



Military Despatches

October 2017

Stranger than fiction

Facts, figures and trivia about D-Day

Military Myths and Urban Legends

Great stories, but are they true or just myths?



Head-to-Head

Three elite units, the SAS, US Navy SEALs and Spetsnaz go head-to-head

Forged in Battle

The Japanese Kamikaze



The Few

The Battle of Britain

For the military enthusiast

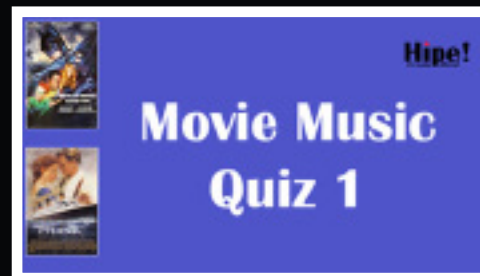


Click on any video below to view



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

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



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



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



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



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

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

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Military Despatches October 2017

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Cover Photograph

South African Air Force Saab Gripen fighters swoop down to carry out an attack on a South African Navy frigate off the coast of False Bay, Cape Town. The photograph was taken during a security exercise in preparation for the 2010 Soccer World Cup that was held in South Africa.



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Editor's Sitrep

So, here we are, issue four is done and dusted. And done before the last day of the month.

This month seems to have a bit of an aeronautical feel to it. It wasn't planned that way. It's just that a number of the articles are about aircraft or pilots.

We've finally started a Patreon account so that people are able to become patrons of the magazine. Read the article on page 17 for more details.

Next month is Armistice Day, so look out for a few articles about that. Can you believe that it's November next month. Then it's Christmas and 2017 is at an end. Where did the year go to?

I am sure that most readers know that Military Despatches is an interactive magazine. That means that there are links to other websites, audio, and video links. Where you see a photograph with the red "play" button, this means that it is a video link. If you are connected to the Internet all you need to do is left click on the play icon and the video will open up in a separate window.

Any text that is blue and underlined means that it is also a link. Left click on the text and it



Video link

[Click on the underlined link](#)

will open another website, audio file, or video.

And don't worry, we check all the websites, audio files and videos beforehand to ensure that they do not contain viruses or malware. We trust that you will enjoy this feature.

If there are any articles that you would like to read, then please feel free to drop us an e-mail and let us know. We will then try our best to produce an article regarding the subject.

Once again, thanks for your support and feel free to distribute the magazine as you see fit.

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

Until next month.

Matt

Hipe!

media

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Forged in Battle

The Kamikaze

Each month "Forged in Battle" looks at weapons, equipment or units that have been tried and tested on the battlefield. This month we look at the Japanese Kamikaze pilots in World War II.

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Battlefield

The Battle of Britain

In May 1940 Nazi Germany launched a massive blitzkrieg against Western Europe. They overran Belgium, the Netherlands and France in only a matter of weeks. Britain stood alone and with the Germans preparing for an invasion, the Battle of Britain was about to start.

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Aircraft Identification

We show you a World War II aircraft and you tell us what it is.

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Book Review

Cuito Cuanavalle: 12 Months of War that Transformed a Continent by Fred Bridgland and We Fear Naught but God: The Pictorial Edition of the South African Special Forces by Paul Els. Two good reads.

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The Lighter Side

Ready for inspection

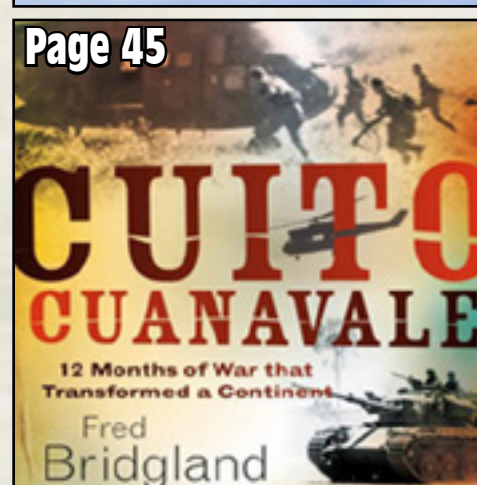
Soldiers in any army around the world will normally have one thing in common - their intense dislike for inspections. And the old South African Defence Force seemed to love holding inspections.

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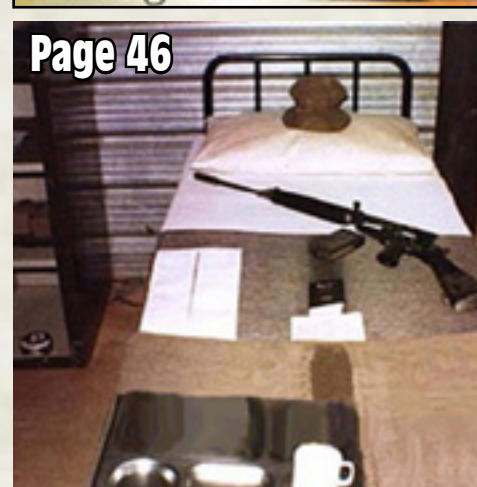


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D-Day - facts, figures and trivia

A few facts, figures and trivia about D-Day, the Allied invasion to liberate Europe during World War II.

On Tuesday 6 June 1944 the largest seaborne invasion force in history landed on an 80 km stretch of the Normandy coast in France.

Codenamed Operation Neptune, it was part of Operation Overlord, the liberation of German-occupied northwestern Europe from Nazi control. It was also the launch of the long-awaited second front. It was simply termed D-Day.

Figures

On D-Day, General Dwight D. Eisenhower commanded a force without parallel in history.

NAVAL FORCES

Ships

- 138 warships
- 221 destroyers, frigates, corvettes
- 187 mine sweepers
- 495 smaller vessels
- 58 submarine chasers
- 4,000 landing craft of all types
- 441 auxiliary Naval craft and small boats
- 864 Merchant Navy ships
- Over 300 other small craft

Servicemen

- 112,824 British sailors
- 52,889 American sailors
- 4,998 other Allied servicemen
- 25,000 Merchant navy
- Total - 195,701

AIR FORCES

Aircraft

- 11,590 aircraft
- 3,500 gliders

Air Crew

- 31,000 (not including airborne troops or their aircrews)

LAND FORCES

Vehicles

- 20,000 (including over 1,000 tanks)

Men landed on the beaches

- American sector - 57,500 (Utah - 23,250, Omaha - 34,250)
- British sector - 75,215 (Gold - 24,970, Juno - 21,400, Sword - 28,845)

Troops parachuted or landed by glider

- Americans - 15,500
- British - 7,990
- Total - 24,900

Total land forces deployed

- 156,205

Trivia

- Planning for Operation Overlord began in earnest in 1943 with Dwight D Eisenhower made supreme commander. British general Bernard Montgomery, hero of the Eighth Army in North Africa, was put in charge of the ground troops.
- About 3,200 reconnaissance missions were launched in the run-up to the invasion to take photos of vital locations.
- In the summer of 1943 an early copy of the plans blew out of a window in Norfolk House, London. A man who was passing by handed them

in, saying his sight was too bad to read them.

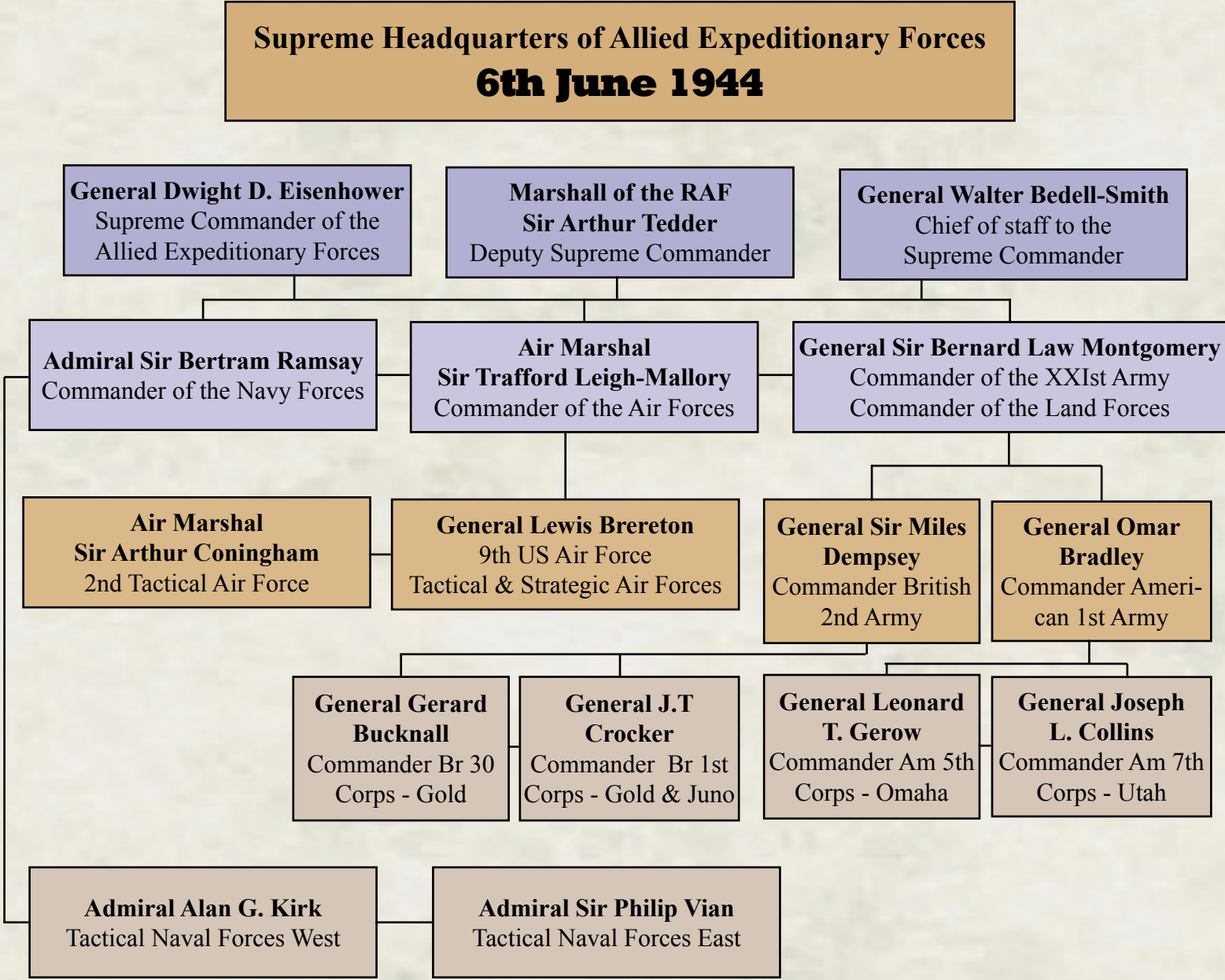
- Beach landings in Normandy were chosen instead of the Pas-de-Calais because defences were lighter and advancing troops would have fewer rivers and canals to cross.

- There were to be five landing zones along a 80 km stretch of coast. The Americans would attack at Utah and Omaha, the British at Gold and Sword and Canadian troops at Juno.

- It was vital that D-Day take place on the date of the highest half-tide at the most Westerly beach (Utah), 40 minutes after first light and following a night when the moon rose between 01h00 and 02h00. Such occasion occur only three days each month and in June 1944 they were the 5th, 6th and 7th of that month. If the invasion wasn't launched on one of those three days it would have had to be postponed for another month.

- D-Day was originally set for June 5 but had to be postponed for 24 hours because of bad weather.

- During D-Day preparations top-secret code names were used to hide the allies' plans from the enemy. 'Utah', 'Omaha', 'Gold', and 'Sword' were beaches on the Normandy coastline, 'Nep-



tune' was the code name for the landings, 'Overlord' was the ensuing battle for Normandy and a 'Bigot' was the code name for someone who had high level security clearance.

