA and US infantry assaulted the hill initially under cover of a moonless night. Each used a heavy preparatory artillery barrage to force the defenders to take cover in bunkers and to screen the approach of the attacking troops.

PVA forces used rapid movement and infiltration tactics to close quickly on the trenches and surprise the defenders, while the US forces used grazing fire to limit defensive small arms fire, then manoeuvred systematically up the hillsides under shellfire. Neither side employed supporting fire from tanks or armoured personnel carriers (APC) to protect attacking troops.

Once inside the trench line,



WAITING FOR THE ATTACK: US troops strengthen their defences while awaiting another Chinese attack.

troops of both forces were forced to eliminate bunkers individually, using hand grenades, explosive charges and occasionally flame throwers, resulting in heavy casualties to the attackers. For the UN forces, infiltration of cleared bunkers by bypassed PVA was a problem throughout the battle and hand-to-hand combat was a frequent occurrence.

Evacuation of casualties was made hazardous by almost continuous artillery fires from both sides. The 7th Division made extensive use of tracked M-39 APCs to evacuate casualties and to protect troops involved in the resupply of water, rations, and ammunition, losing one during the battle.

In addition the UN forces employed on-call, pre-registered defensive fires called flash fire to defend its outposts, in which artillery laid down an almost continuous box barrage in a horseshoe-shaped pattern around the outpost to cover all

approaches from the PVA side of the main line of resistance.

US losses were 104 dead, including 63 in the 31st Infantry with only seven survivors, 31 in the 17th Infantry and 10 among engineers and artillery observers, and 373 wounded. PVA losses were unknown.

Second battle 6–11 July

The 7th Division rebuilt its defences on Pork Chop Hill in May and June 1953, during a lull in major combat. Final agreements for an armistice were being hammered out and the UN continued its defensive posture all along the MLR, anticipating a ceasefire in place.

On the night of 6 July, using tactics identical to those in the April assault, the PVA again attacked Pork Chop. The hill was now held by Company A, 17th Infantry, under the temporary command of 1st Lt. Alton Jr. McElfresh, its executive officer.

Company B of the same regiment, in ready reserve behind

the adjacent Hill 200, was immediately ordered to assist, but within an hour, Company A reported hand-to-hand combat in the trenches. A major battle was brewing and division headquarters ordered a third company to move up.

The battle was fought in a persistent monsoon rain for the first three days, making both resupply and evacuation of casualties difficult. The battle is notable for its extensive use of APCs in both these missions.

On the second night, the PVA made a new push to take the hill, forcing the 7th Division to again reinforce. Parts of four companies defended Pork Chop under a storm of artillery fire from both sides. At dawn of 8 July, the rain temporarily ended and the initial defenders were withdrawn. A fresh battalion,

the 2nd Battalion of the 17th, counter-attacked and re-took the hill, setting up a night defensive perimeter.

7th Division counter-attacks

On both 9 and 10 July, the two sides attacked and counter-attacked. A large part of both PVA divisions were committed to the battle, and ultimately five battalions of the 17th and 32nd Infantry Regiments were engaged, making nine counter-attacks over four days. On the morning of 11 July, the commander of US I Corps decided to abandon Pork Chop Hill to the PVA and the 7th Division withdrew under fire.

Results and losses

Four of the thirteen US company commanders were killed. Total US casualties were 243

killed, 916 wounded, and 9 captured. 163 of the dead were never recovered.

Of the Republic of Korea Army KATUSA troops attached to the 7th, approximately 15 were killed and 120 wounded. PVA casualties were estimated at 1,500 dead and 4,000 wounded.

According to Chinese sources, 6,800 soldiers of 67th division were involved in 1953 summer battles for five days, among them 533 were killed and 1,242 were wounded.

Less than three weeks after the Battle of Pork Chop Hill, the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed by the UN, PVA and North Korean Korean People's Army, ending the hostilities.



THE PORK CHOP: The heights of Pork Chop Hill saw fierce fighting as both sides attacked and counter-attacked in an effort to take control of the hill.

All I want for Christmas

Here is a copy of the letter than Matt O'Brien sent to Santa this year.



Dear Fat Guy in the red suit,

Okay, I've been a good boy this year. You can ask anyone, even my parole officer. So how about this year you give me what I'm actually asking for.

Last year when I said I wanted Shakira for Christmas, I wasn't talking about her new CD.

This year I'm not asking for much. All I need are 10 games for my PC. Now I realise that one of these games hasn't even been released yet. But you're supposed to be magic. So just do your stuff.

And please don't get it wrong this year. I know where you live, if you get my meaning. And a word of advice - don't park your sleigh in my neighbourhood or you just might find it on bricks and your reindeer ending up on someone's braai.

Merry Christmas.

Matt O'Brien

So these then are the ten games that O'Brien wants in his Christmas stocking this year. And he says that if you're looking for a PC game to keep you occupied over the silly season, you won't go wrong with any of these titles. Click on the game cover to watch a review of the game.



Company of Heroes 2

This is a real time strategy game set during World War II. Built around the concepts of cover and directional fire, suppression and morale, you have to use actual battlefield strategies if you wanted to succeed.

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

Where the game really comes into its own is in skirmish mode. You can play multi-player, coop, or even go up against

the AI (Artificial Intelligence). What's also cool is that you can play as the Russians or the Germans.

The base game gives you both the Russian and German forces. It also includes DLC which gives you access to the Americans, British and the Oberkommando faction.

It's not that difficult to learn to play the game and with skirmish mode it will provide hours and hours of entertainment.

Price: R199 (on Steam)



ARMA 3

ARMA 3 is an open world, military tactical shooter video game. 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 features 270 square kilometres of terrain.

The game features a large assortment of weapons, equipment, vehicles, aircraft, and

helicopters.

Modding groups have created thousands of extra stuff for the game, including a group that specialises in South African and African content.

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

This is an excellent military simulator and one I would recommend.

Price: R479 (on Steam)

SPMBT

Steel Panthers: Main Battle Tank was named the best war game of 1995 by Computer Gaming World, PC Gamer US and Computer Games Strategy Plus.

It's a turn-based strategy simulation that you can play in single player against the AI, or you can go up against a real opponent online.

Okay, the game is 24 years old, the graphics are nothing to write home about, but it's still an excellent simulator - and it's

absolutely free.

You can play real life battles that start off during the Korean War in the 1950s. There are scenarios that deal with Southern Africa, including scenarios set in Rhodesia, Angola and South West Africa. You can find scenarios for Ops Savannah, Smokeshell, Protea, Cassinga, Cuito Cuanavale and many more online.

Well worth playing.

Price: Free ([click here](#))



IL-2 Sturmovik: Cliffs of Dover - Blitz Edition

This is a flight simulation where you get to take part in the Battle of Britain, playing either as the RAF or the Luftwaffe.

There are three modes to the game - training, single player, and multi-player.

The game is very realistic and the planes are accurately modelled, meaning there is a steep learning curve.

It is suggested that you do quite a bit of training before you try going into combat. Es-

pecially if you're going to take on real opponents online.

There are no fewer than 23 aircraft that you can fly in the game, and these include both fighters and bombers.

The graphics are really well done and a lot of attention has been paid to detail.

It's a great simulation for those that are looking for realism and a challenge.

Price: R150 (on Steam)





Atlantic Fleet

This turn based tactical and strategic naval combat simulator puts you in command of the Allies or *Kriegsmarine* (German Navy) in the longest military campaign of WWII, The Battle of the Atlantic.

You take command of surface ships, submarines as well as carrier and land based aircraft in the deadly struggle for control of Atlantic shipping lanes.

Protect convoys as the Allies or go on the offensive with deadly submarine wolf packs

and surface raiders of the German Navy.

Atlantic Fleet is not a bad game at all, especially at the price. While the graphics are not bad, they are not high definition.

The good news is that the game will run on a fairly low-end computer.

Price: R109 (on Steam)

Jagged Alliance: Back in Action

The king of an island called Arulco needs to overthrow his wife, Queen Dedriana, and take back his kingdom. And he's hired you to do the job.

Armed with a laptop and a limited budget you have to search a website called AIM (Association of International Mercenaries) and hire the right people to do the job.

You can hire up to three teams of six mercenaries. Problem is you can't afford any good mercs to start off with. And the

good ones won't work for you until you've built up a bit of a reputation.

Each mercenary comes certain skills and characteristics. So you have to put together the right team.

As you take over sectors of the island you can gain more income and hire better people and equipment.

It's an addictive game to play and great fun.

Price: R219 (on Steam)



Ghost Recon: Wildlands

This game is what is known as a tactical shooter. It is set in 2019 in Bolivia. The country has become increasingly unstable as a Mexican drug cartel known as the Santa Blanca Cartel gains more power and influence within the country and turns Bolivia into the world's largest producer of cocaine.

A task force, consisting of you and three others are sent in to take the cartel down. The map is 400 square kilometres

and you can get around the map using cars, trucks, dirt bikes, boats, light aircraft and helicopters.

You have to take down local *buchon* (local bosses) before you can take on the head honcho named El Sueño.

Some missions will require stealth, others brute force. It will keep you occupied for hours.

Price: R699 (on Steam)



U-Boat

U-Boat is exactly what it says it is, a submarine simulator. In a nutshell, you are given command of a Type VII submarine during World War II.

Unlike other submarine games you are not in charge of the submarine itself, but rather in charge of the men controlling the submarine. You act as the U-Boat captain.

Your job is to manage the morale, discipline and trauma of the crew and make sure all the crew come back alive at the

end of a mission.

Before you leave port you are given a mission briefing. You need to check that your boat is in good condition, and take on supplies include torpedoes, fuel, food, water and any other necessary rations and equipment.

You will be required to make all the decisions and handle any situations that may crop up. This is a challenging sim.

Price: R175 (on Steam)



Total War: Shogun 2

As daiymo (warlord) of a Samurai clan your objective is to take on the other clans and become the shogun - the supreme military leader of Japan.

You start with a single territory and the objective is to take over enough territories until you become the most powerful daiymo in Japan.

You will have to build up a strong enough army to invade other territories as well as defend your own. You will need to construct military buildings

to train your troops.

But you also need to look after the civilian population of your territories and provide them with food, education and spiritual guidance. All this costs money.

Collect taxes loot other provinces or trade with them. Use diplomacy, make and break alliances. Do what needs to be done.

Price: R299 (on Steam)



FS 2020

The last time Microsoft released a flight simulator was in 2006 with FlightSim X. Then they announced that a new flight sim, Flight Simulator 2020, would be released next year.

The game will simulate the entire Earth using textures and topographical data from Bing Maps.

There will also be realistic physics and weather systems, and utilize real-world weather data. It has been stated that individual clouds will have their

own behaviours, and that they will impact aircraft performance depending on its location within the system.

It will populate roads with vehicles, water will flow realistically based on wind direction, and trees will have individual leaves, creating the illusion of a living world. It will feature over two million cities and towns and more than 40,000 real-world airports.