- In 1944 authorities became concerned when a number of secret code names appeared as answers in the Daily Telegraph's crossword puzzle. In the month before the D-Day attacks, no less than five code names, including 'Utah', 'Omaha' and 'Neptune' were spotted in the puzzle answers. Alarm bells rang at MI5, which sus-

pected someone was trying to pass information to the enemy, although a search of the writer's home and office turned up nothing.

- Operation Overload was the name given to the whole of the Normandy Invasion. Each separate task was named differently. Operation Neptune was the amphibious invasion, Operation Pointblank the massive bombing campaign prior to the invasion, and Operation Bodyguard to ensure information of the invasion never reached the Germans.
- Hitler anticipated that the

Allied Forces would invade France from the northern coast. To fortify and prepare for this, he assigned Erwin Rommel to head construction of defenses. Rommel was placed in charge of finishing Hitler's Atlantic Wall which consisted of 3,800 km of bunkers, landmines, and various obstacles to make a beach landing more difficult and hazardous for the Allies.

- A phantom army of dummy camps, planes and tanks was constructed in Kent and Essex in order to deceive Germans into thinking the invasion would be at Calais.

- On 28 April 1944, eight ships full of US servicemen and equipment were making their way to the Devon coast in the UK to take part in a rehearsal for the D-Day landings. Unfortunately, a mistake in their paperwork meant the ships were using different radio frequencies, so when a group of German boats picked up on the heavy radio traffic, the slow-moving US landing ships and their lack of communication proved to be easy targets for the German torpedoes. In total some 800 people were killed in the botched operation, a heavier loss than on some of the D-Day beaches. Worried about leaked intelligence and a drop in morale, Allied commanders ordered a blackout on all information about the attack and some families never found out how their relatives had died.
- Terence Otway, whose unit was tasked with attacking the Merville battery on D-Day, wanted to be sure that his men wouldn't leak this highly sensitive information in advance, so to test security he sent thirty of the prettiest members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, in civilian clothes, down to the local pubs. The women were told to do all they could try and get the information. None of the men fell into the trap.
- Despite his well-documented capacity for inspirational speeches, on the night before D-Day Winston Churchill was feeling less than confi-



NOT THE REAL THING: A dummy tank is moved into place. An entire phantom army was created in order to deceive the Germans into thinking the invasion would be at Calais.

- dent. He apparently confided his fears to his wife the evening before the landings telling her: "Do you realise that by the time you wake up in the morning 20,000 men may have been killed?"
- Over the years many people have wondered what the 'D' in D-Day stands for; some have suggested Disembarkment-Day, Decision-Day and even Death-Day. In reality the D just stands for 'Day'. D-Day and H-Hour represent the secret time and day an operation is set to begin, so before and after WWII many other operations had a 'D-Day'. The day before D-Day was known as 'D-1' and the day after as 'D+1', meaning that if the day of the operation changed, all the dates in the plans did not have to be changed.
- New gadgets designed for D-Day included a "swimming tank" and a flame throwing tank called "the crocodile". There were even collapsible motorbikes.
- Eisenhower's famous statement to the troops as he gave the order for Operation Overlord open with "You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you."
- US General Dwight D. Eisenhower wrote a letter that was to be opened 'in case of failure'. In it he wrote "Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone." The letter is mistakenly signed July 5 instead of June 5; presumably he was a little preoccupied at the time.
- Coded messages were sent to alert French Resistance to



D-1: At 23h00 on 5 June 24,000 British and American airborne troops dropped behind German lines. Their objective was to seize vital roads and bridges ahead of the landings at Normandy.

- begin a programme of sabotage. Phrases used included "*le dés est sur le tapis*" (the dice is on the carpet) – an order to destroy trains and railway lines.
- High command thought a successful landing would cost 10,000 dead and 30,000 wounded – 30,000 stretchers and 60,000 blankets were issued.
- From 23h00 on 5 June some 24,000 airborne troops were delivered behind the German lines to secure important roads and bridges. Along with more than 2,000 aircraft, 867 gliders were used.
- To add to the illusion, early on D-Day morning "Ruperts" – dummies dressed in paratrooper uniforms complete with boots and helmets – were dropped in Normandy and the Pas-de-Calais. The dummies were equipped with recordings of gunfire, while the real troops supplied additional sound effects to create the illusion of a large scale airborne attack. This operation, code-named "Titanic," was designed to distract the Ger-
- man military while the main forces landed further to the west.
- The first British casualty on D-Day was Lt "Den" Brotheridge, shot in the neck shortly after landing in France in a glider at 00h16. His unit was tasked with taking the crucial target of Pegasus Bridge, an objective that was achieved.
- Many paratroopers that day were dropped in the wrong place including US Private John Steele. His parachute famously became snagged on the church steeple at Sainte-Mère-Eglise. He was trapped for two hours before being taken prisoner.
- At 03h00 1,900 Allied bombers attacked German lines. A staggering three million kilograms of bombs were dropped that day. A total of 10,521 combat aircraft flew a total of 15,000 sorties on D-Day, with 113 lost.
- A naval bombardment from seven battleships, 18 cruisers, and 43 destroyers began at 05h00 and went on until 06h25. Midget submarines, called X-boats, lay submerged in the sea off the

- coast of France, surfacing on the morning of D-Day to guide in the invading craft using beacons.
- Defences on the beaches included concrete gun emplacements, wooden stakes, mines, anti-tank obstacles, barbed wire and booby traps. Around 50,000 German troops opposed the landing forces.
- General Dwight Eisenhower once said "Andrew Higgins is the man who won the war for us". But who is Andrew Higgins? Higgins is the man who designed and built LCVs, the amphibious vehicles that enabled the Allied forces to cross the channel. Eisenhower is reported to have said, "If Higgins had not designed and built those LCVs, we never could have landed over an open beach. The whole strategy of the war would have been different."
- The flat-bottomed landing craft were originally designed to rescue flood victims on the Mississippi river in the US.
- US troops went ashore on the landing beaches at 06h31, followed an hour later by the British and Canadians on their beaches. There were 61,715 British troops, 21,400 Canadian soldiers and 73,000 Americans.
- The heaviest losses were on Omaha beach where US forces suffered 2,000 casualties.
- Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was in charge of defending northern France from the expected Allied in-



HITTING THE BEACHES: American troops come ashore from one of the landing craft. By the evening of the first day more than 150,000 troops had been landed on the five beaches.

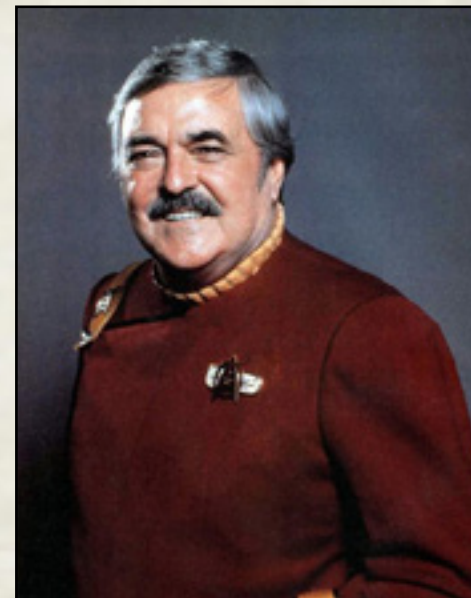
vasion. On 6 June he was at home in Germany celebrating his wife's 50th birthday having been told the sea was too rough for a landing.

- Nazi leader Adolf Hitler was asleep when word of the invasion arrived. No one dared wake him and it's said vital time was lost in sending reinforcements.
- Spanish-born double agent Garbo plied the Germans with misinformation that led them to believe the Normandy landings were just a ruse.
- The newly developed drug penicillin went with troops on D-Day and saved thousands of lives.
- Condoms were issued to soldiers – most were used for covering the end of their rifles to keep them dry.
- Despite setbacks, including

the failure to capture the city of Caen, D-Day saw the Allies establish a successful beachhead from which they could continue the invasion of Normandy. By the evening of the first day, along with more than 150,000 men, 20,000 vehicles had been landed.

- The Allies ferried two pre-fabricated harbours called Mulberries across the Channel to help supply the beachhead with equipment. The one at Arromanches involved 600,000 tons of concrete.
- Total Allied casualties on D-Day were much lighter than feared – around 10,000 with 4,572 killed including 1,641 Brits. The Germans are estimated to have lost about 9,000.

- Actor Richard Todd starred in *The Longest Day*, a 1962 film about D-Day, as Major John Howard. He was involved in the real landings as an officer in the 7th Parachute Battalion.
- James Doohan, who would go on to find fame as Scotty in *Star Trek*, was a lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Artillery on D-Day and lost a finger during the fray.
- The stunning Omaha Beach scene in the 1998 movie *Saving Private Ryan*, starring Tom Hanks, cost \$9,24 million to film and used 1,000 extras.
- Famous photographer Robert Capa captured some of the most memorable images of the action though only a handful of the frames he took survived. The others



BEAM ME UP SCOTTY: James Doohan, who played the part of chief engineer Montgomery Scott in *Star Trek* took part in the D-Day landings.

- were accidentally destroyed by a lab technician.
- The victory in Normandy can't be traced to a single moment. The Germans had been unable to complete the Atlantic Wall and the deception tactics had paid off with many of the German forces diverted from the key coasts. Even the French Resistance, having heard from their English sources of the invasion, had launched successful attacks that slowed German reinforcements.
- The Allies failed to achieve any of their goals on the first day. Carentan, St. Lô, and Bayeux remained in German

hands, and Caen, a major objective, was not captured until 21 July. Only two of the beaches (Juno and Gold) were linked on the first day, and all five beachheads were not connected until 12 June. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill landed on the beach at Gray-sur-Mer (Juno) on 12 June, General de Gaulle on 14 June and King George VI on 16 June. On 6 June the Canadian 50th Infantry Division had landed at Juno and by the end of the day had landed 21,400 men, 3,200 vehicles and 1,100 tons of supplies.

Key Allied role players - D-Day



Dwight D. Eisenhower



Arthur Tedder



Walter Bedell-Smith



Bertram Ramsay



Trafford Leigh-Mallory



Bernard Montgomery

Military myths and urban legends

Over the next few months we will be looking at some well-known, and some lesser known, myths and legends about the military and seeing if they are true or not.

Did you know that Hitler's real surname was Schicklgruber? Or that Roosevelt knew that Pearl Harbour was going to happen? And of course you must know that carrots help you see in the dark.

And if you did know any of the above, sorry to disillusion you, but none of it is true.

It's not surprising that myths will spring up about wars, the events that took place during wars, and the people that fought in them. While some of them are true, most of them are nothing more than myths and urban legends.

Over the next few months we will examine a few of them and see whether they are true, or nothing more than a myth.

The Myth

France meekly surrendered to Germany in 1940 because the French were cowards.

The Verdict

False

The Reality

While it is true that the French did surrender quickly - the Germans achieved this in six weeks, something they had been unable to do in four years during World War I - the reasons are oversimplified.

The French were relying heavily on the Maginot Line to stop the German advance. Instead of attacking it the Germans went around it.

French troops fought hard

during the Battle of France, inflicting over 150,000 casualties on the Germans and destroying over 800 tanks. The French army was let down by poor leadership, dumb tactics, bad logistics and commanders trying to fight a defensive war.

The Myth

US President Franklin D. Roosevelt knew that the attack on Pearl Harbour was going to take place. He allowed it to happen as a pretext for war.

The Verdict

False

The Reality

While there were fears that the Japanese were going to launch an attack, the Americans had no idea of where and when it would happen.

Pearl Harbour was a combination of bad luck, poor training, and bitter rivalry between branches of the US military.

The US Navy believed that the Japanese did not have the ability to attack Pearl Harbour because of its shallow depth, making it almost impossible to launch torpedoes from planes.

The incoming Japanese planes were detected by radar but no warning was passed on. Radar was brand new and being operated by men who barely knew how to use it at the time.

The Myth

US country singer John Denver was a sniper during the

Vietnam War. He had the second highest amount of sniper kills during the war. His hit song "Sunshine On My Shoulder" was actually about his exploits as a sniper.

The Verdict

False

The Reality

Not only was Denver not a sniper in Vietnam, he never served in the US Military at any stage.

The Myth

A German U-boat, the U-1206, sank when the experimental toilet it used overflowed, causing a flood that could not be stopped.

The Verdict

True (kind of...)

The Reality

This story is true. Well almost true. The U-1206 was a new German submarine carrying a newly developed form of high-pressure toilet that could be used at lower depths than the older systems.

While on patrol the captain had to use the heads and when he went to flush the toilet he accidentally opened a valve to the outside.

This caused water to flood in which contacted the subs batteries, causing deadly chlorine gas to form.

In order to vent the gas the captain ordered the sub to surface, which it did, right in front of the Scottish coastline. The



THE FUHRER QUICK STEP: Adolf Hitler danced a jig on learning the news that France had surrendered. Or did he?

sub came under attack and was badly damaged. The captain ordered it to be scuttled.

The Myth

When France surrendered after only six weeks Hitler was so overcome with joy that he danced a jig that was captured on camera.

The Verdict

False

The Reality

On learning the news that France had surrendered after only six weeks, Hitler took a slight step back in shock. The event was indeed captured on film.

The British then edited the film to make it look as if Hitler was dancing a silly jig. It was a clever bit of propaganda by the British and it certainly worked. It stirred up outrage and mockery of Hitler.

The Myth

Hollywood actors Jimmy Stewart and Charles Bronson were decorated World War II veterans.

The Verdict

True

The Reality

Both Stewart and Bronson served in the US Army Air Corps during World War II.

Stewart served with a B-24 squadron and flew over 20 combat missions over Europe. He was decorated with two Distinguished Flying Crosses, the French Croix de Guerre, and multiple Air Medals.

Bronson, who was born Charles Dennis Buchinsky, came from a family that was so poor that he had to wear his sister's dress to school.

He worked in a coal mine until he was drafted into the US Army Air Corps. Trained as an aerial gunner, he served on

B-29 Superfortress bombers during the Pacific Campaign. He flew 25 missions and was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries sustained during a raid on Japan.

The Myth

During World War II a British officer disabled a German tank with an umbrella.

The Verdict

True

The Reality

Major Digby Tatham-Warter was a British paratrooper dropped at Arnhem during Operation Market Garden.

He said that he carried an umbrella with him because he always had trouble remembering the passwords after a drop. Few men could mistake the man carrying an umbrella in the middle of a war to be anything but British.

During the failed attempt to hold the bridge at Arnhem he actually did disable a German tank by thrusting the umbrella through the observation slit of the tank and wounding the driver.

Another account was when the battalion chaplain was pinned down by mortar fire, Tatham-Warter walked over, opened the umbrella as if to give him cover from the fire, and calmly escorted the chaplain to safety.

Wounded and captured, he escaped from the hospital with another British officer.

Trust you enjoyed these. Next month we'll look at a few more military myths and urban legends and see how many are true.

The Maleoskop Statue Group and its story

Article written by HJ van Heerden and edited by MR Loubser.

The first shots in the South African Border War that would last for 23 years were fired on the South West African (now Namibia) and Angolan border on the 26th August 1966 during a contact at Ongulumbashe in the west of Ovamboland.

This is regarded as the first confrontation between the South Africa Security Forces (that consisted of members of the South African Police, South

African Air Force and 1 Parachute Battalion) and armed SWAPO/PLAN guerillas.

The following Bush War legends, Captain "Rooi Rus" Swanepoel, Captain Johan Viktor (both SA Police) and Captain Jan Breytenbach (SA Defence Force), formed part of the first contact.

For the entire duration of the Border War (1966 to 1989), members of the South African Police (SAP) performed Coun-

ter Insurgency (COIN) duties in a full combatant role in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), the South West African border and borders of the Republic of South Africa. In the early 1970's all members of the SA Police who were called to do duties on the borders were exposed to a 6 week Counter Insurgency (COIN) Training programme on a farm in the Northern Transvaal close to the town of Groblersdal.

This training facility was called Maleoskop and over the years to follow, vast numbers of SA Police members who would serve in the SA Police COIN unit received specialized COIN and tactical training at this facility.

In memory of the more than 107 police officers who paid the highest price performing COIN duties, Colonel Buks van Staden, a crafty sculptor, was commissioned to create the Maleoskop Statue Group. Colonel van Staden cast these statues by melting thousands of spent R1 Cartridges.

These statues depict a standing white policeman protecting his kneeling wounded black brother at arms in a combat situation. On the 1st of April 1987, the Maleoskop Memorial consisting of the statue group and a scroll of honour was unveiled by the Deputy Minister of Law and Order, Mr. Roelf Meyer.

Due to the winds of change, the Maleoskop training centre



ROUTE MARCH: COIN training at Maleoskop 1970 to 1989.

and land was handed over during 2003, to a local indigenous tribe after a successful land claim. The statue group was then removed and relocated to the South African Police Service (SAPS) Transport Museum in the Pretoria CBD. Since 2008 numerous military and police associations requested permission to relocate the statues to the Voortrekker Monument in the Garden of Remembrance. The SAPS management at the time rejected the requests.

After the closure of the SAPS Transport Museum the statues were vandalized and seriously damaged. The four arms were broken off, the rucksack, two R1 rifles and bronze Roll of Honour were sold to unscrupulous scrap dealers and melted - lost forever.

During May 2014, the SA Police COIN Unit Veterans League was established and in 2015 submitted a request to the management of the South African Police Service for the transfer of ownership of the statue group to the SA Police COIN

Unit Veterans League to enable the restoration and relocation to an acceptable Garden of Remembrance. After a lengthy and difficult negotiation process, the request was granted and on the 25th of April 2015, the two statues were transferred to a place of safe keeping in

Pretoria.

Once the statues were in safe custody, the SAP COIN Unit Veterans League requested permission on two occasions (2015 & 2016), to relocate the statues at the Voortrekker Monument for permanent placement in the Garden of Remembrance. Both these requests were rejected due to the so called "Apartheid" connection of the statues.

In the beginning of 2017, a COIN League Veteran, indicated the availability of a piece of land that could be developed in a memorial and where these statues could permanently be relocated in the north of Pretoria. The proposal was investigated and later discussed at the AGM of the SAP COIN Veterans League and agreed to engage in a formal 99 year leasehold period to obtain the land and erect the statues as part of a memorial.



THEN AND NOW: Mr Roelf Meyer during unveiling at Maleoskop on the 1st April 1987 (left). The statues at the SAPS Transport Museum in Pretoria after they were damaged (right).



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM: The annual commemoration of the Battle of Ongulumbashe held on 26 August 2017.

In order to commemorate the memory of the 107 SAP COIN Unit members who died in the war, the COIN Unit Veterans League have an annual Commemoration service and this year it was held on the 26th of August 2017. The statues were transferred to the relocation site to be erected and restored to its previous glory for the memorial service. The COIN Veterans League members spent a couple of Saturdays and this resulted in the timeous temporary erection of the statues, ready for the big day.

The big day eventually arrived and on the 26th August 2017, the memory of our fallen comrades was honoured at the Maleoskop Statue Group at the new memorial site. In attendance were Veterans from the SA Police COIN Unit Veterans League, the KOEVOET Veterans League, SADF Para-

bat Assosiation, 102 Battalion, MOTHS, SA Legion and SA Air Force Society, amongst others.

The development of the SAP COIN Memorial will be conducted in four phases, the project involves a pedestal for the statues and a memorial wall containing the Roll of Honour and other emblems. The physical restoration of the two damaged statues will be the fifth and last phase.

In order to accumulate funds for the development and restoration of the Statues and the memorial project, the COIN Unit Veterans League commissioned 120 numbered miniature replicas of the Statues as a limited edition.

They are issued with a certificate of authenticity signed by the first Honorary President of the COIN Veterans League, the late Lt Genl JJ Viktor (SOE)

who was a participant in the Battle of Ongulumbashe on 26 August 1966 when it all began.

In future the annual COIN Unit commemoration service will be held on the 3rd Saturday of August to commemorate the Battle of Ongulumbashe and to pay homage to our fallen comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice and never returned home.

RIP: Lt Genl JJ Viktor (SOE)
(17/12/1929 - 5/7/2017)

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Military Despatches

Monthly online magazine for the Military Enthusiast

<https://www.patreon.com/militarydespatches>

Last month I wrote an article titled "Qua Vadis Military Despatches". It was about some of the reasons why I do this monthly online magazine.

One of the main reasons for doing this publication is to try and raise funds to assist military veterans.

That taken into account, Military Despatches is, and will remain, a free online magazine for military enthusiasts.

As stated, we will not be placing paid advertising in Military Despatches at any time. Any adverts in the magazine are there free of charge and because we feel that it is something that will be of interest or benefit to our readers.

So if you have an event that you wish to promote, let us know in time and we will do our best to accommodate you.

We have also started a page on Patreon for those that wish

to become patrons of Military Despatches. You can click on the link above to go to the page and see what it is all about.

We would like people to become patrons, yet no-one is under any obligation to do so. We have no intention of ever becoming a 'subscribers only' magazine. It will remain free and you will be free to distribute it to whoever you want.

Thanks for your support.

Useful links

Every month we will be featuring a few useful links to military websites, newsletters and online magazines. Stuff that we think our readers will appreciate.

Here are two of our favourites. The first one is Nongqai, the unofficial police newsletter for veterans of the former South African Police Force and for those interested in Police History. The second is Jimmy's Own, the official newsletter of the South African Signals Association. Click on the magazine covers to go to the respective websites.



The best things in life are free

One of the most important things for a conscript in the South African Defence Force was his weekend pass. Getting home though was often a problem.

For a national serviceman in the South African Defence Force (SADF) nothing was more important than a weekend pass. Often, however, it was a mission to get home.

Most national servicemen did not have their own cars and even if they did they were not allowed to keep them on the base. For many of them the only way to get home was to hitch hike.

Before the introduction of the 'Ride Safe' campaign hitching in uniform was against standing orders. Still, most national servicemen did it.

The other options were to either catch a plane or a train, but both of these were expensive. Especially on a national serviceman's salary. Some, however, did come up with a plan.

Ryan Murphy did his basic training at the Army Gymnasium in 1976 and he explains how he avoided standing in the cold with his thumb extended, hoping for someone to stop and give him a lift.

I did basics in the July intake of 76. I was at the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg and at the time I lived in Durban North.

One of my friends at school had been a guy by the name of Clive and we did basics together. On our first weekend pass Clive and I decided to hitch down to Durban. What an absolute nightmare.

When we left the camp we walked about five kilometres up the N3 so that there was less of a chance of the Military Police finding us hitching. It was freezing cold that night and there was very little traffic on the road.

We stood on the side of the road until about ten o'clock that night and we didn't get a lift. Eventually we walked back to camp, went to our bungalow and went to sleep. The following morning we decided to abandon our attempt at going home and we spent most of the weekend wandering around Heidelberg. If you've ever been to Heidelberg you will know that this is about as much fun as watching paint dry. The most exciting thing in Heidelberg at that time was going to watch the traffic lights change colour. I don't know if much has changed since then.

Two weeks later we received another weekend pass and this time I was determined to get home. Clive and I left the camp and walked into town to a steakhouse, the only one in Heidelberg, called the Golden Egg. We had a plate of chips and a cold drink and then walked down to Heidelberg railway station. This was a distance of about four kilometres.

The Trans-Natal Express is a train that used to run every day between Johannesburg and Durban. In those days it would arrive at Heidelberg station

at about 8.00pm and would then arrive in Durban at about 9.00am the following morning. This was a perfect method of transport because it was reliable, warm, and comfortable.

The only drawback was the fact that a 2nd Class return ticket would set you back R45.00. In 1976 that was still a fair whack of money, especially if you received a national serviceman's salary. There was no way that Clive and I could afford that type of money. I had a plan up my sleeve though. When the train arrived in Heidelberg the ticket inspector, or conductor, would jump off onto the platform and then count how many people were boarding the train at Heidelberg. This was not that difficult because it was usually only a handful of passengers. The conductor would then know how many tickets he had to check.