Price: No idea





Stocking fillers

Looking for a stocking filler for either yourself or a friend this Christmas? Then how about one of these movies. Five of them are based on true stories. We can strongly recommend 'My Father's War' to any South African military veteran. Click on the cover to watch a trailer of the movies.



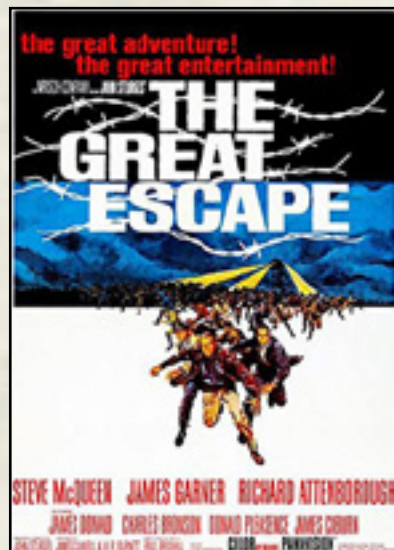
Enemy at the Gates



A Bridge too Far



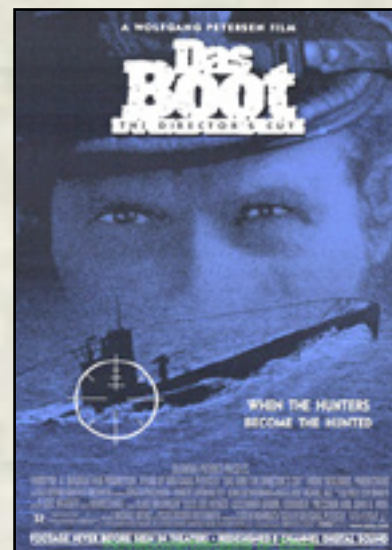
Siege at Jadotville



The Great Escape



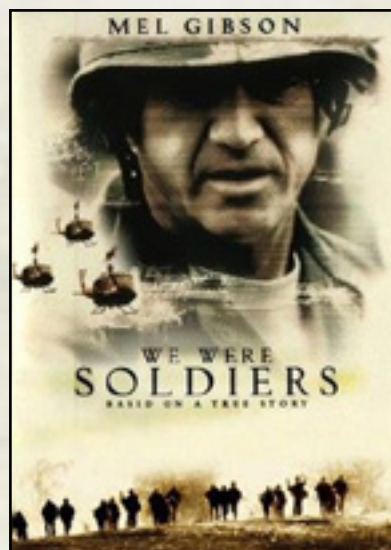
My Father's War



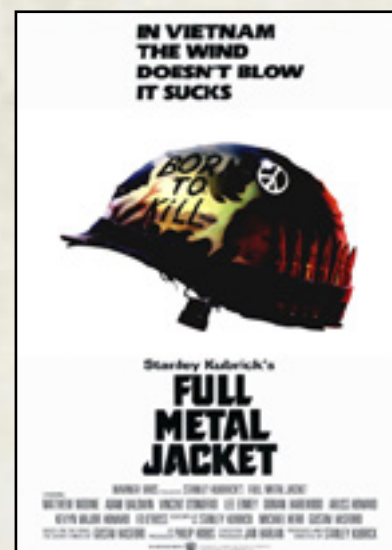
Das Boot



Platoon



We Were Soldiers



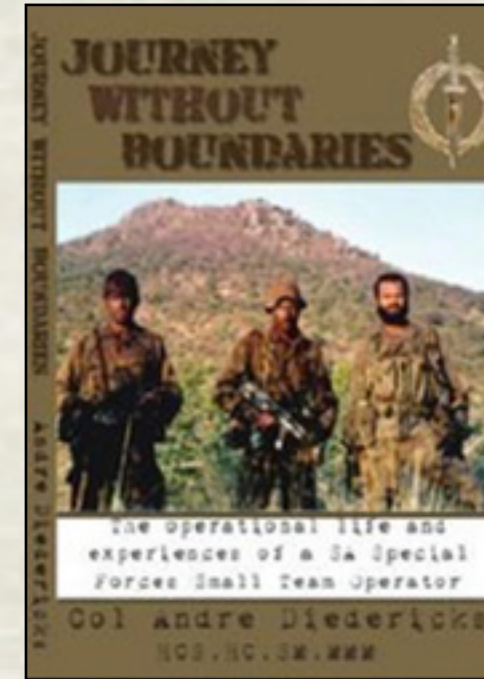
Full Metal Jacket

Good reads for the holidays

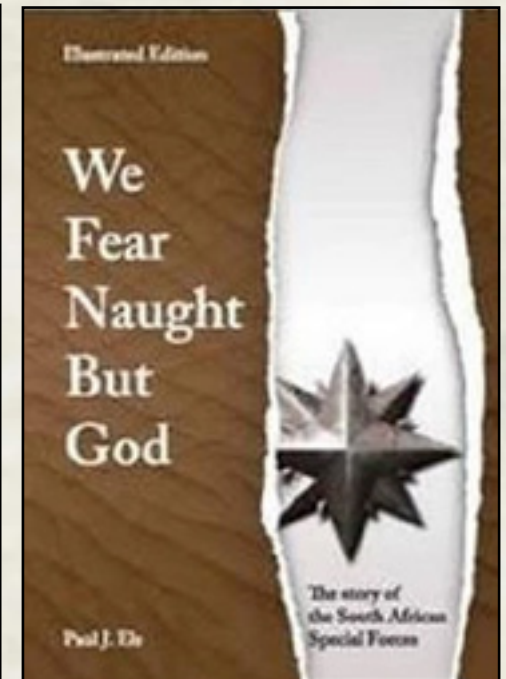
Many people will be on leave during December and it's the perfect time to catch up on a bit of reading. And many of us will be looking for the ideal gift to buy. You can't go wrong with a good book and we can recommend any of the books on this list. All of these books have been read and reviewed in Military Despatches at some stage.



Iron Fist from the Sea
Douw Steyn & Arne Söderlund
R300



Journey Without Boundaries
Col Andre Diedericks
R325



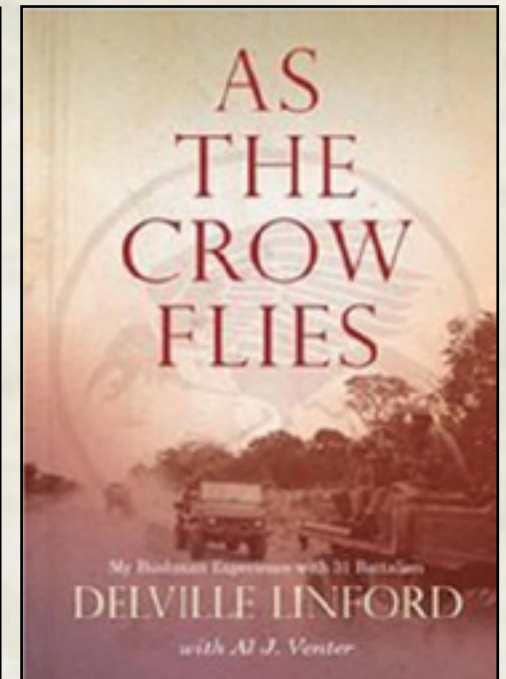
We Fear Naught But God
Paul Els
R395



Cuito Cuanavale
Gennady Shubin & Igor Zhdarkin
R255



Beyond No Mean Soldier
Peter McAleese
R525



As The Crow Flies
Delville Linford
R255

All books are available from [Bush War Books](#)

Some of the significant military events that happened in December. Highlighted in blue are the names of those members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that lost their lives during the month of December.

1 December

- **1914** - Col. J.F. Jordaan of the SA force captures Gen. Christiaan de Wet, on his way to German South West Africa at Waterbury, near Vryburg, Northern Cape (now North West Province).
- **1933** - Rudolf Hess & Ernst Rohm become ministers in Hitler's government.
- **1939** - SS-Fuhrer Himmler begins deportation of Polish Jews to concentration camps.
- **1978** - Lance Corporal Lionel Ashley Roe from Air Force Base Waterkloof was killed in a military vehicle accident at Waterkloof. He was 20.
- **1980** - Rifleman Johan Nothnagel from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident while on weekend pass. He was 19.
- **1992** - Cabinet decides to replace the SAAF trainer Harvards by the Swiss-made Pilatus PC-7 MK2. The joint venture will include twelve SA companies.
- **1995** - Prosecutors in South Africa formally charge former Defence Minister Gen. Magnus Malan and nineteen others with the murders of thirteen people in 1987. They were all later acquitted.
- **1998** - At least fourteen people are killed and twenty-four injured in a bomb explosion in a market in Algiers.

- **2012** - The world's first nuclear carrier, USS 'Enterprise' (CVN 65), is inactivated after 51 years of commissioned service.

2 December

- **1805** - Napoleon defeated Russia and Austria in the Battle of Austerlitz.
- **1836** - Commandant Andries Hendrik Potgieter is elected chief commandant of the Voortrekkers.
- **1856** - The Battle of Tugela (also Battle of Ndongakusuka) takes place in the war between Cetewayo, eldest son of the Zulu chief Mpande, and his father's younger brother, Umbolazi (also Mbulazi). In one of the bloodiest battles fought on the southern tip of Africa, more than 5,000 warriors are killed and thousands drown in the Tugela River.
- **1877** - The Battle of Umzimtsani takes place during the Ninth Border War. Seventy men of the Prince Alfred's Guard unit are attacked by the Galekas, but ward the attack off.
- **1900** - The Battle of Goede Hoop takes place during the Second Anglo-Boer War. Chief Commandant De Wet engages Col. Herbert at Goede Hoop, between

Smithfield and Bethulie in the OFS. De Wet takes off on the arrival of reinforcements sent by General Knox.

- **1914** - Adolf Hitler is awarded the Iron Cross, Second Class. "The happiest day of my life," he says.
- **1914** - Austrians capture Belgrade, Serbia, after several tries.
- **1935** - Abyssinian government orders troops out of Harar on humanitarian grounds.
- **1941** - HMS 'Prince of Wales' & 'Repulse' ("Force Z") arrive at Singapore.
- **1942** - The Allies repels a strong Axis attack in Tunisia, North Africa.
- **1965** - Rifleman Mark Andrew Brown from the Kaffrarian Rifles died as a result of heat exhaustion during a training session at the Infantry School in Oudtshoorn. The heat was reported at over 37 Degrees C during the training session. As a direct result of the findings of Board of Enquiry held into his death, training procedures were modified and amended. He was 21.
- **1978** - Corporal Johannes Havenga from 5 SAI was Killed in Action after being struck in the chest by a Soviet RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents at Eenhana. He was 20.