Clive and I waited across the railway line on the far side of the platform. When the train arrived we ran up and climbed on from the opposite side to the platform. By doing this we had avoided being seen by the conductor, so he would not be looking for us to check on our tickets.

Which was probably just as well because we didn't have a ticket. Once on the train we would find an empty compartment and stash our bags under the seats.

The trick was then to ensure



FREE RIDE: Catching a train home for the weekend was expensive for your average national serviceman. Unless you stowed away for a free ride that is.

that the conductor did not spot you for the next 13 hours. To achieve this we had to be very tricky.

It was no good sitting in the compartment without a care in the world because the conductor would usually do a few patrols up and down the train. He had a list that showed exactly who was supposed to be on the train and it also showed what compartments they were supposed to be in. If he saw two army guys sitting in a compartment that he knew was supposed to be empty he would have immediately asked for our tickets. Likewise if he came upon a compartment that was supposed to be empty and the door was locked from the inside he would put two and two together very quickly.

Above the door in each compartment was a luggage space that extended out over the corridor of the train.

You could store a fair amount of baggage in that space or, as

in our case, it was perfect to hide two young troops.

As I said, we would shove our bags under the seats and then climb into the luggage rack, jump into our sleeping bags, and make ourselves as comfortable as possible. If the conductor walked past and looked into the compartment, it would appear to be empty because there was no way that he would spot us in the luggage rack unless he walked into the compartment, turned around, and checked the luggage space.

It may not have been the most comfortable trip but at least we knew that we were heading home and it wasn't costing us anything. The next morning there were usually plenty of people climbing off in Durban, so it was unlikely that the conductor would even notice you.

On the Sunday night we would reverse the procedure. Because most of the people catching the Trans-Natal would board at Durban Station, we

would arrive as normal and climb onto the train. We would find an empty compartment and entrench ourselves in the luggage rack.

The train would arrive at Heidelberg at 7.00am the following morning and we would climb off the train on the side opposite the platform.

Clive and I would then have to jog back to camp to ensure that we made it in time.

Although we were supposed to check in by midnight on the Sunday, we had received special permission to arrive late because we told our company commander that we travelled by train.

I must tell you this bit though. One Friday night we were heading down to Durban and we climbed on the train at Heidelberg and found ourselves an empty compartment.

We would normally find a 1st Class compartment because there was more chance of finding one empty than in 2nd Class.

So anyway we find an empty compartment, stow our bags, and climb into the luggage rack to settle down for the night.

When the train arrived at Newcastle in the early hours of the morning, Clive and I were fast asleep. Some guy boarded the train and came into the compartment. What we didn't realise was that this poor sap, who was on his way to Durban, had paid extra to hire the entire compartment for himself.

So he walks in and tries to put his bags under the seats but they don't seem to fit. He looks under the seats and sees that there are already bags there.



TRAVEL IN STYLE: According to Murphy it was always best to hide in a 1st class compartment. Normally because there was more of a chance of finding one empty.

Then he tries to put his stuff into the luggage rack on of course he sees these two pairs of bleary eyes looking down at him. To say that he was upset would be putting it mildly.

He stormed off to find the conductor and Clive and I knew we were in trouble. We jumped down from the luggage rack, grabbed our bags, and headed out of the compartment.

I told Clive that we should split up because the conductor would be looking for two of us.

I spent the rest of the night ducking and diving the conductor. At one stage I hid in a toilet and used my back and feet to brace myself between the walls up near the roof. The conductor actually opened the door and looked into the toilet. If he had looked up I would have been bust.

Clive headed down towards 2nd Class and he saw a compartment door that was slightly opened. He had quietly opened the door and on entering he had seen that there were four guys asleep in the compartment. He had slid under the seat and fi-

nally fallen asleep.

The next morning he had rolled out from under the seat, shocking the hell out of these four guys who were now wide-awake. Luckily for him they had seen the funny side of it and they hid him in the compartment until the train arrived in Durban.

When we did arrive in Durban I jumped off the train and headed for the exit as quickly as possible. There were some other army guys on the train and I saw that the conductor had cornered them and was demanding to see their tickets. I met up with Clive outside the station and we headed home.

Sneaking a ride on the train was kind of fun and it still brings back pleasant memories. I sometimes wonder how easy it would be to get away with stuff like that now.

Maybe one weekend I'll take a train trip down to Durban and see if I can still pull it off. That would be a gas.

Ride Safe Campaign



For any soldier in any army, getting home on leave is special. For those conscripts that served in the old SADF it was just as special.

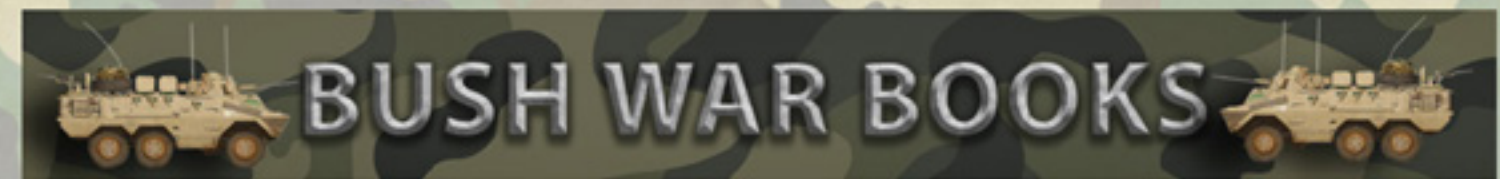
Towards the end of their basic training, troops were given leave over a weekend. It was known as a pass.

If they were not on the border or on duty, troops would normally receive a pass weekend every second week. However these could, and often were, cancelled for a variety of reasons.

The main problem facing troops was how to get home. For many the only option was to hitch hike or thumb a lift. This, however, was against SADF Standing Orders and troops found hitching could be charged.

Eventually the SADF came up with the Ride Safe Campaign. Troops on pass were issued with a Day-Glo orange sash and there were designated pick up points for those wish to give a troop a lift.

Matt Hurter, a local musician, even did a song to promote the campaign.



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.

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

SAS - Navy Seals - Spetsnaz

Most countries that have a military force will also have a special forces element.

NATO defines special operations as "military activities conducted by specially designated, organised, trained, and equipped forces, manned with selected personnel, using

unconventional tactics, techniques, and modes of employment".

Depending on the country, special forces may perform some of the following functions: airborne operations, counter-insurgency, "counter-terrorism", foreign internal defense, covert ops, direct action,

hostage rescue, high-value targets/man-hunting, intelligence operations, mobility operations, and unconventional warfare.

In Head to Head this month we will be looking at three different special forces units from three different countries, namely Britain, the United States and Russia.

The Units



Special Air Service (SAS)



United States Navy SEALs



Spetsnaz

History

Special Air Service

The SAS was founded in 1941 as a regiment and in 1950 it was reconstituted as a corps.

Presently the corps consists of 22 Special Air Service Regiment, 21 (Artists) Special Air Service Regiment (Reserve) and 23 Special Air Service Regiment (Reserve). 21 and 23 Regiments are reserve units under the operational command of 1st Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Brigade.

Originally known as L De-

tachment, Special Air Service Brigade, the unit was formed in July 1941 by David Stirling and was intended to be a commando force that operated behind enemy lines. It consisted of five officers and 60 other ranks.

Their first mission, in November 1941, was a disaster. It was a parachute drop in support of Operation Crusader. A total of 22 men, a third of the unit, were killed or captured.

Their second mission, how-

ever, was a major success. Transported by the Long Range Desert Group, it attacked three airfields in Libya, destroying 60 aircraft with the loss of 2 men and 3 Willys Jeeps. In September 1942, it was renamed 1st SAS, consisting at that time of four British squadrons, one Free French, one Greek, and the Folboat Section. The Folboat Section would later go on to become the Special Boat Service (SBS).

At the end of World War II the British Government saw no further need for the SAS and it was disbanded on 8 October 1945.

The following year the government had a rethink and decided that there was a need for a deep-penetration commando unit.

The Artists Rifles took on the mantle as 21st SAS Regiment on 1 January 1947.

In 1951 21 SAS squadron was raised to fight in the Korean War. After three months of training they were told that they

were no longer required and instead they were sent to fight in the Malayan Emergency.

Mike Calvert had already formed a new unit called the Malayan Scouts (SAS) and had formed a squadron of 100 volunteers. They became A Squadron, 21 SAS squadron became B Squadron, and 1,000 Rhodesian volunteers became C Squadron.

By this stage the British had recognised the need for a regular army SAS regiment. 22nd SAS Regiment was added to the army list in 1952 and have

been based at Hereford since 1960.

In 1959 the third regiment, 23rd SAS Regiment, was formed by renaming the Reserve Reconnaissance Unit.

Since then 22 SAS Regiment has taken part in operations around the world. This includes countries such as Borneo, Oman, Aden, Northern Ireland, Gambia, the Falklands, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and other countries.

United States Navy SEALs

The United States Navy's Sea, Air and Land Teams, better known as the Navy SEALs, are the US Navy's primary special operations force and a component of the Naval Special Warfare Command.

The Navy SEALs can trace their roots back to World War II when the US Navy recognised the need for the covert reconnaissance of landing beaches and coastal defences.

In 1942 the Amphibious Scout and Raider School was established at Fort Pierce, Florida. The Scouts and Raiders were a joint US Army, Marine and Navy unit.

In September 1942 Navy Combat Demolition Units were trained in demolitions, explosive cable cutting and commando raiding techniques at ATB Little Creek in Virginia.

Some of the earliest World War II predecessors of the SEALs were the Operational Swimmers of the Office of Strategic Services, or OSS.

On 23 November 1943, the U.S. Marine landing on Tarawa Atoll accentuated the need for hydrographic reconnaissance and underwater demolition of obstacles prior to any amphibious landing. This led to the formation of Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT).

During the Korean War UDT units worked closely with the Republic of Korea naval special forces.

In 1961 President John F. Kennedy was passionate about the need for unconventional warfare and special operations as a measure against guerrilla warfare.

In a speech to Congress he announced his intention to spend over \$100 million to strengthen U.S. special operations forces and expand American capabilities in unconventional warfare.

Kennedy did not, however, create the Navy SEALs. His announcement was only a formal acknowledgement of a process that had been under way since

Korea.

Admiral Arleigh Burke, the Chief of Naval Operations, recommended the establishment of guerrilla and counter-guerrilla units.

This was the beginning of the Navy SEALs. All SEALs came from the Navy's Underwater Demolition Teams. The first two teams were formed in January 1962 and stationed on both US coasts: Team One at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, in San Diego, California and Team TWO at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Seal Teams One and Two saw extensive combat in Vietnam. They amassed a combined kill/death ratio of 200:1.

Since Vietnam the Navy SEALs have taken part in operations in countries such as Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Philippines and the Horn of Africa.

Spetsnaz

Spetsnaz is the abbreviation for *Войска специального назначения*, tr. *Voyska spetsialnogo naznacheniya* which can be translated as Special Purpose Forces or Special Purpose Military Units. Historically they were special military units controlled by the military intelligence service GRU.

In 1950, Georgy Zhukov advocated the creation of 46 military spetsnaz companies, each consisting of 120 servicemen. This was the first use of "spetsnaz" to denote a separate military branch since World War II.

These companies were later expanded to battalions and then to brigades. However, some separate companies (orSpN) and detachments (ooSpN) existed with brigades until the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The special purpose forces of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (RF) included fourteen land brigades, two

naval brigades and a number of separate detachments and companies, operating under the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) and collectively known as Spetsnaz GRU.

These units and formations existed in the highest possible secrecy, and were disguised as Soviet paratroopers (Army spetsnaz) or naval infantrymen (Naval spetsnaz) by their uniforms and insignia.

Twenty-four years after the birth of Spetsnaz, the first counter-terrorist unit was established by the Chairman of the KGB, Yuri Andropov. From the late 1970s through the 1980s, a number of special-purpose units were created in the KGB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD).