- **1979** - Lieutenant Johannes Jacobus Du Toit from 3 SAI Died of Wounds while serving in Rhodesia. He was 23.
- **1980** - Rifleman Nicolaas Christian Izaks from the South African Cape Corps was killed when he was struck by a bullet from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while stationed at M'pacha in the Caprivi Strip. He was 21.
- **1984** - Rifleman Wynand Eckard from 2 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in South West Africa while on leave pass. He was 21.
- **1988** - Rifleman Johannes Gerhardus Janse van Vuuren from the SADF Equestrian Centre was killed in a private motorcycle accident while on a weekend pass in Klerksdorp. He was 20.

3 December

- **1810** - Britain seizes the islands of Reunion and Mauritius from French control.
- **1902** - Mitsuo Fuchida, the Japanese pilot who would one day transmit the code "Tora, Tora, Tora" (indicating that the attack on Pearl Harbour had been successful) was born on this day.
- **1915** - British 6th Indian Division falls back on Kut-el-Amara, Iraq.
- **1942** - Guadalcanal: Japanese destroyers land reinforcements.
- **1963** - The Minister of De-

fence, P.W. Botha, announces a reshuffle of senior defence force posts to increase the efficiency of the country's Defence Department, the Defence Production Board and the Defence Organisation. Consequently Lieutenant-General C.A. Fraser, at present Chief of the Army, becomes Joint Commander, Combat Forces, in which capacity he will take command in times of war or emergency of the fighting formations of Army and Air Force elements.

- **1980** - Two members from 3 SAI were Killed in Action and one was critically wounded (he later Died of Wounds on 20 January 1981) while their Company was based at Ondangwa Town. The casualties were: Rifleman Johannes Erasmus van der Merwe (19). Rifleman Christo van Zyl (18).
- **1982** - SA Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha warns that SA will not tolerate the introduction of Cuban troops and will not hesitate to launch counter-measures against Mozambique, if it allows nationalist guerrillas to operate against SA from its territory.
- **1986** - Rifleman J.H. Nanyemba from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents

in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.

- **1987** - Angola claims South African troops and planes have launched attacks deep inside Angola.
- **1993** - Angola's government and its rebel foes agree to a cease-fire in their eighteen-year war. The final cease-fire agreement was only signed in April 2002.

4 December

- **1941** - US Navy Department orders Guam to destroy all codes and secret documents.
- **1943** - During World War II, the second Cairo Conference took place, attended by Prime Minister Churchill, President Roosevelt and President Inonu of Turkey.
- **1963** - The Security Council, in resolution 182 (1963), calls upon all States "to cease forthwith the sale and shipment of equipment and materials for the manufacture and maintenance



Pik Botha

of arms and ammunition in South Africa”.

- **1971** - The Defence Minister denies that South Africa has sent troops to Malawi to quell the security threat on Malawi's southern border, but admits that military equipment is being supplied.
- **1978** - Sapper Jacobus Cornelius Francois Cloete from the SWA Engineer Support Unit SWATF was accidentally killed during construction work at Grootfontein when a concrete block fell off a scaffolding and struck him on the head, killing him instantly. He was 19.
- **1983** - US airstrikes on Syrian anti-aircraft positions in Lebanon.
- **1986** - Defence Amendment Act, dealing mainly with various ways of combating terrorism, commences.
- **1987** - Rifleman A. Dala from 32 Battalion was found murdered by persons unknown. He was 31.
- **1987** - Private Abraham Samuel Jacobus Stander from 31 Field Workshop, Technical Service Corps was accidentally killed approximately 10km outside Grootfontein when he fell off the rear of a moving Samil 20 vehicle that was travelling on the road to Otavi. He was 21.
- **1992** - President George Bush orders about 28,000 US troops to Somalia to block warring Somali gangs from intercepting food shipments.

5 December

- **1812** - Napoleon deserts his army during the retreat from Moscow.
- **1839** - George Armstrong Custer, who made his last stand at the Battle of Little Big Horn, was born on this day.
- **1861** - Richard Gatling applies for a patent on a clever device - the machine gun.
- **1911** - Italian forces at Tripoli defeat Turks.
- **1934** - Italian and Ethiopian troops clash at the Ualul (Welwel) on the disputed Somali-Ethiopian border.
- **1941** - Japanese First Air Fleet at 40 North 178 East, 2,655 kilometres from Pearl Harbour.
- **1941** - US military commanders in the Pacific are informed that Japanese embassies & consulates have been ordered to destroy their codes & code machines.
- **1941** - Moscow Counter-offensive: Under pressure from Zhukov's Soviet troops, the Germans call off their drive on Moscow.
- **1943** - Japanese air raid on port facilities at Calcutta.
- **1943** - USAAF introduces drop-tanks, allowing P-47s & P-51s to escort bombers from Britain into Germany
- **1950** - Korean War. UN forces abandon Pyongyang under heavy Chinese pressure.
- **1979** - The Prime Minister announces the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry

into the reporting of defence matters, to be headed by Justice M.T. Steyn. The Commission is to inquire into and make recommendations on the dividing line between the rights of the media to inform and the right of the public to be informed on the one hand, and the interests of the security of the state on the other.

- **1980** - Rifleman Frans Nyundu from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 32.
- **1981** - Rifleman Wayne Leon Jooste from 8 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1983** - Private Stefan Willem Welgemoed from the South African Medical College, attached to Naval Base Durban, was killed in a military vehicle accident at Richmond. He was 19.
- **1984** - Trooper Johannes Fred from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1992** - Aid agencies are stripped by gunmen in Somalia on the eve of US troop arrival.

6 December

- **1865** - The Battle of Platberg is fought during the Orange Free Sate-Basotho War.

- **1912** - First underwater submarine torpedo attack: Greek submarine 'Deflin' misses Turkish cruiser 'Medjidije' at 500m.
- **1914** - The Germans capture Lodz.
- **1917** - Two ships collided at Halifax, Nova Scotia, resulting in an explosion that killed more than 1,500 persons and injured 8,000. The Norwegian ship Imo collided with the French munitions ship Mont Blanc which was loaded with supplies for the war in Europe, including 5,000 tons of TNT. A tidal wave caused by the explosion destroyed much of the city.
- **1935** - Dessye palace, Ethiopia, is destroyed by an Italian air raid.
- **1941** - Admiral Husband Kimmel says, "No young man, I don't think they'd be such damned fools," when a journalist asks if the Japanese might initiate war.
- **1942** The Royal Air Force bombs Philips factory in the Netherlands, 150 die.
- **1943** - Burma: Allies cancel major amphibious operation.
- **1961** - Heavy fighting erupts in Congo's Katanga Province between United Nations and Katangan forces.
- **1968** - 2nd Lieutenant Ian Anthony Hefer from 5 Squadron was killed when his De Havilland Vampire FB9 crashed near Waterkloof during a routine training flight. He was 18.

- **1977** - Signaller Jan Johannes Bothma from 84 Signals Unit was killed in a head-on collision between a Military Bedford and a Military Landrover on the Grootfontein to Rundu road. He was 22.
- **1988** - Sergeant Petrus Alwyn Minnaar from 3 Electronic Workshops was killed in a military vehicle accident at Rundu. He was 29.
- **1988** - Corporal Derrick Gobey from 2 SAI was killed when his Samil 100 truck overturned at Bagani. He was 20.
- **1988** - Rifleman Deon Potgieter from 1 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 19.

7 December

- **1891** - In German South West Africa Captain Kurt von François moves his administrative headquarters to Windhoek, seven months after erecting a fort there.
- **1895** - At the Battle at Amba Alagi, Abissynia, the Ethiopians beat Italian armies.
- **1914** - Pope Benedict XIV calls on all powers to declare a Christmas truce.
- **1917** - US declares war on Austria-Hungary.
- **1940** - The British attack larger Italian forces in Libya by surprise, capturing 40,000 prisoners in three days.

- **1941** - The U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was attacked by nearly 200 Japanese aircraft in a raid that lasted just over one hour and left nearly 3,000 Americans dead.
- **1964** - Field Cornet (Lieutenant) Izak Cornelius Potgieter from 42 Army Air Reconnaissance Squadron (later 42 Squadron) was killed when his Cessna 185A crashed near Coligny during a routine low level cross-country reconnaissance flight. He was 23.
- **1975** - Sergeant Frederick Gerhardus Wannenbergh CS (P) from 1 Reconnaissance Commando Died of Wounds in the Battle for Bridge 14 in Central Angola during Operation Savannah. He was 24.
- **1976** - Sergeant Jan Gerrit Bantjies from 1 SAI organised himself a live Alouette Gunship 20 x 82mm High Explosive Incendiary (HEI) cannon cartridge to keep as a souvenir while he was serving in the Operational Area.



George H.W. Bush

While attempting to make the device safe, the High Explosive projectile exploded, killing him instantly. He was 28.

- **1979** - Rifleman Patrick Benjamin Bickers from 5 SAI died in 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria from injuries received in a hit and run accident on the Pietersburg Highway. He was 19.
- **1979** - Rifleman Johannes Gabriel Albertus Mostert from 11 Commando Regiment was Killed in Action while on patrol in the Etale area. He was 19.
- **1981** - Spain becomes a member of NATO.
- **1987** - The US state department says it hopes South Africa's withdrawal from Angola will be followed by the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the country.
- **1987** - Lieutenant (Mrs) Daphne Margaret Therissa Bacher from the South West Africa Medical Command SWATF died in the Windhoek State Hospital after contracting pneumonia. She was 43.
- **1988** - Lance Corporal Johannes Christiaan Du Plessis from 2 Special Service Battalion was killed at the Rooisloot Training Area when his armoured car overturned, crushing him underneath. He was 19.

8 December

- **1895** - Battle at Amba Alagi: Ethiopian emperor Mene-lik II drives Italian general

Baratieri's forces out.

- **1914** - General Christiaan Beyers, former Speaker of the Transvaal Parliament and Commandant-General of the Union Defence Force, drowns in the Vaal River.
- **1914** - Battle of the Falkland Islands: British battlecruisers annihilate von Spee's German cruiser squadron.
- **1940** - During the Blitz, the House of Commons and Tower of London were seriously damaged amid an overnight air raid by German bombers on London.
- **1941** - Japanese troops land in Malaya, attack Hong Kong, invade Siam and the Dutch East Indies, bomb the Philippines, and capture the USS Wake in Shanghai.
- **1941** - WWII: The Union of SA, Australia and the US declare war on Japan.
- **1943** - Japanese air raids on British airfields in Assam.
- **1944** - Iwo Jima: U.S. bombers and carrier aircraft begin a 72 day pre-invasion bombardment.
- **1952** - French troops fire on demonstrators at Casablanca, 50 die.
- **1977** - Three SADF members were Killed in Action during a contact SWAPO/PLAN with insurgents when their patrol walked into an ambush near Ruacana. The casualties were: Sergeant Johannes Cornelius Badenhorst from Regiment North Natal (28). Lance Corporal Christiaan Rudolf Kotze from West Coast Comman-

do (23). Rifleman Johannes Hendrik Petrus Kruger from Bloemfontein Commando (25).