During the 1990s, special detachments were established within the Federal Penitentiary Service (FSIN) and the Airborne Troops (VDV). Some civil agencies with non-police

functions have created special units also known as Spetsnaz, such as the Leader special centre in the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MChS).

2013 saw the creation of the Special Operations Forces of the Russian Federation encompassing all special military units in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

Spetsnaz were very active during the Soviet war in Afghanistan and the Mujahideen had great respect for them.

After the collapse of the USSR, Spetsnaz forces of the Soviet Union's newly formed republics took part in many local conflicts such as the Civil war in Tajikistan, Chechen Wars, Russo-Georgian War and the Crimea Crisis.

Spetsnaz forces also have been called upon to resolve several high-profile hostage situations such as the Moscow theatre hostage crisis and the Beslan school hostage crisis.

Organisation

22 Special Air Service Regiment

Based in Hereford in the United Kingdom, 22 SAS usually has a strength of between 400 to 600. There are four operational squadrons: A, B, D and G.

Under the command of a major, each squadron consists of roughly 65 men. Each squadron is divided into four troops and a small headquarters section. A troop will normally consist of 15 men with each man

possessing a particular skill in addition to the basic skills he has learned during his extensive training. These skills would include signals, medic, demolition, linguist, etc.

Each troop in a squadron will specialise in a different area. This is made up of boat troop, air troop, mobility troop and mountain troop.

Boat troop specialise in maritime skills that include diving



using rebreathers, using kayaks and rigid-hulled inflatable boats. They often train with the Special Boat Service.

Air troop specialise in free fall parachuting and high altitude parachute operations that include High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) and High Altitude High Opening (HAHO) techniques.

Mobility troop use vehicles and are experts in desert warfare. They are also trained to an advance level of motor mechanics and can field-repair most vehicle breakdowns.

Mountain troop are specialists in Arctic combat and survival. They are trained in the use

of skis, snowshoes and mountain climbing techniques.

The four squadrons rotate duty. One is maintained on Counter Terrorism duty in the UK, a second is on deployment, a third will be preparing for deployment while doing short term training, and the fourth will be preparing for long-term overseas training such as jungle or desert exercises.

After the massacre at the 1972 Summer Olympics, British Prime Minister Edward Heath ordered that an SAS Counter Revolutionary Wing (CRW) be established.

They are trained in Close Quarter Battle (CQB), sniper

techniques, and hostage rescue in buildings or on public transport.

Their first deployment was during the Balcombe Street Siege in December 1975. Members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) had been trapped in a flat by the Metropolitan Police. After a six day siege the PIRA unit heard on BBC Radio that the SAS were being sent in. They then surrendered.

The first documented action abroad by the CRW wing was assisting the West German counter-terrorism group GSG 9 at Mogadishu in 1977.

United States Navy SEALs

There are 10 Navy SEAL teams and a SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team (SDVT).

A SEAL team will normally consist of six platoons and each platoon can be task organised for operational purposes into four squads of eight 4-5 man fire teams/boat crews. The size of each SEAL Team with platoons and support staff is about 300 personnel.

A typical SEAL platoon will have an Officer in Charge (OIC), normally a lieutenant, a platoon chief and two squads commanded by a lieutenant (junior grade).

The remaining members of the team are operators with specialty skills in ordinance, communications, diving, medical, etc.

Platoon core skills consist of: Sniper, Breacher, Communicator, Maritime/Engineering, Close Air Support, Corpsman, Point-man/Navigator, Primary Driver/Navigator (Rural/Urban/Protective Security), Heavy Weapons Operator, Sensitive Site Exploitation, Air Operations Master, Lead Climber, Lead Diver/Navigator, Interrogator, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Technical Surveillance, and Advanced Special

Operations.

SEAL Teams 1, 3, 5 and 7 are based at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, California. SEAL Teams 2, 4, 8, and 10 are based at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Virginia.

A SEAL Delivery Vehicle unit, SDVT-1, is located in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. An SDV platoon consists of 12-15 SEALs.

SEAL Team 6 was dissolved in 1987. The Navy then established the Naval Special Warfare Development Group, also known as DEVGRU.

While DEVGRU is administratively supported by Naval Special Warfare Command, they are operationally under the command of the Joint Special Operations Command. Much about DEVGRU remains classified.



Spetsnaz

The organisation structure of Spetsnaz is far more complex than most. That is because there is not a single Spetsnaz unit.

The Russian Ground Forces have their own Spetsnaz units, as does the Russian Navy. The Russian Airborne Troops have the 45th Guards Spetsnaz Brigade.

The Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) have various Spetsnaz units as does the National Guard of Russia. Finally the Ministry of Justice also has its own independent regional Spetsnaz de-

tachments such as Saturn.

The basic Spetsnaz unit comprises a team of eight to ten soldiers commanded by an officer. Within each team there is a specialist in communications, reconnaissance, sniping and explosives, and every member of the team has been cross-trained to ensure that a mission can continue, even if a specialist is lost.

Modern Russian forces are structured in operational fronts that each contain a Spetsnaz Brigade.



Selection and Training

22 Special Air Service Regiment

The SAS never recruit directly from the general public. Selection is open to any serving member of the UK Armed Forces, but historically most of the candidates will come from airborne or commando units such as One Parachute Regiment.

There are two selection courses a year, one in summer and one in winter. They are held in Sennybridge and in the Brecon Beacons, both of which are in Wales.

A selection course will normally start with about 200 candidates and last for five weeks. They first have to do a Personal Fitness Test (PFT) and then an Annual Fitness Test (AFT).

The hill phase sees the candidates march cross country against the clock. The distance is increased each day. This culminates in what is known as the

Endurance or, as the SAS refer to it, the Fan Dance.

This is a 64 km march with full equipment that scales and descends Pen y Fan, the highest peak in south Wales.

At the end of the hill phase candidates must be able to run

6.4 km in 30 minutes and swim 3.2 km in 90 minutes or less.

Typically only 15-20% will make it through the hill phase. Most will drop out within the first few days and by the end only about 30 will remain.

Following the hill phase the



THE FAN DANCE: Pen y Fan in the Brecon Beacons is the location for the Endurance march during SAS selection.

remaining candidates move to the jungle phase that takes place in Belize, Brunei or Malaysia.

Candidates are taught navigation, patrol formations, patrol movement and jungle survival skills.

Those that pass this phase then return to Hereford to train in battle plans and foreign weapons. This is followed by a week-long escape and evasion exercise.

Candidates are formed into

patrols. Dressed in old World War II uniforms and carrying a tin filled with survival equipment they are given a map point and told they have to reach it by first light.

If they make the rendezvous point (RV) within a certain time window they may receive a little something to eat before being given the next RV. If they miss the window, they get nothing.

During the escape and evasion

phase the candidates are being chased by a 'Hunter' force that attempts to track them down and capture them.

Those that are captured or make it through the week then have to face the final selection test, arguably the hardest, resistance to interrogation that last for 36 hours. Those that pass this final phase are rewarded with a transfer to an operational squadron.

United States Navy SEALs

Before even applying to do Basics Underwater Demolition SEAL (BUD/S) training a prospective candidate must first pass a number of mental and physical requirements.

They must then pass the SEAL Physical Screening Test which involves a 457 metre swim in under 12.30 minutes, 50 push ups in two minutes, 50 sit-ups in two minutes, 10 consecutive pull-ups, and a 2.4 km run in under 10.30 minutes.

Those that make the grade

then go on the selection course. During selection candidates can be removed from the course or they can Drop on Request (DOR).

Hell Week, in the third week of the first phase of selection, consists of five and a half days of cold, wet, and very difficult operational training on less than four hours of sleep.

On average only 25% of the candidates will make it through Hell Week.

The typical Navy SEAL training cycle will consist

of eight week Naval Recruit Training, eight week Naval Special Warfare Prep School, 24 week Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Training (BUD/S), five week Parachute Jump School, and 26 week SEAL Qualification Training (SQT).

Upon graduation from SQT they receive the US Navy SEAL Trident, designating them as Navy SEALs. They are assigned to a SEAL Team or a SDV Team and begin 18 months of predeployment training.

This consists of six month Professional Development, six month Unit Level Training Detachment (ULT), and six month Squadron Integration Training (SIT).

ULT training blocks are Air Operations, Land Warfare, Maritime, Urban and Special Reconnaissance.

In total it can take over two and a half years to completely train a Navy SEAL for his first deployment.



HELL WEEK: This grueling phase of training is all about being wet, cold, hungry, and mentally and physically exhausted.

Spetsnaz

The selection and training for Spetsnaz is very demanding. Candidates must be physically fit, intelligent and politically reliable before they will even be considered.

Once they pass the basic requirements they then have to sign a loyalty oath. In this they acknowledge that the death

penalty awaits anyone who betrays the Spetsnaz.

During the selection phase candidates face obstacle courses and long gruelling marches, many of which are conducted in full chemical warfare protective clothing, including gas masks.

Compared to western standards the training is harsh and

physical abuse of candidates is not uncommon. They are often denied rations so that they have to forage for food themselves.

In addition to their basic military training, they receive specialised training in hand-to-hand combat, silent killing techniques, parachuting including HALO techniques, infiltration techniques including defeating alarm systems and locks, sabotage, demolition, foreign languages, survival, rappelling, sniping, reconnaissance, map reading, foreign weapons, foreign vehicle operation, and foreign tactics and procedures.

Those that get through specialised training then take part in a series of battlefield exercises in realistic environments such as mock Cruise missile bases, NATO airfields and communication facilities. All exercises involve the use of explosives and live rounds.



YOU CAN'T TAKE IT: An instructor goads a candidate, trying to get them to quit.

Small arms

Special Air Service

The SAS make use of and are trained to use a large variety of weapons.

This can include the HK MP5 submachine gun (entire range), M16 A2 assault rifle with 40 mm M203 grenade launcher, 7.62 mm FN SLR, M249 Minimi light machine gun, 7.62



Minimi LGM



M16 A2

mm GPMG (General Purpose Machine Gun), Accuracy International PM sniper rifle, SSG 3000 sniper rifle, Barret .50 long-range sniper rifle, Franchi



Accuracy International PM Sniper Rifle

US Navy SEALs

The SEALs use a wide variety of weapons, often dependent on mission type or, to an extent, personal preference.

Pistols used include the 9 mm SIG Sauer P226, .357 Smith and Wesson revolver, .45 HK Mk 23 Mod O Special Operations Forces Offensive Handgun designed specially for US-SOCOM, 9 mm HK P9S, and the .45 M1911A1 pistol.

The primary choice of rifle is



Remington 870

the CAR-15, often fitted with an M203 grenade launcher, the M16A2, and the veteran 7.62 mm M14 because of its larger round and impressive stopping power.

The main choice of submachine gun is the HK MP5, al-

though other HK submachine guns are also used.

The HK MP5K-PDW is designed specifically for NAVWARCOM use.

For ship-boarding, jungle and close-quarters work the Remington 870 combat shotgun is popular.

Squad support weapons include the 7.62 mm M-60.

The principal sniper weapons are the 7.62 mm Remington M40A2, the 7.62 mm M86, the M24, the 7.62 mm M21, and the .50 calibre McMillan SASR.



CAR-15

Spetsnaz

As most Spetsnaz missions take place deep behind enemy lines they tend to be lightly armed and carry only a small selection of weapons.

These could include an AK-74 or AN-94 assault rifle,



RPG-16



AN-94

a silenced 9 mm pistol, a knife and up to 10 grenades. In addition each team carries an SVD sniper rifle, RPG-16 grenade launcher, and an under-rifle grenade launcher.

Anthony Beauchamp-Proctor

Andrew (Anthony) Frederick Weatherby Beauchamp-Proctor, VC, DSO, MC and bar, DFC (4 September 1894 - 21 June 1921) was a South African recipient of the Victoria Cross. He was South Africa's leading ace of World War I, credited with 54 aerial victories.

Beauchamp-Proctor was born on 4 September 1894 in Mossel Bay, Cape Province, the second son of a school teacher. He was attending the University of Cape Town studying engineering when the European war broke out. He took leave from his studies to join the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles (The Dukes). He served as a signalman in the German South-West Africa campaign.

In August 1915 he was demobilised with an honorable discharge. He promptly went to work with the South African Field Telegraph and re-enrolled in university. He managed to complete his third year of college before reenlisting, this time into the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), in March 1917.

He was accepted as an Air Mechanic Third Class. From there he passed on to pilot training at the School of Military Aeronautics at Oxford in England, where he was also commissioned.

Learning to fly presented a slight problem for Beauchamp-Proctor - he stood only five feet two inches tall. This meant he was unable to see out of the cockpit and his feet couldn't reach the rudder bars.

His aircraft seating was altered to accommodate him; his seat was raised so he had a bet-

ter view from the cockpit and so he could reach controls. Blocks of wood were also fastened on his rudder bar so he could reach it.

On 10 June 1917, he soloed, when he had just over five hours flying time. He crashed upon landing, wiping out the landing gear. Nevertheless, he continued to fly solo. He was passed on to a bomber squadron, Number 84, with a little under ten hours flying experience.

When he joined 84 Squadron in July 1917, it was reforming as a fighter squadron.

France 1917-18

On 23 September 1917, the unit went to France flying SE5s. Under the command of Major William Sholto Douglas the unit became one of the most effective scout squadrons in the RFC/RAF during 1918.

The squadron would be credited with a victory total of 323, and would produce 25 aces. However, Beauchamp-Proctor would be pre-eminent, with almost triple the number of successes of the second leading ace. He was not par-

ticularly esteemed as a flier, but was a deadly shot.

Beauchamp-Proctor's piloting skills can be judged by the fact he had three landing accidents before he ever shot down an enemy plane.

Beauchamp-Proctor continued to fly the SE5 with modifications to the aircraft's seat and controls, something his Philadelphia-born American squadron mate, Joseph "Child Yank" Boudwin, who stood only two inches taller, also had to use.

The alterations to relatively primitive controls could have



KNIGHTS OF THE AIR: Beauchamp-Proctor flew an SE5 during his career with the RFC/RAF. Pictured above is an SE5a, an upgrade of the standard SE5.

contributed to Beauchamp-Proctor's poor airmanship.

His initial confirmed victory did not come until the turn of the year. On 3 January 1918, he sent a German two seater 'down out of control'. He then claimed victories four more times in February, becoming an ace on its final day. Only one of his first five victories resulted in the destruction of an enemy; the other four were planes sent down as 'out of control'.

March brought him four more victories; three of them were scored within five minutes on the 17th. With five kills to his name Beauchamp-Proctor was now regarded as an 'ace'.

The term 'ace' - or, more precisely 'fighter ace' - was first used during World War I to describe a pilot who had brought down at least five enemy aircraft. The first-ever reference in print to an air 'ace' appeared in an article in The Times of 14 September 1917, which described Raoul Lafayette as 'the

"ace" of the American Lafayette Flying Squadron." The German equivalent was *Oberkanone*, which means 'top gun'.

Although the definition varied from country to country and was never officially approved, it was used during both World Wars, with aces universally hailed as heroes.

In April Beauchamp-Proctor claimed only one kill. Among his 11 victories for the month of May were five on 19 May. On that morning, he knocked an enemy observation plane out of the battle; fifteen minutes later, he destroyed an Albatross D.V scout. That evening, at about 6:35 PM, he downed three more Albatros D.Vs.

By the 31st, his roll had climbed to 21 victims -16 fighters and five observation aircraft.

The next day marked a change of focus for him; he shot down an observation balloon. For the remainder of his career, he would choose to blind the enemy, choosing to concentrate

on shooting down kite balloons and observation aircraft.

Also notable is the drop in his "out of control" victories; from here on out, the record shows destruction after destruction of the enemy.

His June string would only run to the 13th, but in that time, he would destroy four balloons, an observation two-seater and a fighter. Only one fighter went down out of control.

On the 22nd, he was awarded the Military Cross. July would pass without incident. On August 3, he was granted one of the first ever Distinguished Flying Crosses.

The break in his victory string lasted almost a month, as he went on home leave and helped a recruitment drive for the RAF.

On 8 August, he returned and resumed with tally number 29, another balloon. On August 9 Beauchamp-Proctor was leading No. 84 Squadron on a patrol over their base at Bertangles, with Boudwin and six-foot-four tall Hugh Saunders as wingmen, and got involved in a heated engagement at 2:00 pm, that involved the threesome in combat against Fokker D.VII fighters of JG I, led that day by the future Nazi Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring.

He would claim an additional 14 victories, and end the month with his claims list extended to 43.

One memorable day was the 22nd; he attacked a line of six enemy balloon over the British 3rd Corps front. He set the first one afire with his machine guns and forced the other five to the ground, the observers taking to their parachutes.

His 15 'kills' for August would include five balloons, all destroyed, and two more two-seater planes. He was now up to 43 victories. September claims would be all balloons - four of them.

In the first few days of October, he would destroy three more balloons and three Fokker D.VII fighters, one of which burned. Another D.VII spun down out of control.

On 8 October he was hit by ground fire and wounded in the arm, ending his front line service.

Up until the end of May, he destroyed six enemy planes single-handed, and shared the destruction of two others. He drove ten down out of control, and shared in another 'out of control' victory. Two of his victims were captured.

Certainly a creditable record, and like many other aces, with no conquests over balloons. Balloons, with all the anti-aircraft artillery guarding them, and patrolling fighter airplanes ready to intercede for them, were very dangerous targets. Commonly they were hunted by co-ordinated packs of attacking fighters.

Beauchamp-Proctor's victory list ran to a total of 54; two (and one shared) captured enemy aircraft, 13 (and three shared) balloons destroyed, 15 (and one shared) aircraft destroyed, and 15 (and one shared) aircraft 'out of control'.

His 16 balloons downed made him the leading British Empire balloon buster.

On 2 November, he had been awarded a Distinguished Service Order, crowned by the Vic-

toria Cross later in the month, on the 30th.

Post war

He was discharged from hospital in March 1919 and embarked on a four month long lecture tour of the USA, before returning to England and qualifying as a seaplane pilot with a permanent commission as a Flight Lieutenant in the RAF.

After his VC investiture at Buckingham Palace in November 1919 he was awarded a year's leave, and this enabled him finish his BSc degree in Engineering.

Death

He was killed on the 21 June 1921 in a training accident flying a Sopwith Snipe, in preparation for an air show at the RAF Hendon.

His aircraft went into a vicious spin after performing a slow loop, and he was killed in the ensuing crash. At least one observer remarked that the loss of control and subsequent crash of the aircraft could have been linked to Proctor's diminutive size.

He was originally buried at Upavon, Wiltshire, but in August 1921 his body was returned to South Africa where he was given a state funeral.

There still exists confusion over Beauchamp-Proctor's given name. For decades he was listed as "Anthony" but more recent scholarship indicates "Andrew", which apparently is the name on his tombstone.

**Citations
Military Cross**

"For conspicuous gallantry

and devotion to duty. While on offensive patrol he observed an enemy two-seater plane attempting to cross our lines. He engaged it and opened fire, with the result that it fell over on its side and crashed to earth.

On a later occasion, when on patrol, he observed three enemy scouts attacking one of our bombing machines.

He attacked one of these, and after firing 100 rounds in it, it fell over on its back and was seen to descend in that position from 5,000 feet. He then attacked another group of hostile scouts, one of which he shot down completely out of control, and another crumpled up and crashed to earth.

In addition to these, he has destroyed another hostile machine, and shot down three completely out of control. He has at all times displayed the utmost dash and initiative, and is a patrol leader of great merit and resource."

MC citation,
Supplement to the
London Gazette,
22 June 1918

Distinguished Flying Cross

"Lt. (T./Capt.) Andrew Weatherby Beauchamp-Proctor, M.C. A brilliant and fearless leader of our offensive patrols. His formation has destroyed thirteen enemy machines and brought down thirteen more out of control in a period of a few months.

On a recent morning his patrol of five aeroplanes attacked an enemy formation of thirty machines and was successful in destroying two of them. In the evening he again attacked



The final resting place of Captain Beauchamp-Proctor. He was one of only 19 pilots that were awarded the Victoria Cross during World War I.

Only three people have ever been awarded two Victoria Crosses. The first was Captain Arthur Martin-Leake of the Royal Army Medical Corps. He won his first VC in 1901 during the Anglo-Boer and his second during World War I.

The second double VC winner was Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse also of the Royal Army Medical Corps, earning both during World War I. His bar was awarded post-humously.

The third was New Zealander Captain Charles Upham who earned both awards during World War II.

an enemy formation with great dash, destroying one machine and forcing two others to collide, resulting in their destruction."

DFC citation,
Supplement to the

London Gazette,
3 August 1918

Distinguished Service Order

"A fighting pilot of great skill, and a splendid leader. He rendered brilliant service on the 22nd August, when his Flight was detailed to neutralise hostile balloons. Having shot down one balloon in flames, he attacked the occupants of five others in succession with machine-gun fire, compelling the occupants in each case to take to parachutes.

He then drove down another balloon to within fifty feet of the ground, when it burst into flames. In all he has accounted for thirty-three enemy machines and seven balloons."

DSO citation,
Supplement to the
London Gazette,
2 November 1918

Victoria Cross

"Between August 8, 1918, and October 8, 1918, this officer proved himself victor in twenty-six decisive combats, destroying twelve enemy kite balloons, ten enemy aircraft, and driving down four other enemy aircraft completely out of control.

Between October 1, 1918, and October 5, 1918, he destroyed two enemy scouts, burnt three enemy kite balloons, and drove down one enemy scout completely out of control. On October 1, 1918, in a general engagement with about twenty-eight machines, he crashed one Fokker biplane near Fontaine and a second near Ramicourt; on October 2 he burnt a hostile balloon near Selvjgny; on Oc-

tober 3 he drove down, completely out of control, an enemy scout near Mont d'Origny, and burnt a hostile balloon; on October 5, the third hostile balloon near Bohain.

On October 8, 1918, while flying home at a low altitude, after destroying an enemy two-seater near Maretz, he was painfully wounded in the arm by machine-gun fire, but, continuing, he landed safely at his aerodrome, and after making his report was admitted to hospital.

In all he has proved himself conqueror over fifty-four foes, destroying twenty-two enemy machines, sixteen enemy kite balloons, and driving down sixteen enemy aircraft completely out of control.

Captain Beauchamp-Proctor's work in attacking enemy troops on the ground and in reconnaissance during the withdrawal following on the Battle of St. Quentin from March 21, 1918, and during the victorious advance of our Armies commencing on August 8, has been almost unsurpassed in its Brilliancy, and, as such has made an impression on those serving in his squadron and those around him that will not be easily forgotten.

Capt. Beauchamp-Proctor was awarded Military Cross on 22 June 1918; D.F. Cross on 2 July 1918; Bar to M.C. on 16 September 1918; and Distinguished Service Order on 2 November 1918."

VC citation,
Supplement to the
London Gazette,
30 November 1918

Kamikaze

Each month "Forged in Battle" looks at weapons, equipment or units that have been tried and tested on the battlefield. This month we look at the Japanese Kamikaze pilots.

Every soldier that has taken part in combat knows that there is a chance that they may be killed or wounded. It is a risk that goes along with the job.

Yet how would you feel about combat if you knew beyond any shadow of a doubt that you were going to get killed? Would you have second thoughts?

Not only did the men of the *Tokubetsu Kōgekitai* not have second thoughts, they actually looked forward to their deaths.

After the costly defeats at Leyte Gulf and Iwo Jima in 1945 the Japanese were a beaten nation. But out of the desperate defence of their homeland were born the *Kamikaze* pilots - volunteers for certain death.

Officially titled *Tokubetsu Kōgekitai* (Special Attack Unit), they were more commonly known as *Kamikaze* (Divine Wind).