- **1987** - Two members from the Gordonia Commando were killed when they were run over by a civilian vehicle that failed to stop at a military roadblock near Uppington. They were: Rifleman Willem Petrus Burger (23). Rifleman Desmond Reginald van der Merwe (38).

9 December

- **1838** - The Voortrekker commando under Andries Pretorius and Sarel Celliers make a solemn promise to God. Should they be victorious, they undertake that they and their descendants will annually dedicate the day of the conquest to the glory of God alone. This promise was repeated nightly until the Battle of Blood River on the 16th was fought.
- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War the Russian czar rejects President Paul Kruger's pleas for official aid in South Africa against the British. Many Russians fought as volunteers on the Boer side.
- **1917** - General Sir Edmund Allenby enters Jerusalem, on foot.
- **1931** - Japanese army attacks Chinese province of Jehol.
- **1939** - Russian air raid on Helsinki.
- **1940** - British 8th Army opens offensive in North

Africa by attacking Sidi Barrani in Egypt. They seize 1,000 Italians in a sudden thrust.

- **1940** - The Greeks begin a counter offensive against the Italians in Albania
- **1941** - South African armoured cars take part in the pursuit of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps as it retreats towards El Agheila in North Africa.
- **1941** - China declares war on Japan, Germany and Italy.
- **1946** - The Nuremberg "Doctors' trial" begins, against physicians and officers who conducted Nazi human experimentation, euthanasia, and mass murder.
- **1961** - SS Colonel Adolf Eichmann is convicted of war crimes in Israel.
- **1967** - The United States withdraws the last of three C-130 transport planes sent to Congo in July to help the Kinshasa government airlift troops to suppress a rebellion of White mercenaries and Katangese soldiers.
- **1974** - Portuguese and Rhodesian soldiers are accused in a UN report of torturing and killing over 1,000 Africans in Mozambique during the war of independence.
- **1977** - Two members from 1 SAI were Killed in Action when their patrol walked into a SWAPO/PLAN insurgent ambush near St. Mary's on the Yati Strip. They were: Corporal Abraham Izak Emmanuel Venter (20). Rifle-

man Edwin Chaplin Bishop (20).

- **1982** - Rifleman Simeon Shimbaranda from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 24.
- **1982** - South African Defence Force commandos crossed the border into Lesotho. Their target was a cluster of houses on the outskirts of Maseru where members of the African National Congress (ANC) were believed to be in hiding.
- **1983** - Rifleman Allen Derrick Wolton from 7 SAI was killed in an accidental mortar bomb explosion during operations in Southern Angola. He was 19.
- **1991** - Sergeant Laurens Kruger from Group 21 was killed when his Military vehicle overturned between Watersend and Bray. He was 26.
- **1992** - American forces land in Somalia to begin humanitarian operation in famine-stricken country.
- **1993** - 2nd Lieutenant Gideon van Zyl from 4 SAI was Killed in Action by automatic weapons fire in Katlehong Township on the East Rand during a military intervention in a fire-fight between Armed IFP and ANC Militia's. He was 19.

Adolf Eichmann



10 December

- **1665** - The Royal Netherlands Marine Corps, founded by Michiel de Ruyter, was founded on this day.
- **1898** - The Treaty of Paris was signed between American and Spanish representatives following Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War. Under the treaty, the U.S. gained the Philippine Islands, the islands of Guam and Puerto Rico, and an agreement by Spain to withdraw from Cuba.
- **1899** - British General Gatacre is defeated in the Battle at Stormberg Junction by the Republican forces under Chief Commandant J.H. Olivier. This is the first of three serious British setbacks known as Black Week.
- **1941** - During World War II, British Battleships Repulse and Prince of Wales were sunk by Japanese warplanes in the South China Sea, kill-

- ing nearly 800 crewmen.
- **1941** - Guam surrenders to a Japanese landing force after a two day battle.
- **1975** - Rifleman Thom Du Toit Lotze from 2 SAI was Killed in Action in a contact with Cuban Forces during Ops Savannah. He was 19.
- **1975** - Sapper Udo Kneed von Schmettau from 2 Field Engineer Regiment was Killed in Action during Ops Savannah. He was 19.
- **1976** - Lance Corporal Marthinus Petrus Pearson from 3 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1978** - Private Hendrik Stephanus Willem Engelbrecht from the South African Medical Corps Training Centre was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident in Northern Owamboland. He was 21.
- **1978** - Rifleman Mark Steven Taylor from Infantry School was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident near Calitzdorp. He was 19.
- **1983** - Rifleman Richard Barrington from 6 SAI was shot dead when a fellow soldier accidentally mistook him for an insurgent during an ambush. He was 19.
- **1983** - Lieutenant Robert Ernest Byron from Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Hartenbos. He was 23.
- **1988** - Sapper Christiaan Andre de Goede from 2

Field Engineer Regiment was killed when his military vehicle overturned near Nelspruit. He was 18.

- **1992** - Troops open fire on a truckload of Somalis who barrel through a French checkpoint, killing two and injuring seven in the first bloodshed of the U.S.-led military mission in Somalia.
- **2010** - For the first time since World War II, a German infantry battalion paraded in a French city, at Strasbourg, to mark the formation of a Franco-German combat brigade.
- **2011** - Henry Lafont, last French veteran pilot of the Battle of Britain, dies aged 91.

11 December

- **1845** - The first Anglo-Sikh War in India began as the Sikhs attacked British colonial forces. The Sikhs were defeated after four battles. Part of the Punjab region of northwestern India was then annexed by the British.
- **1878** - Sir Bartle Frere, new British High Commissioner, delivers an ultimatum to Cetewayo, Zulu chief, to disband his army, hand over certain offenders and receive a British resident. This led to the war between Britain and Zululand.
- **1899** - The British under Methuen attempt to advance and are defeated by the Boers under Cronje as the Battle of Magersfontein,

one of the most decisive battles of the war, starts. Apart from the dead and wounded, many hundreds, especially the killed Scots, are rendered medical casualties through exposure and serious sunburn.

- **1937** - Italy withdraws from League of Nations.
- **1940** - British capture Sidi Barrani, Egypt, from Italians.
- **1941** - US submarines commence war patrols against Japanese shipping
- **1941** - A major turning point in World War II occurred as Japan's Axis partners, Italy and Germany, both declared war on the United States. The U.S. Congress immediately declared war on them. President Roosevelt then made the defeat of Hitler the top priority, devoting nearly 90 percent of U.S. military resources to the war in Europe.
- **1960** - Black Sunday: Anti-French Riot in Algiers, 114 die.
- **1975** - Sapper Alfred Robert Willemse from 2 Field Engineer Regiment Died of Wounds in the Battle of Bridge 14 during Operation Savannah. He was 19.
- **1977** - Two members of 11 Commando Regiment Died of Wounds when their Buffel vehicle detonated a boosted Yugoslavian TMA-3 Cheese Mine. They were: Corporal Mark Anthony Wilcox (19). Rifleman Daniel Louis Buys (19).

- **1978** - Lance Corporal Vivian Charles Evert from 5 SAI was accidentally killed while doing a recovery of a broken down pantry Bedford near Glencoe. He was 19.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Johnny Alvern Booysen from the South African Cape Corps was accidentally drowned at Rundu during an off-duty excursion. He was 21.
- **1982** - Rifleman Paul Labuschagne from 8 SAI was killed at Eenhana when struck by a bullet from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 19.
- **1983** - Signaller Gary Bresler from 2 Signals Regiment was killed instantly after being struck by lightning during a training exercise at Sabie. He was 23.
- **1983** - Lieutenant Eugene Werner Nel from the Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Oudtshoorn. He was 24.
- **1984** - Captain Carel Petrus van der Merwe Brand from Sector 30 was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Kamanjab to Erwee Road in South West Africa. He was 34.
- **1984** - Sapper D.A. van Wyk from 1 SWA Engineer Regiment, attached to 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in the Koakoveld. He was 18.

- **1990** - Private Rudi van Rooyen from the Ordnance Service School was accidentally killed at Bloemhof while refueling a convoy en route to Cape Town when he was run over by a diesel bunker vehicle. He was 21
- **1994** - Russia sent tanks and troops into Chechnya to end the rebel territory's three-year drive for independence.

12 December

- **1899** - The Battle of Magersfontein continues. At about midday the British retire to their camp at Modder River.
- **1899** - Winston Churchill climbs over the yard wall of the State Model School in Pretoria where he has been imprisoned and walks to the Eastern railway line where he jumps a train to Lourenço Marques.
- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War Britain announces in London that more than 11,000 British soldiers have already been killed.
- **1917** - French troop train derails in the Alps, killing 543.
- **1940** - British troops capture Sidi el-Barrani.
- **1941** - British decide to abandon northern Malaya.
- **1941** - Germans begin house-by-house search for Jews in Paris.
- **1941** - Japanese invade Burma.

- **1975** - Rifleman David Hercules Dewald Marais from 2 SAI Died of Wounds received in action on 10 December 1975 in a contact with a Cuban Patrol during Ops Savannah. He was 18.
- **1979** - Rifleman Johannes Jacobus Fourie from 5 SAI was Killed in Action during a 20 minute contact with a numerically superior force of 181 heavily armed SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line. He was 20.
- **1980** - 2nd Lieutenant Arthur Eduard De Villiers from 3 SAI was killed instantly at Ondangwa during a thunderstorm when lightning struck a tent pole while he was holding onto the tent pole chain. He was 20.
- **1980** - Rifleman Gary Lang from 61 Mech Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident while on pass. He was 19.
- **1992** - Rifleman Sabelo Lukhozi from 21 Battalion was attacked and stabbed



Franklin D. Roosevelt

to death by persons unknown while on foot patrol in Soweto. He was 24.

13 December

- **1862** - During the American Civil War, the Battle of Fredericksburg occurred in Virginia as the Union Army of the Potomac under General Burnside suffered a costly defeat, losing 12,653 men after 14 frontal assaults on well entrenched Rebels on Marye's Heights. "We might as well have tried to take hell," a Union soldier remarked. Confederate losses were 5,309. "It is well that war is so terrible - we should grow too fond of it," stated Confederate General Robert E. Lee during the fighting.
- **1880** - The First Anglo-Boer War (Transvaal War of Independence) begins.
- **1899** - On this night a bedraggled Winston Churchill knocks on the door of the manager of Delagoa Bay Collier, pleading for something to eat after his escape from Pretoria the night before. The manager, John Howard, hides him in the underground stables of the mine, and slips him into a goods truck destined for Lorenzo Marques six days later, from where he sails to Durban to enjoy a rousing welcome as hero.
- **1916** - Avalanches kill 10,000 Austrian & Italian troops in 24 hrs in the Tyrol.
- **1916** - French chief of staff Josef Joffre replaced by

Robert Nivelle.