It was during the Battle of Leyte Gulf that the legend of the *Kamikaze* was born. Commander of the Japanese air forces in the Philippines, Vice-Admiral Takijiro Onishi, instructed his pilots to crash their planes into the flight decks of American aircraft carriers in an effort to damage them and prevent them from launching their planes.

The pilots, in Zero fighters laden with bombs, responded with great enthusiasm, crashing their fighters on the carriers and causing hundreds of casualties.

The attack failed and the Americans dealt a decisive blow to what remained of the Japanese Navy.

While the Americans had taken Leyte Gulf and Iwo Jima the greatest battle of the Pacific War awaited them - the Battle for Okinawa.

Okinawa is the largest of the Ryukyu Islands and is basically the last stop before the Japanese mainland. It was considered by both the Japanese and Americans to be of the utmost importance strategically.

From Okinawa to Tokyo is a distance of 1,554 kilometres, easily within the range of American B-29 Superfortress bombers. The Japanese had to make a stand at Okinawa or lose the war. It's garrison of 70,000 troops were prepared to fight to the death to defend it.

Duty above all

One of the most important things in Japanese culture is the concept of *giri* (duty). There is a strong sense of duty to the Emperor, the country, and to one's family - in that order.

One of the sayings regarding

duty is "*Gimu wa yama yori omoku, shi wa hane yori mo karui*" (Duty is heavier than a mountain, while death is lighter than a feather).

Moreover the tradition of death instead of defeat, capture and perceived shame was deeply entrenched in Japanese military culture. It was one of the primary traditions of the samurai, who lived by the code of *Bushido* (The Way of the Warrior). There was no greater honour than to die in battle.

The defence of Okinawa

Vice-Admiral Onishi was faced with the task of depriving the Americans the use of Okinawa's airfields which had the potential to handle 5,000 planes.

He did not have enough planes to carry out conventional attacks and he decided to stake everything on suicide tactics.

He gathered his remaining pilots together and told them that the fate of Japan lay in their hands. He invited them to volunteer for the *Kamikaze okubetsu Kōgekitai* (Kamikaze Special Attack Squad) and offered them a glorious death for the Emperor and the homeland.

Pilots would attempt to crash their aircraft into enemy ships



THE FINAL PHOTO: A group of young Kamikaze pilots, carrying samurai swords, pose for a final photograph before flying their one-way mission.

in what was called a *taiatari* (body attack) in planes laden with some combination of explosives, bombs, torpedoes and full fuel tanks. Every single pilot volunteered.

The word *Kamikaze* can be translated as 'Divine Wind'. It comes from the word *kami* which means 'god', 'spirit', or 'divine', and *kaze* which means 'wind'.

Legend has it that in August 1281 Mogul conqueror Kublai Khan sent a huge fleet to invade Japan. While waiting to land their invasion force the Japanese Sun Goddess sent a typhoon that destroyed the Mogul fleet and saved Japan. This typhoon was given the name *Kamikaze*.

Now Onishi's young pilots were about to become the new *Kamikaze*, a Divine Wind that would once again destroy the hateful invaders and save the homeland.

On the morning of 6 April 1945 Onishi was about to launch his secret weapon.

Operation Kikusui

It was called Operation Kikusui (Floating Chrysanthemum), named after the symbol of spiritual purity.

The Kikusui pilots rose early on the morning of 6 April 1945 and after a light breakfast they assembled in the crew-hut.

In a solemn ceremony they were served *sake* (rice wine) or water, known as *mizu no sakazuki*, by veteran pilots. Each man was given a black ceremonial belt which was inscribed with the code of *Bushido*. He put the belt on and then drank a toast to Emperor Hitohito, to the everlasting survival of Nippon, and to a glorious death.

They then sang the *Kamikaze Song of the Warrior*:

In serving on the seas, be a corpse saturated with water,

In serving on land be a corpse covered with weeds,

In serving in the sky, be a corpse that challenges the clouds.

Let us all die close by the side of our Sovereign.

After the ceremony the pilots returned to their barracks to await their orders and write letters to their families.

One of the pilots, Reserve Ensign Susumu Kaijitsu wrote:

"My activities are quite ordinary. My greatest concern this morning is not about death, but rather of how I can be sure to sink an enemy carrier. Please watch for the results of my meagre efforts. If they prove good, think kindly of me and consider my good fortune. Most of all, do not weep for me."

They also composed and read a death poem, a tradition stemming from the samurai, who did it before committing *seppuku* (ritual suicide by disembowelment).

Kamikaze would wear their *senninbari*, a "belt of a thousand stitches" given to them by their mothers.

Presently a whistle blew - the signal to prepare for take-off. They left their sealed letters on their beds and hurried out to the parade ground.

After a roll call they saluted their superiors and their comrades and climbed into the trucks that would take them



KIKUSUI FLAG: The flag showed a half-chrysanthemum floating on water. It was the symbol of spiritual purity and represented the air-sea nature of Operation Kikusui.

across the field to their aircraft.

It was an odd assortment of aircraft that stood on the field: single-engined Zeke and Zero fighters with 272 kg bombs strapped under them; Baku mass-produced planes of crude and minimal construction without any armour, but with 250 kg of TNT encased in the nose, set to explode on impact; and giant conventional bombers which had been modified to carry the *Ohka* (Cherry Blossom).

The Yokosuka MXY-7 Ohka was a rocket-powered aircraft made of wood. It had a 1,200 kg bomb built into the fuselage. It would be flown to the target under a bomber and then released close to the target. A pilot would then guide it onto the target.

Before climbing into the cockpit, pilots would normally tie a *hachimaki* around their helmet. The *hachimaki* was a head scarf worn as a symbol of perseverance, effort, and courage.

They now waited for the final order to take off on their one-way mission.

Hissatsu!

A total of 355 planes, divided up into two waves, took off from Kanoya and Skikoku on 6 April 1945.

Their target was the Allied Armada of 1,500 vessels strung out around the beachheads of Okinawa.

There were 195 navy planes in the first wave and it included 80 *Kamikazes* of various types, nine Type One bombers carrying Ohkas, and 107 escort fighters. The army's *Tokubetsu* of 160 assorted *Kamikaze* took off a little later, making up the



DEATH DIVE: A Japanese kamikaze pilot in a damaged single-engine bomber, moments before striking the U.S. Aircraft Carrier USS Essex, off the Philippine Islands, on 25 November 1944.

second wave.

The *Kamikaze* pilot's manual told pilots never to close their eyes. This was because if a pilot closed his eyes he would lower the chances of hitting his target. In the final moments before the crash, the pilot was to yell *His-satsu* (Clean Kill) at the top of his lungs.

The manual also explained how a pilot may turn back if the pilot could not locate a target and that "[a pilot] should not waste [his] life lightly." One pilot who continually came back to base was shot after his ninth return.

All hell was let loose as plane after plane hit the sea and exploded. It took some time for the Allies to realise that the Japanese pilots were deliberately trying to crash their planes into vessels.

Destroyers and other small ships veered wildly to dodge the *Kamikazes*, listing to 45 degrees in abrupt turns while their gunners desperately tried

to fight off the attackers.

American and British fighters were being launched from the decks of the aircraft carriers, climbing to take on the escorting Mitsubishi Zeros flown by veteran Japanese pilots.

For the Allies it was like watching a mysterious force at work, not human but unbelievably brave and stupid.

Vice-Admiral Charles R. Brown of the United States Navy said, "There was a hypnotic fascination to the sight so alien to our Western philosophy. We watched each plunging kamikaze with the detached horror of one witnessing a terrible spectacle rather than as the intended victim. We forgot self for the moment as we groped hopelessly for the thought of that other man up there."

One hundred and thirty five *Kamaikaze* sacrificed themselves or were shot down in that first attack. During the first day Operation Kikusui had cost the Japanese 248 planes and pilots.



FLYING BOMB: Japanese Yokosuka MXY-7 Ohka ("cherry blossom"), a specially built rocket-powered kamikaze aircraft used towards the end of the war. The U.S. called them Baka Bombs ("idiot bombs").

The incredible battle raged for eighty-two days and nights. On some days the Japanese could only muster a few planes, but on others mounting great and costly attacks.

The Verdict

By 21 June 1945 the Americans had lost 40 ships sunk and

368 damaged with thousands of lives lost. They had also lost 763 aircraft in battle against the *Kamikaze* and their escorts.

It had cost the Japanese just over 7,800 aircraft and pilots before the last *Kamikaze* had died in a ball of fire.

It is estimated that only about 19% of *Kamikaze* pilots man-

aged to hit a ship. The other 81% either missed their target or were shot down.

A later analysis by the US Strategic Bombing Survey concluded that if the *Kamikaze* attacks had been introduced earlier in the war, and if they had been sustained in greater power and concentration, they could well have caused the Allies to withdraw or to revise their strategic plans.

But whatever we may think about the *Kamikaze*, whatever the strategists, politicians and historians of the future may postulate, there is one thing that cannot be denied - and that was the sublime spirit of the *Kamikaze* corps, whose pilots brought to the world a forgotten message of human courage.

Were they brave, patriotic, misguided, or mad? Everyone will have their own thoughts on the matter. Yet no matter what your personal opinion, one thing is for sure. They were a corps forged in battle.



The Battle of Britain

In May 1940 Nazi Germany launched a massive blitzkrieg against Western Europe. They overran Belgium, the Netherlands and France in only a matter of weeks. Britain stood alone and with the Germans preparing for an invasion, the Battle of Britain was about to start.

On 10 May 1940, after the Phoney War, the Battle of France began in earnest.

In a matter of weeks Belgium and the Netherlands has been overrun and France was set to fall as well.

The remnants of the British and French armies were trapped on the beaches at Dunkirk.

The Germans halted their advance on Dunkirk in what became known as the "Halt Order". Contrary to popular belief, it was not Adolf Hitler that gave the order.

Generalfeldmarschall (Field Marshals) Gerd von Rundstedt and Günther von Kluge suggested that the German forces around the Dunkirk pocket should cease their advance on the port and consolidate to avoid an Allied breakout. The order was sanctioned by Hitler on 24 May.

It gave the Allies time to evacuate more than 330,000 Allied troops from Dunkirk between 26 May and 4 June 1940.

On 4 June 1940 British Prime Minister Winston Churchill made one of his famous speeches.

"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields, and in the streets. We

shall never surrender."

On 18 June 1940 Hitler told Herman Goering, "The war is finished. I'll come to an understanding with England."

On the same day Winston Churchill made a broadcast to the British people. "What General Weygand called the Battle of France is over. The Battle of Britain is about to begin."

Hitler hoped that the British government would seek a peace agreement. If, however, all other options failed he considered an invasion as a last resort.

It was given the code name *Unternehmen Seelöwe* (Operation Sea Lion) and was planned for September 1940.

As a precondition for an invasion Hitler specified that he wanted both air and naval superiority. *Luftwaffe* (Air Force) commander Herman Goering assured Hitler that he would easily sweep the Royal Air Force (RAF) from the skies in just a few days.

Earlier, on 16 May 1940, Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding, Commander-in-Chief of the RAF Fighter Command, had sent a historic and vital letter to the Air Council.

The Air Council wanted Dowding to commit most of his fighter squadrons to the Battle of France. He was adamant that

the majority of the squadrons should be held back to defend Britain.

Part of his letter stated, "It should be made clear to the Allied Commanders on the Continent that not a single aeroplane from Fighter Command beyond the limit will be sent across the Channel, no matter how desperate the situation may become."

On 10 July 1940 the Germans launched a surprise air raid against a British shipping convoy in the English Channel. Many consider this strike to be Phase One of the Battle of Britain.

On 19 July 1940 Herman Goering was promoted to *Reichsmarschall* of Germany. On the same day Hitler addressed the *Reichstag*.

"I feel it to be my duty before my own conscience to appeal once more to reason and common sense in Great Britain. I consider myself in a position to make this appeal since I am not a vanquished foe begging favours, but the victor, speaking in the name of reason. I can see no reason why this war must go on."