- **1918** - The first US occupation troops cross the Rhine to enter Germany.
- **1937** - The beginning of one of the worst atrocities of World War II as the Chinese city of Nanking (Nanjing) was captured by the Japanese. Over the next six weeks, the Rape of Nanking occurred in which Japanese soldiers randomly attacked, raped and indiscriminately killed an estimated 200,000 Chinese persons.
- **1939** - Battle of the Rio de La Plata: three British cruisers defeat the German pocket battleship 'Graf Spee'.
- **1941** - British and Canadian troops abandon the mainland portions of Hong Kong.
- **1945** - The "Beast of Belsen" Josef Kramer (39), the "Bitch of Belsen" Irma Grese (22), and six other Belsen war criminals, hanged on this day.
- **1969** - Britain announces agreement to withdraw all its forces from Libya within next few months.
- **1976** - Lance Corporal William Hendrik Boucher from 95 Tactical Airfield Unit (Later Air Force Base Ondangwa) was part of the SAAF Guard detail on the Base when a fire broke out in one of the tents in the Air Force camp area. While assisting to put out the fire, the heat of the flames caused a fire extinguisher to explode, killing him instantly. He was 22.

- **1977** - Candidate Officer Gerard Genis from 4 Squadron was killed at Lanseria shortly after take-off in his Atlas MB326KM Impala Mk II when the radio compartment panel opened in flight causing the aircraft to roll inverted out of control. He was 19.
- **1985** - Rifleman J.N. Hamukwaya from 202 Battalion SWATF died in the Rundu State Hospital from injuries received when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Rundu. He was 23.
- **1987** - Rifleman John Marcus Bothma from the South African Cape Corps was killed in a private vehicle accident at Usakos. He was 20.
- **1988** - Rifleman Alfred Mahlakwane from 116 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Pietersburg. He was 22.
- **1988** - Private Jacob Janse from 6 Maintenance Unit was admitted to 3 Military Hospital in Bloemfontein suffering from liver cancer. He succumbed to the disease on 13 December 1988. He was 22.
- **1988** - Angola, Cuba, and South Africa end eight months of negotiations under US mediation for a settlement in South West Africa by signing a protocol in Brazzaville, the Congo, thereby ensuring independence for the territory. The final signing took place at UN

headquarters in New York on 22 December.

- **1991** - North and South Korea signed a treaty of reconciliation and non-aggression which also formally ended the Korean War, although actual fighting had ceased in 1953.
- **2003** - US troops find Iraqi Dictator Saddam Hussein in a hole in the ground.

14 December

- **1799** - George Washington died at Mount Vernon.
- **1896** - World War II General James Doolittle was born in Alameda, California. On April 18, 1942, he led a squadron of B-25 bombers launched from the aircraft carrier Hornet to conduct the first American air raid of the war against mainland Japan. He also headed the Eighth Air Force during the Normandy invasion and was awarded the Medal of Honour.
- **1901** - Reports reach London of the large number of deaths in South African concentration camps during the Second Anglo-Boer War.
- **1939** - The Soviet Union (Population 181 million) "defends" itself by attacking Finland (2 million).
- **1939** - The League of Nations expelled Soviet Russia for its aggression against Finland.
- **1939** - Norwegian politician Vidkun Quisling meets Hitler for the first time, in Berlin, and offers to betray his

country to the Nazis.

- **1941** - Japanese forces in Malaya occupy Gurun & Kroh.
- **1970** - Field Marshal Viscount Slim, Defender of India, Liberator of Burma, dies at the age of 79.
- **1979** - Two members from 5 SAI were Killed in Action near Nkongo when their Platoon was ambushed by a numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near a village waterhole. The casualties were: Rifleman Willie Jacobus Applegryn (19). Rifleman Daniel Jacobus Victor (19).
- **1981** - Sapper Jan Adriaan Crous from 25 Field Engineer Squadron was Killed in Action while driving a Buffel Troop Carrier when the vehicle detonated a boosted Soviet TMA-3 Cheese mine on Oom Willie se Pad. He was 20.
- **1981** - Rifleman Fernando Chameia from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion on the road between Ongiva and Chiede during operations in Southern Angola. He was 27.
- **1981** - Signaller Abraham Johannes Nortje from SALNET accidentally drowned while crossing a river during a foot patrol near the Cutline. He was 29.
- **1984** - Rifleman Theodore Marais from North West

Command was killed after being accidentally run over by a military vehicle while at Potchefstroom. He was 20.

- **1995** - A Bosnian peace treaty was signed in Paris by leaders from the former Yugoslavia. The treaty ended Europe's worst conflict since World War II.

15 December

- **1815** - The Slagtersnek rebels are tried in the Uithenhage landdrost court. One is reprieved by Lord Charles Somerset, the other, Cornelis Faber (43), Stefanus Cornelis Botma (43), his brother Abraham Carel Botma (29), Hendrik Frederik Prinsloo (32) and Theunis de Klerk, are sentenced to death.
- **1890** - Sioux leader Sitting Bull (native name Tatan-ka-yatanka) was killed in a skirmish with U.S. soldiers along the Grand River in South Dakota as his warriors tried to prevent his arrest.
- **1899** - The British under General Redvers Buller make a frontal attack in the



Saddam Hussein

Battle of Colenso aimed at relieving the besieged town of Ladysmith. The action fails and the British lose over 1,100 men, including Lieutenant Freddy Roberts, only son of Field-Marshal Lord Frederick Roberts. Eight Boers die and thirty are wounded. This third straight defeat of British troops, which began at Stormberg on December 10, brings "Black Week" to an end.

- **1938** - General Jan Kemp, acting SA minister of defence, announces during the Voortrekkereuefes festivities that Robertshoogte in Pretoria will in future be known as Voortrekkerhoogte.
- **1941** - USS 'Swordfish' (SS-193) becomes 1st US sub to sink a Japanese ship.
- **1943** - The Battle of San Pietro took place during World War II as a German panzer battalion devastated American forces trying to take the 700-year-old Italian village.
- **1961** - Nazi SS-Colonel Adolf Eichmann was sentenced to death in Jerusalem for his role in the Holocaust. Eichmann had organized the deportation of Jews from all over occupied Europe to Nazi death camps.
- **1976** - Corporal Timothy Gilmore Conway from Regiment Algoa Bay was Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds when his Temporary Base near Oshikango came under heavy enemy mortar attack.

He was 23.

- **1978** - Corporal Thomas Davis from 2 Parachute Regiment was accidentally killed in the Operational Area when struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle. He was 24.
- **1980** - Rifleman Anthony Uytenbogaardt from 1 SAI was killed when his civilian motor vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with another vehicle. He was 19.
- **1981** - Lance Corporal Jeremiah Richards from 8 SAI was killed in Northern Kavangoland when the Buffel Troop Carrier in which he was traveling, overturned and he was crushed under the vehicle. He was 19.
- **1984** - Two members from 1 SWA Engineer Regiment SWATF were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. They were: Sapper G.J. Bock (18). Sapper J.P. Isaacs (18).
- **1989** - Mercenary coup in Comoros gives up power after twenty-one days. The mercenary leader and ex-presidential bodyguard, Bob Denard, attempted to create a 'pirate kingdom' after the assassination of president Ahmed Abderrahman Abdallah.
- **1989** - The dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet ended in Chile. Pinochet had come to power in 1973 after a military overthrow of the democratically elected gov-

ernment.

16 December

- **1653** - Following the defeat of King Charles I in the English Civil War, Oliver Cromwell, leader of the Parliamentary forces, was declared Lord Protector of England.
- **1773** - The Boston Tea Party occurred as colonial activists disguised as Mohawk Indians boarded British ships anchored in Boston Harbor and dumped 342 containers of expensive tea into the water.
- **1838** - In the Battle of Blood River, a Voortrekker commando of 470 men, under leadership of Andries Pretorius, is attacked at Ncome River (later called Blood River) by an army of Zulu King Dingane. About 3,000 Zulus are killed. This day was first commemorated by the Afrikaner community as Dingaan's Day and later as Day of the Covenant.
- **1880** - The first shots in the First Anglo-Boer War are fired in Potchefstroom. The war ended with the defeat of the British in the battle of Amajuba, on 27 February 1881.
- **1900** - The second Republican invasion of the Cape Colony starts under Commandant P.H. Kritzinger and General J.B.M. Hertzog.
- **1913** - The Women's Memorial is unveiled in Bloemfontein, to commemorate

26,251 women and children who died during the Second Anglo-Boer War, mainly in British concentration camps.

- **1914** - German battlecruisers shell the British resort towns of Scarborough and Hartlepool.
- **1941** - Dan Pienaar gains distinction in an attack on the Italian outpost of El Wak and is awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).
- **1944** - American big-band leader Glenn Miller disappeared in a small plane over the English Channel and was presumably killed. Best remembered for Moonlight Serenade and In the Mood.
- **1944** - During World War II in Europe, the Battle of the Bulge began as the Germans launched a big counter-offensive in the Ardennes Forest along a 75-mile front, taking American troops by surprise. Aided by foggy, snowy weather, the Germans penetrated 104 kilometres into Allied lines by the end of December. The German advance was eventually halted by Montgomery on the Meuse and Patton at Bastogne. As the weather cleared, Allied aircraft attacked German ground forces and supply lines and the counter-offensive failed. There were an estimated 77,000 Allied and 130,000 German casualties.
- **1944** - German V-2 rocket strikes Antwerp theatre. 638 are killed.

• **1956** - UN troops occupy Port Said, Suez Canal Zone, following the abortive Tripartite Invasion.

- **1961** - Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), formed since June 1961 under leadership of Nelson Mandela, performs its first acts of sabotage by attacking post offices and other buildings in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Durban.
- **1963** - Able Seaman Johannes Hendrik Jordaan from SAS President Steyn was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident between Colesberg and Phillipolis. He was admitted to the Bloemfontein Hospital where he later succumbed to his injuries. He was 23.
- **1971** - Pakistan accepts an armistice, ending the Bangladesh Liberation War and Indo-Pakistani War of 1971.
- **1979** - Rifleman Arrie Zagarias Greyling from 5 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1982** - Signaller Daniel Andries Barnard from 2 Signal Regiment was killed in a private motor vehicle accident, in Pretoria. He was 23.

17 December

- **1920** - South Africa receives the League of Nations man-

date over South West Africa.

- **1963** - President Christophe Soglo is overthrown in a military coup in Dahomey, now Benin.
- **1965** - Eight members of the South African Cape Corps drowned during a sea training exercise when their light surface craft was hit by a freak wave and capsized in Kalkbay. They were: Rifleman Piet Rittles (25). Rifleman Harden Classen Presence (36). Rifleman Jacobus Newing (22). Rifleman Mattheus Willem Joubert (24). Rifleman Harry Harris (33). Rifleman Jacobus Gideon Farmer (32). Rifleman Frikie Braaf (24). Rifleman Jacobus Abraham Arnolds (20).
- **1968** - The first rocket to be wholly developed and manufactured in South Africa is successfully launched from the new rocket launching range at St. Lucia Bay on the east coast. The Minister

Glenn Miller



of Defence asserts that the rockets are defensive not offensive weapons.

- **1975** - Gunner Barend Hermanus Neethling from 4 Field Regiment was accidentally killed in Central Angola during Ops Savannah. He was 18.
- **1975** - Trooper Danie Anderson from 1 Special Service Battalion was accidentally killed during Operation Savannah. He was 19.
- **1979** - Rifleman Leon Pereira from 32 Battalion was Reported Missing after being attacked by a crocodile while swimming in the Kavango River near Buffalo. He was 20.
- **1981** - Sergeant Ronald Potgieter from Regiment De la Rey Died of Wounds resulting from an accidental mortar bomb explosion during a weapons demonstration in Northern Owamboland. He was 21.
- **1983** - Rifleman Daniel Chindumba from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 22.
- **1984** - Rifleman Lenas July from 201 Battalion SWATF was killed at Omega after being struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 25.
- **1993** - American troops are pulled out of Somalia following a series of gun battles with Somali troops un-

der the command of General Mohammed Farah Aidid.

18 December

- **1899** - Field Marshal Lord Roberts is appointed British supreme commander in South Africa.
- **1916** - During World War I, the Battle of Verdun concluded after ten months of fighting in which 543,000 French and 434,000 German soldiers were killed.
- **1939** - Air Battle of Heligoland Bight: RAF bombers attempting to raid German naval bases suffer heavily at the hands of the Luftwaffe.
- **1940** - Adolf Hitler ordered the German General Staff to begin planning Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Soviet Russia.
- **1972** - Operation Linebacker: US begins "Christmas bombing" of North Vietnam.
- **1983** - During Ops Askari, ten members that were part of an Anti-Aircraft team deployed near Caiundu in Southern Angola were Killed in Action during a fierce fire-fight when their position was attacked by a numerically superior enemy force of more than 200 FAPLA troops. The casualties were: Lieutenant Keith Claassen (20). Sergeant Hendrik Albertus Oosthuysen (25). Rifleman Lourens Johannes Jansen van Rensburg (20). Rifleman Thomas Kakuru (20). Rifleman Ndara Diyerenge (20). Rifleman Alfred Ka-

munga (18). Rifleman Esau Mashika (20). Rifleman Hamat Hamutenya (22). Rifleman Aron Dikuwa (20). Rifleman Edward Moyo (20).

- **1985** - Rifleman Albert Hapera from 911 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 19.
- **1988** - Commandant Ernestes Johannes Jacobus Brummer from the Northern Cape Command Headquarters died in the Kimberley Hospital after being critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident in Kimberley. He was 31.

19 December

- **1941** - Italian divers sink British BBs 'Queen Elizabeth' & 'Valiant' at Alexandria.
- **1942** - General Dan Pienaar is killed as his aircraft crashes into Lake Victoria at Kisumu while returning to South Africa. The suburbs Danville (Pretoria) and Dan Pienaar (Bloemfontein) have been named after him.
- **1942** - Guadalcanal: Malaria rate reaches 972 cases per 1,000 US troops.
- **1943** - Military coup in Bolivia.
- **1946** - War broke out in French Indochina as Ho Chi Minh attacked the French seeking to oust them from Vietnam. This marked the beginning of a thirty-year conflict which eventually led to heavy U.S. involve-

ment and ended with a Communist victory in April 1975 after U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam.

- **1964** - Air Mechanic Henri Martin Strydom from Air Force Base Ysterplaat was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident on 17 Dec 1964. He was transferred to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he sadly succumbed to his injuries on 19 December 1964. He was 18.
- **1976** - Corporal Benjamin Johannes Schoeman of Regiment Noord Natal Died of Wounds while on patrol along the Cut-line North of Ombalantu. He was 28.
- **1982** - Rifleman Terence Norman Fitzpatrick from 5 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident at Ladysmith. He was 18.
- **1982** - Rifleman Shaline Lloyd Keen from Special Forces Headquarters was accidentally killed at the Headquarters while he was standing on the back of a Landrover and the vehicle overturned. He was thrown out of the vehicle and the vehicle rolled over him. He was 19.
- **1985** - Two members from 202 Battalion SWATF were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Omega. The casualties were: Rifleman Lenox Hipangua (20). Rifleman Benjamin Johannes Thomas (21).
- **1992** - President F. W. de

Klerk announces that he is either suspending or forcibly retiring 23 officers of the South African Defence Force, including two generals and four brigadiers for illegal or unauthorised activities and malpractice. He says further disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution will follow pending the completion of the probe.

20 December

- **1852** - Sir George Cathcart, governor and commander-in-chief at the Cape (31 March 1852-26 May 1854), is defeated when he attacks Moshesh at Berea Mountain, Basutoland, with his force of 2 500 regular troops. He concluded peace in accordance with instructions from the British Colonial Office and returned to the Cape Colony.
- **1860** - South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union in a prelude to the American Civil War. Within two months Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas seceded. In April 1861, Virginia seceded, followed within five weeks by Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina, thus forming an eleven state Confederacy with a population of nine million, including nearly four million slaves. The Un-

ion had 21 states and a population of over 20 million.

- **1880** - The Battle of Bronkhorstspuit takes place, four days after the Transvaal War of Independence started, in which a detachment under British officer Col. P.R. Anstruter is cut to pieces by a commando led by Comdt. Frans Joubert: half of the force is killed and wounded and the rest taken prisoner.
- **1900** - The Kitchener memorandum concerning the implementation of concentration camps for Boer women and children is issued. Between 1900-1902 27,827 people, mostly women and children, were to die in these camps.
- **1914** - Josef Johannes (Jopie) Fourie, rebel commando leader during the 1914 Rebellion, is executed by a firing squad after being found guilty of high treason. His death caused an outrage in Afrikaans-speaking circles, and was a potent factor in the rise of the National Party.



Ho Chi Minh

- **1924** - Adolf Hitler is freed from prison, having served only part of his sentence for the "Beer Hall Putsch".
- **1935** - Italians are driven back to the Dembeguina Pass when Abyssinian troops cross the River Takaze.
- **1939** - Captain Hans Wilhelm Langsdorff, commander of the 'Graf Spee,' commits suicide at the age of 45.
- **1942** - First Japanese bombing of Calcutta.
- **1944** - Battle of Bastogne: Germans surround the American defenders, initiating a siege.
- **1958** - First successful test of the US Titan ICBM.
- **1965** - A re-organisation of the South African Defence Force replaces the General Staff with a body to be known as the 'Supreme Command' with the Commandant-General as Chairman and the Executive Commanders as members.
- **1979** - Rifleman Antonio Cahasa from 32 Battalion was accidentally killed during a follow-up patrol in Southern Angola when his Buffel Troop Carrier was involved in a collision with a Hyena vehicle. He was 33.
- **1985** - Six South Africans and three Lesotho nationals are killed in an attack for which the renegade Lesotho Liberation Army claims responsibility, while the Lesotho government blames SA.
- **1989** - The U.S. invaded Panama attempting to capture Manuel Noriega on charges of narcotics trafficking. Operation Just Cause occurred seven months after Noriega had declared unfavorable election results in his country to be null and void. The invasion toppled the Noriega government and resulted in the installation of Guillermo Endara as president. Noriega temporarily eluded capture, but surrendered a few weeks later to U.S. troops. He was then tried, convicted, and imprisoned in the U.S.

21 December

- **1832** - Egyptian forces rout Turkish army at Battle of Konieh.
- **1879** - Soviet Russia leader Josef Stalin was born in the village of Gori in Georgia, Russia. His original name was Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili.
- **1900** - The inaugural meeting of the Burgher Peace Committee is held in Pretoria. Lord Kitchener discusses his concentration camp policies with this group, mentioning that stock and Blacks would also be brought in. An estimated 14,100 Blacks were to die in these camps.
- **1941** - Japanese renew their attempt to capture Wake Island.
- **1945** - World War II General George Patton died in Germany following a car accident. He had been injured on

9 December near Mannheim and was taken to a hospital in Heidelberg where he died. He was buried in Luxembourg.

- **1964** - SA signs treaty with Great Britain on the supply of military equipment to South Africa.
- **1977** - Rifleman Stephen Victor Paul Devereaux from SWA SPES, SWATF died from a gunshot wound accidentally self-inflicted while he was serving at Okankolo in Northern Owamboland. He was 18.
- **1979** - Rifleman C. Kavatjana from the Hereroland Area Force Unit SWATF was accidentally shot and killed by own forces after being caught in cross-fire during a heavy contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1979** - Peace agreement signed, ending seven-year Rhodesian guerrilla war and 15-year rebellion against the British crown.
- **1983** - Rifleman Gustav Carl Schönborn from the University of the Orange Free State Military Unit was killed when a military vehicle accidentally drove over him in very dusty conditions with poor visibility during anti-insurgent follow-up operations in Southern Angola. He was 21.
- **1988** - Pan American Flight 103 exploded in midair as the result of a terrorist bomb and crashed into Locker-

bie, Scotland. All 259 passengers and crew members along with 11 persons on the ground were killed.

- **2003** - The Sudanese government and rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Army reach a tentative deal to evenly divide the country's oil wealth as part of negotiations to end its 20-year-old civil war.

22 December

- **1880** - During the First Anglo-Boer War a three-month siege of Pretoria begins.
- **1894** - A French court martial convicts Alfred Dreyfus of treason on trumped up charges, triggering "The Dreyfus Affair".
- **1944** - Battle of the Bulge. General Anthony McAuliffe to a German ultimatum to surrender with the reply, "Nuts!". (See this month's Famous Figures in Military History).
- **1944** - Vietnamese Liberation Army is formed by Vo Nguyen Giap.
- **1956** - Last British and French troops leave Egypt.
- **1965** - Second military coup in Dahomey (now Benin) is led by Colonel Christophe Soglo.
- **1977** - Rifleman David Herculaas Wilters from 4 SAI Died of Wounds in Northern Owamboland. He was 18.
- **1977** - Lieutenant Kurt Gagliano from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents

near the Cut-Line. He was 21.

- **1982** - Private Pieter Johannes Jordaan from 92 Ammunition Depot was killed in a private motorcycle accident near Witbank while off duty. He was 30.
- **1988** - South Africa signs an accord granting independence to South-West Africa. Angola, Cuba, and South Africa end eight months of negotiations under US mediation for a settlement in South-Western Africa by signing a formal treaty at UN headquarters in New York, after signing a protocol earlier in December.
- **1989** - Private Johannes Bornman from the North West Command Workshops, Technical Service Corps, died in 1 Military Hospital after suffering a brain aneurysm. He was 20.
- **1990** - Rifleman Michael Charles Muller from the South African Cape Corps died at Umgababa from a gunshot wound, accidentally self-inflicted. He was 19.

23 December

- **1910** - German SS General Kurt "Panzer" Meyer was born on this day.
- **1941** - British troops capture Benghazi, Libya.
- **1943** - General Montgomery, commander of the Allied forces in North Africa, is advised that he will be

appointed commandant for D-day.

- **1948** - Hideki Tojo was hanged for war crimes. He had been Japanese prime minister from 1941-44. Following Japan's defeat in World War II, he was arrested as a war criminal, tried by a military tribunal and sentenced to death. He was hanged along with six other Japanese wartime military leaders at Sugamo Prison in Tokyo, with the sentence carried out by the U.S. 8th Army.
- **1968** - North Korea releases 82 crewmen of the USS 'Pueblo' (AGER-2), held since January.
- **1971** - Private Hendrik Roos from the Air Force Gymnasium was killed in a private motorcycle accident at Honeydew in Johannesburg. He was 17.
- **1975** - Two members from 14 Field Regiment attached to Battle Group Orange during Ops Savannah were Killed in Action when their



Hideki Tojo

artillery gun position received a direct hit from a salvo of 122mm Soviet BM-21 Katyusha rockets. The casualties were: Gunner Glen Martin Felix Muller (18). Gunner Matthys Jacobus Theunissen (18).

- **1975** - Sergeant (Flight Engineer) Pieter van Rensburg from 17 Squadron SAAF was killed while serving in Rhodesia when his Alouette III Helicopter crashed after flying into High Tension overhead Power Lines. He was 22.
- **1976** - Lieutenant Christiaan Johan Swart from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action after breaking his neck when his Unimog overturned after detonating a landmine just outside Elundu. He was 23.
- **1980** - Rifleman Ivan Shipago from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line. He was 25.
- **1983** - Rifleman Simon Petrus Jurgens Du Toit from the Kimberley Regiment was killed in a private motor vehicle Accident, at Warrenton. He was 21.
- **1985** - Five civilians were killed and forty injured in a bomb explosion in the Sanlam shopping centre in Amanzimtoti, Natal South Coast. Umkhonto we Siswe (MK) cadre Andrew Sibusiso Zondo, who detonated the explosive in a rubbish bin, was executed by hang-

ing in 1986.

- **1986** - Rifleman Peter James from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 19.
- **1989** - Lance Corporal Samuel Athol Ellis from Regiment Bloemspruit was accidentally killed after being struck by a bullet during a shooting incident at Nkongo Base. He was 20.
- **2013** - Mikhail Timofeyevich Kalashnikov, the man that designed the AK-47, dies at the age of 94.

24 December

- **1914** - The first-ever German air raid against Britain took place when a German monoplane dropped a single bomb on Dover, England, during World War I.
- **1914** - World War I. Along sections of the Western Front, British and German troops declare an unofficial Christmas truce.
- **1941** - Manila is heavily bombed by Japanese aircraft.
- **1942** - The first surface-to-surface guided missile, later known as the V-1 Flying Bomb, was launched by German rocket engineer Wernher von Braun. Called "Buzz Bombs" for the loud buzzing sound of their motor, they were used by Nazi Germany against Britain beginning in September 1944.
- **1943** - General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed

Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force preparing for D-Day.

- **1976** - Private Philip Lindsay Backhouse from 16 Maintenance Unit was killed when the civilian motorcycle he had borrowed, was involved in an accident. He was 19.
- **1976** - Private Hermanus Jakobus van der Westhuizen from 13 Maintenance was killed in a military vehicle accident at the Letaba Training Area. He was 18.
- **1976** - Sergeant Stephen Graham van Biljon from Central Flying School Dunottar died after suffering a fatal heart attack at the Base. He was 38.
- **1978** - Sergeant Abrie Pieter De Man from 2 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident in Kavangoland. He was 20.
- **1980** - Signaller Thomas Arnold Du Toit from the Orange Free State Command Died of Wounds after being accidentally shot in a friendly fire incident near Ruacana. He was 21.
- **1980** - German admiral & führer Karl Dönitz dies at the age of 89.
- **1981** - Rifleman Karel Theunissen from the South African Cape Corps was Killed in Action after his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a Landmine while on patrol in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1983** - Trooper Johan van Tonder from 10 Armoured Car Squadron SWATF was

killed when his Eland 90 Armoured Car was involved in a collision with another military vehicle at Grootfontein. He was 19.

- **1987** - Rifleman Pieter Breytenbach from 44 Parachute Regiment was Reported Missing during a parachuting exercise at Komatipoort after he was seen to land in the Crocodile River. Despite an intensive search, his body was never located and he has no known grave. He was 22.

25 December

- **1901** - During the Battle of Tweefontein, (also Groenkop or Krismiskop) General De Wet surprises British soldiers. At least fifty-seven of them are killed. De Wet takes the unwounded soldiers (about 120) with him to put them across the Basutoland border a few days later.
- **1941** - British-Canadian garrison of Hong Kong surrenders to the Japanese 38th Division.
- **1977** - Rifleman Michael Nicolaas Beukes from 4 SAI was critically wounded during a fierce contact that took place between Beacon 9 & 10. He was 18.
- **1979** - Private Ronald Atkins from 2 Military Base Management was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident, at Grootfontein. He was 20.
- **1981** - Rifleman Funa Dala from 32 Battalion Died of Wounds in Hospital on 25

December 1981 after being critically wounded in a landmine explosion on the road between Ongiva and Chiede in Southern Angola on 14 December 1981. He was 28.

- **1985** - The Six-day War between Mali and Algeria over the disputed Agacher strip starts.
- **2016** - Airplane crash in the Black Sea kills 92, including the Russian Army Chorus.

26 December

- **1862** - The first US navy hospital ship, 'Red Rover' commissioned, with four Catholic nuns serving as nurses.
- **1893** - Mao Tse-Tung was born in Hunan Province, China.
- **1900** - The Battle of Greylingstad takes place when Commandant Buys attacks the South Rand mine, near Greylingstad. Part of the guard is cut off and has to surrender, but the burghers are forced to retreat when the main column arrives.
- **1915** - The German gunboat, the Kingani, is captured by the British on Lake Tanganyika. It is removed by portage through the jungle of the Belgian Congo.
- **1916** - Joseph Joffre is made a Marshal of France.
- **1943** - Battle of North Cape: The Scharnhorst is sunk by the Royal Navy.
- **1944** - Battle of the Bulge:

US 4th Armored Div relieves Bastogne.

- **1944** - The Red Army surrounds Budapest.
- **1972** Former US President Harry S Truman dies at the age of 88.
- **1975** - Curiango, Angola is taken by Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, (MPLA, Popular Liberation Movement of Angola) guerrillas.
- **1987** - Private Andre Johan van Niekerk from 1 Maintenance Unit died of pneumonia at 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria. He was 18.
- **2006** - Former naval officer and US President Gerald R. Ford dies at the age of 93.

27 December

- **1838** - In the Battle of the White Umfolozi, the Voortrekker commando is ambushed and nearly overpowered by a Zulu impi. Alexander Harvey Biggar, among others, is killed in the running fight.
- **1922** - The Imperial Japanese Navy commissions



Mikhail Kalashnikov

the 'Hôshô', the first purpose-built carrier to enter service in any navy.

- **1941** - British Commandos raid Vaagso, Norway.
- **1944** - B-29s from Saipan make their fifth major raid on Tokyo.
- **1956** - 5,580 Egyptian prisoners of war are exchanged for four Israelis held by Egypt.
- **1960** - France detonates its third atomic device in the Sahara.
- **1977** - Two members from the 1st Battalion Regiment Bloemspruit and one member from the Bronkhorst-spruit Commando were killed when their Unimog vehicle skidded off the road and overturned in wet weather while traveling on the Rundu to Bagani Road. They were: Sergeant Andries (23). Lance Corporal Barend Frederick Wiese (26). Rifleman Leon Myburgh (27).
- **1979** - Soviets invade Afghanistan, initiating a disastrous nine-year war that opens the country to a Taliban takeover.
- **1980** - Two members from 101 Battalion SWATF were accidentally shot dead in Northern Owamboland by members of a 53 Battalion Patrol who mistook them for SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. They were: Rifleman Philipus Elifas (20). Rifleman Elias Philipus (21).
- **1983** - Rifleman Teixeira Manganhes from 32 Battal-

ion burnt to death when Aerospatiale SA330C/H Puma struck trees and crashed during a take-off near Cassinga while carrying out trooping during Ops Askari. He was 31.

- **1983** - Rifleman Shawn Pretorius from 4 SAI Died of multiple shrapnel wounds received in an accidental hand grenade explosion inside a Ratel while in Southern Angola during Ops Askari. He was 18.
- **1996** - A genocide trial began concerning the killing of an estimated 800,000 Tutsis in Rwanda. In 1994, a bloody civil war had broken out between the two main ethnic groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi. After the Hutu army seized power it had waged a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" against the Tutsi population.
- **2012** - General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander of the US Army during "Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm", dies at the age of 78.

28 December

- **1901** - Commandant Gideon Scheepers is found guilty on several charges by a British court martial and sentenced to death. He professes his innocence to the end.
- **1921** - The Rand Revolt begins with a strike by miners after announcements of wage reductions on the gold-mines necessitated by the depression following WWI.

- **1950** - Korea: Chinese troops cross 38th Parallel.
- **1962** - UN troops occupy Elizabethstad, Katanga.
- **1971** - Ordinary Seaman Johannes Petrus Gerhardus Botha from SAS Simonsberg was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 18.
- **1983** - Trooper Norman Walter Niemand from 1 Special Service Battalion attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group, was Killed in Action in Southern Angola. He was 19.

29 December

- **1895** - Leander Starr Jameson crosses the border into Transvaal, leading about five hundred hand-picked policemen of the Chartered Company on their way to Johannesburg.
- **1900** - The Battle of Helvetia near Machadodorp takes place, with the British under Major Cotton surrendering to General Ben Viljoen. Major Cotton is fatally wounded.
- **1940** - During the Blitz, German aircraft dropped thousands of incendiary bombs on the centre of London, causing the worst fire damage since the great fire of 1666. St. Paul's Cathedral survived but eight other Wren churches along with the Guildhall and Old Bailey were badly damaged.
- **1941** - First Japanese air raid on Corregidor.
- **1965** - During the Vietnam

War, North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh rejected unconditional peace talks offered by the U.S.

- **1981** - Rifleman James Clark Cromhout from 2 Parachute Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 23.
- **1983** - Rifleman Jacobus Johannes Adonis from the South African Cape Corps was Killed in Action in Northern Owamboland during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 20.
- **1983** - Corporal Sarel Johannes Reynders from 3 Squadron was killed in a private motorcycle accident, in Pretoria. He was 21.
- **1983** - Private Johan Coghill from the South African

Medical Corps was killed in a military vehicle accident at De Doorns. He was 20.

- **1983** - Commodore Dieter Gerhardt, former commanding officer of the Simons Town naval base, and his wife Ruth Gerhardt, are sentenced to life imprisonment and ten years' imprisonment respectively, being found guilty of high treason on charges of spying for the Soviet Union.
- **1992** - Rifleman Abraham Mohlolo Khoathela from 44 Parachute Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident at the Soweto off-ramp while traveling on the Potchefstroom Road. He was 24.

30 December

- **1900** - Battleships are sent to Tangiers by the Spanish

government as the first part of its intended invasion of Morocco.

- **1935** - Italian bombers destroy a Swedish Red Cross unit in Ethiopia.
- **1959** - USS 'George Washington' (SSBN-598) is commissioned, the first ballistic missile sub.
- **1972** - US President Richard Nixon halts bombing of North Vietnam & announces peace talks.
- **1975** - Major Hendrik Matthee from the School of Armour suffered a fatal heart attack while on duty at Grootfontein. He was 38.
- **1976** - Corporal Peter Vaughan Phipson from the Equestrian Regiment Died of Wounds in 1 Military Hospital after being critically wounded near Okatopi. He was 19.

1940 London Blitz



- **1987** - The Transkei military, under General Bantu Holomisa, overthrows the administration of Stella Sigcau of the Transkei.
- **1988** - Airman Johan Nicolaas Nel from the 70 Mobile Radar Unit was accidentally electrocuted while serving at 140 Squadron, AFB Ondangwa. He was 19.
- **1989** - Private Douglas Emmaneuil De Freitas from 72 Motorised Brigade Headquarters was killed instantly while on guard duty at the Brigade Headquarters when he was struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge from a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 19.
- **2006** - Saddam Hussein is hanged at the age of 69.

31 December

- **1967** - Prime Minister B.J. Vorster warns that the government would re-assess the Simon's Town agreement during 1968. This reaction follows the British government's decision to maintain the South African arms embargo.
- **1971** - Sergeant Petrus Johannes Engelbrecht from 1 Special Service Battalion Died of Wounds received in an accidental hand grenade explosion while serving in the Caprivi Strip. Eleven others were also injured in the same incident. He was 21.
- **1975** - Rifleman Michael Lenin van der Schyff from the Equestrian Regiment

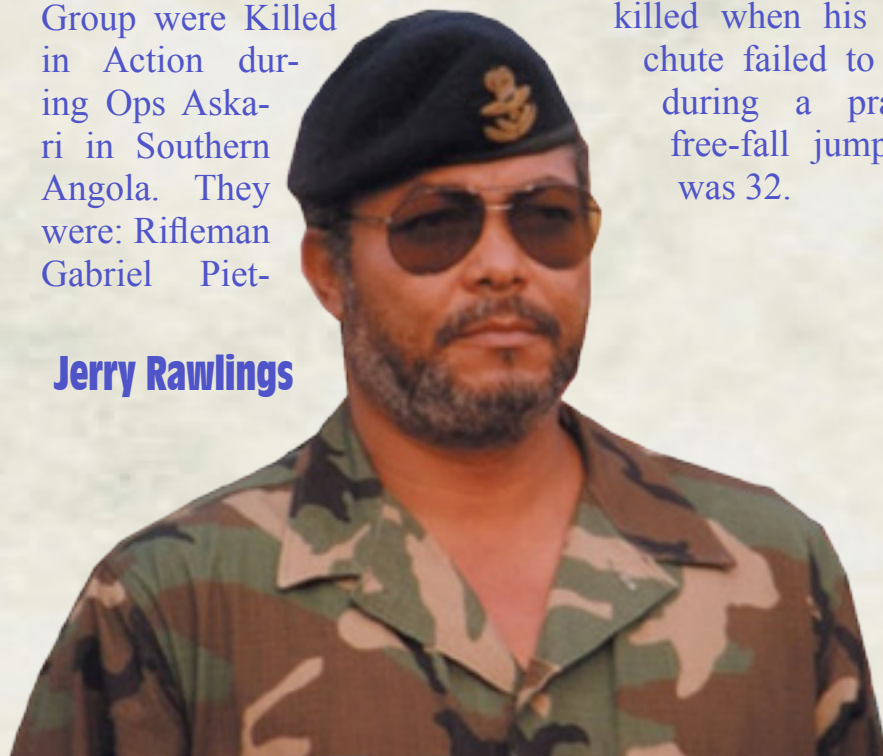
was accidentally killed when struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 19.

- **1976** - Rifleman Jacobus Abraham Visser from Infantry School was killed when he accidentally fell from a horse and broke his neck. He was 18.
- **1981** - In his second military coup, Jerry Rawlings overthrows the government of President Hilla Limann in Ghana.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal André Christiaan Weideman from 6 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned on the Oshakati to Ruacana road. He was 20.
- **1983** - 2nd Lieutenant Pieter Marcus Liebenberg from 4 SAI was Killed in Action near Cuvelai in Southern Angola during Ops Askari. He was 21.
- **1983** - Three Members from 4 SAI attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group were Killed in Action during Ops Askari in Southern Angola. They were: Rifleman Gabriel Piet-

er le Roux (18). Rifleman Derick John Schröner (18). Rifleman Mathys Cornelius Smit (18).

- **1983** - Rifleman Johan Carel Fourie from Regiment Groot Karoo, attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was Killed in Action during Ops Askari. He was 21.
- **1983** - The Nigerian civil government of President Shehu Shagari is overthrown in a fourth, bloodless, military coup led by Major-General Muhammadu Buhari. He was declared Head of State on 2 January 1984.
- **1986** - Trooper Peter Matthews from 1 Special Service Battalion, attached to 32 Battalion contracted cerebral malaria while deployed in Southern Angola. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he unfortunately succumbed to the illness. He was 20.
- **1993** - Staff Sergeant R. Nieuhaus from 44 Parachute Regiment was accidentally killed when his parachute failed to open during a practice free-fall jump. He was 32.

Jerry Rawlings



Military Despatches

To all our readers from all of us at Military Despatches.

**Thanks for your support during the year.
Here's wishing you everything of the best for
Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New
Year.**





Nicknames

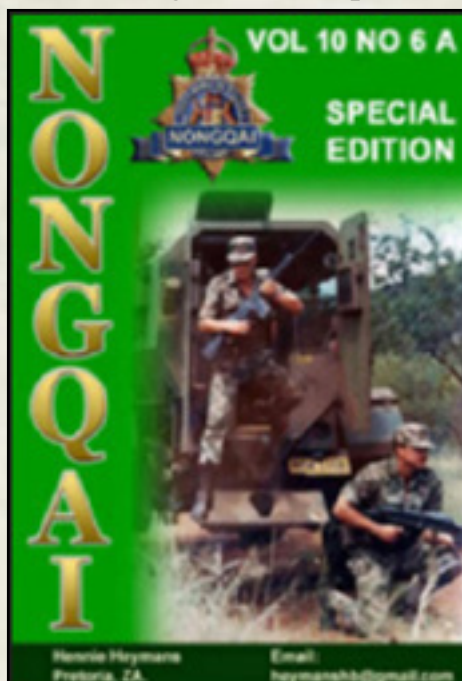
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|--|---|
| 1. Honey tank. | 12. Grease Gun. |
| 2. Adolf Galland. | 13. Mike Hoare. |
| 3. Stonewall. | 14. Adolph Malan. |
| 4. M4 Sherman. The British named it the 'Ronson' after a cigarette lighter because they said it "lights up first time, every time" when hit. | 15. Jimmy. |
| 5. British Field Marshall Douglas Haig. | 16. White Death. |
| 6. The Nebelwerfer Rocket Launcher. | 17. The potato masher or the stick grenade. |
| 7. Junkers Ju 87. | 18. Thompson submachine gun or Tommy Gun. |
| 8. General George S. Patton Jnr. | 19. The Dam Busters. |
| 9. 101st Airborne Division. | 20. Vorster Orrel. |
| 10. Bubi (A German word meaning "young boy" or "kid".) | 21. Der rote Kampfflieger - the Red Battle-Flyer. |
| 11. Stalin Organ. | 22. Dad's Army. |
| | 23. The Red Devils. |
| | 24. Eland 60 armoured car. |
| | 25. Bohemian Corporal. |
| | 26. H. Norman Swartzkopf. |



Useful links

Every month we will be featuring a few useful links to military websites, newsletters and on-line magazines. Stuff that we think our readers will appreciate.

Here are two of our favourites. The first one is Nongqai, the unofficial police newsletter for veterans of the former South African Police Force and for those interested in Police History. The second is Jimmy's Own, the official newsletter of the South African Signals Association. Click on the magazine covers to go to the respective websites.

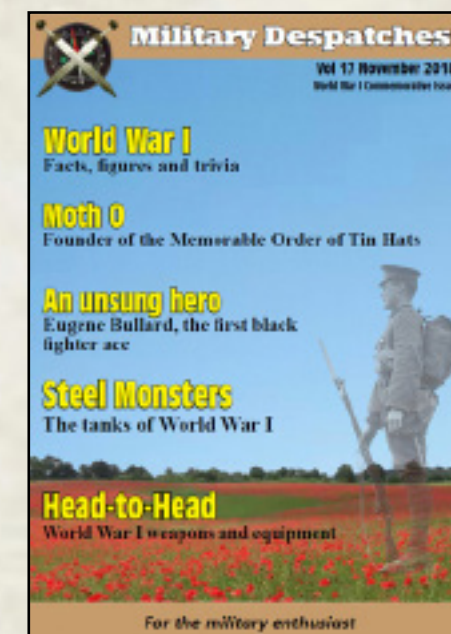


Military Despatches Website



"Things don't have to change the world to be important."

Steve Jobs



Our aim is to make the Military Despatches website easy to use. Even more important to us, we want to make the website informative and interesting. The latest edition of the magazine will be available, as will all the previous editions. More over, there will be links to videos, websites, and articles that our readers may find interesting. So check out the website, bookmark it, and pass the URL on to everyone that you think may be interested.



Have you checked out the bookshelf on the website? Here you can open and read individual articles on screen with no need to download anything.

You will find articles on numerous different topics that have been published over the past two years as well as video clips and documentaries.

Hipe!

media

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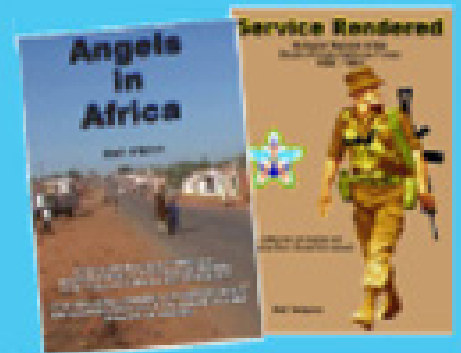
Online Magazines

Flip book magazines with pages that can be turned.



E-books

Produced in any electronic format required.



2D & 3D Animation

Produced in any video format.



Video Production

Scripting, storyboard, filming and editing done to any video format required. We also do aerial and underwater video and stills.



Still Photography

If you're thinking digital media then think Hipe Media.