Lord Halifax rejected Hitler's peace terms on 22 July 1940. French foreign minister Paul Baudouin said, "If the Germans do not master England this au-



THE PROTAGONISTS: Four of the main aircraft that took part in the Battle of Britain. From top - British Spitfire, German Messerschmitt Bf 109, British Hawker Hurricane, German Heinkel he 111.

turn, they will have lost the war."

On 31 July 1940 Hitler said, "The air war will start now and will determine our ultimate relative strength."

The following day Hitler's Directive 17 for the combat of air and sea warfare against England was issued.

Between 8 and 23 August 1940 Phase Two of the Battle of Britain takes place. British radar stations and RAF airfields come under attack.

While the Luftwaffe enjoyed an edge in total aircraft during the early stages of the battle, the RAF had a secret weapon in the form of Radio Direction Finding, better known as radar.

Shortly after the technology was developed in the 1930s, the British built a ring of radar stations along their coastline. These "Chain Home" stations were still primitive - a civilian Observer Corps was required to spot low-flying aircraft - but they nevertheless became a crucial part of Britain's strategy.

By pinging approaching Luftwaffe raiders with radio waves, the RAF could pin down their location and scramble fighters to intercept them, thereby robbing the Germans of the element of surprise.

Nazi leaders never appreciated the importance of British radar, and their failure to degrade it allowed the RAF to consistently remain a step ahead of the Luftwaffe.

Adlertag (Eagle Day), on 13 August 1940, was the first day of *Unternehmen Adlerangriff* (Operation Eagle Attack). The aim of the operation was the destruction of RAF Fighter Command and give the Germans air superiority.

The German attacks on 13 August inflicted significant damage and casualties on the ground, but, marred by poor intelligence and communication, they did not make a significant impression on Fighter Command's ability to defend British air space.

Goering had promised Hitler that *Adlertag* and *Adlerangriff* would achieve the desired results within days, or at worst

weeks. The Germans total strength exceeded 2,520 serviceable planes. RAF Fighter Command could only must 749 fighters.

The RAF squadrons included many foreign pilots. Of the more than 2,900 RAF pilots who served in the Battle of Britain, only around 2,350 were British. The rest were natives of Commonwealth territories such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, as well as expatriates from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium and other countries under Nazi occupation. The Eagle Squadrons were three fighter squadrons of the Royal Air Force, formed with volunteer pilots from the United States.

The Polish No. 303 fighter squadron downed 126 German planes during the battle - more than any Allied unit - and one of the RAF's top scoring aces was Josef Frantisek, a Czech aviator who single-handedly claimed 17 aerial victories.

Adolph Gysbert Malan, better known as Sailor Malan, was a South African fighter pilot who led No. 74 Squadron based at RAF Biggin Hill. Under his leadership No. 74 Squadron became one of the RAF's most accomplished squadrons. Malan scored 27 kills, seven shared destroyed, three probably destroyed and 16 damaged. Malan developed a simple set of rules for fighter pilots (see insert).

On 15 August 1940 Goering called off attacks on radar sites in view of the fact that not one of those attacked had been put out of action.

Phase Three of the Battle of Britain took place between 24

Sailor Malan developed a set of simple rules for fighter pilots, to be disseminated throughout RAF Fighter Command, which eventually could be found tacked to the wall of most airbases:

TEN OF MY RULES FOR AIR FIGHTING

- Wait until you see the whites of his eyes. Fire short bursts of one to two seconds only when your sights are definitely "ON".
- Whilst shooting think of nothing else, brace the whole of your body: have both hands on the stick: concentrate on your ring sight.
- Always keep a sharp look-out. "Keep your finger out".
- Height gives you the initiative.
- Always turn and face the attack.
- Make your decisions promptly. It is better to act quickly even though your tactics are not the best.
- Never fly straight and level for more than 30 seconds in the combat area.
- When diving to attack always leave a proportion of your formation above to act as a top guard.
- INITIATIVE, AGGRESSION, AIR DISCIPLINE, and TEAMWORK are words that MEAN something in Air Fighting.
- Go in quickly – Punch hard – Get out!

August and 6 September 1940.

As well as attacking radar stations and RAF airfields, the Luftwaffe had been bombing British ports and their defences as part of Operation Sea Lion.

On 24 August 1940 a bomber dropped bombs, believed to be accidentally, on central London instead of the docks. Nine people were killed.

Winston Churchill was outraged and ordered an immediate retaliation. On 25-26 August a force of over 70 bombers from RAF Bomber Command set off for Berlin, which was just within range. Their targets were armament factories in the north of the city and Tempelhof Airport.

Due to ferocious German anti-aircraft fire the bombers had to fly too high and the bombs consequently landed on fields, woods and some residential areas. Damage was slight and no-one was killed.

It was, however, a huge embarrassment to Goering. Earlier, in a speech to the Luftwaffe, he had stated, "No enemy bomber can reach the Ruhr. If one reaches the Ruhr, my name is not Goering. You may call me Meyer."

Hitler was not just embarrassed, he was furious. In a speech at the Sportpalast in Berlin on 4 September, he announced, "If the British Air Force drops two, three or four thousand kilos of bombs, then we will drop 150,000, 180,000, 230,000, 300,000 or 400,000 kilos, or more, in one night. If they declare that they will attack our cities on a large scale, we will erase theirs!"

Ignoring the progress the Luftwaffe was making in attacking RAF air bases, he de-

manded they shift their focus toward "erasing" British cities from the map.

The bombing campaign now known as the Blitz began on 7 September 1940 with a raid on London, and dozens more attacks followed over the next several weeks. Phase four of the battle, the Blitz, begins.

While the bombings took a sobering toll on British civilians, they also temporarily relieved pressure on the RAF, allowing it to repair its crippled airfields and refresh its pilots. The respite proved critical.

On 14 September 1940 Hitler postponed Operation Sea Lion for three days. The Luftwaffe launched a massive air attack on 15 September in an effort to score a knockout blow against the RAF. The Luftwaffe suffered their heaviest losses of the battle. First reports indicated that 175 German planes had been shot down. The day has now become celebrated as Battle of Britain Day.

On 17 September 1940 Operation Sea Lion was postponed indefinitely. From 1 to 31 October 1940 the final phase of the Battle of Britain takes place. The Germans carry out high altitude bombing by day and night. On 12 October Operation Sea Lion is called off until the following Spring.

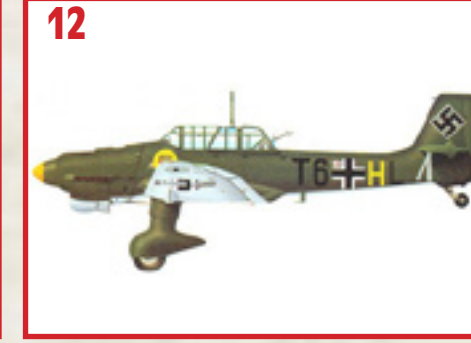
King George VI appoints Air Chief Marshal Dowding a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Bath on 30 September 1940.

From 31 October 1940 night attacks on cities continued until May 1941. The daylight attacks did not. The Battle of Britain was over.

Aircraft Identification

This month we're looking at aircraft that all flew during World War II. Can you name them? We can tell you that they cover American, British, German, Italian, Japanese and Russian aircraft.

Answers on page 47.



IL★2 STURMOVIK

BATTLE OF STALINGRAD

While I enjoy flight simulators, they can get a bit boring. You get in your aircraft and, if everything goes to plan, you fly from point A to point B.

That's why I really enjoy a good combat flight simulator, and IL-2 Sturmovik has always been one of those titles that has set the bench mark.

I first played IL-2 Sturmovik back in 2001 and it was a decent game back then.

Things have changed over the past 16 years however, and the latest versions of the game are incredible.

IL-2 Sturmovik: Battle of Stalingrad was released in 2014 and Battle of Moscow was released in 2016. A new game, Battle of Kuban is due for release any time soon.

In this review we'll be taking a look at IL-2 Sturmovik: Battle of Stalingrad.

As stated earlier, it's a combat flight simulator that covers the Battle of Stalingrad from Operation Uranus on 19 November 1942 and continues to the complete liberation of the city on 2 February 1943.

You get to fly as either the Soviet Air Force or the Luftwaffe and there are eight planes that you can fly. The German planes are the Bf 109 F-4, Bf 109 G-2,

Ju 87 D-3 (Stuka), and the He 111 H-6. The Russian planes are the LaGG-3 Series 29, Yak-1 Series 69, IL-2 AM-38 (model 1942), and the Pe-2 Series 87.

And the aircraft are superb in both their look and feel. Realistic sounds and physics, detailed aircraft systems modeling, advanced aerodynamics and state-of-the-art flight modeling gives you a real sensation of flight.

The detailed damage model not only changes the visual look of an aircraft, but also its handling, making an aerial dogfight interesting and unpredictable.

The developers of the game went to a lot of trouble to get everything as accurate as possible.

The action takes place on a 358 x 230 km map - The largest and most detailed recreation of the Battle of Stalingrad theatre ever modeled in a flight simulation with unique structures, buildings and landscapes.

There are various modes available. The single player campaign tells the story of recreated battles that are historically accurate. You will be there from the start of the battle in November 1942 and, if you survive, will be there until the end in February 1943.

The Quick Mission Builder allows you to set up your own

Ready to defend the Motherland, Matt O'Brien climbs into the cockpit to face the might of the Luftwaffe.

missions. It's easy and with a few quick clicks of the mouse button you can set up a mission. You could, for example, take off from a certain airfield, fly to a point on the map, bomb an enemy aerodrome and then return to your base.

Scenarios are single missions included in the game or created by players in the Mission Editor.

Online Multi-Player mode lets you fly with others. There can be up to 100 aircraft in the sky. Not only can you be a pilot, you can also crew a bomber as a gunner.

The Mission Editor tool makes possible to create your own scenarios of any complexity for single-player and multi-player alike.

When leaving on a mission you get the opportunity to set up your aircraft. How much fuel do you need? What type of ammunition, based on target type or tactics, will you select?

The realistic graphics and unique visual effects are stunning: clouds, lightning, tracers, explosions and huge smoke plumes - all of them fully realized to recreate the aerial combat scenery of war time Stalingrad.

The environment also plays a big role. There is a dynamic



day and night cycle, various seasons, and a wide range of weather types that will influence aircraft behaviour and aerial engagements.

The AI (artificial intelligence) is also well done. There is a big difference between taking on an enemy pilot that has only a few hours combat experience to taking on an ace.

On the subject of AI, you can use your radio to issue orders to AI planes under your control.

In missions you can choose whether you want to be a fighter pilot taking on other fighters in dogfights or go after bomber formations. Or maybe you want to fly an attack plane such as the Stuka or the IL-2 AM-38. Why not fly a bomber such as the He 111 H-6 or Russian Pe-2.

You can take on ground targets such as tanks, trucks, AAA batteries, artillery units or even armoured trains.

Talking about tanks, if you get tired of flying you can try your hand at some armoured

warfare. Besides the eight aircraft available there are also two tanks to use. The Russian T-34-76 and the German Pz III Ausf L are both available.

The tanks are just as highly detailed as the aircraft and you can get involved in some classic tank battles.

When starting off you can set the level of difficulty. It is advisable to use the Quick Mission Builder to set up a few simple missions. This will allow you to get to grips with flying the plane and give you a feel for the characteristics of the craft you're flying.

Knowing what you plane can and cannot do is important. The Yak-1, for example is highly manoeuvrable. Yet the Bf 109 G-2 is faster, has a quicker rate of climb, and a ceiling level 2,000 m higher than the Yak.

Once you get the hang of it, start the single player campaign and fly a few scenarios before you go online.

Going up against other play-

ers online is fun, but it can be a steep learning curve.

If you enjoy flight simulators then you won't go wrong with this one.



Publisher - 1C Company

Genre - Combat Flight Sim

Platform - PC

Score - 8.5/10

Price - R679

The Great Escape

Directed by John Sturges, *The Great Escape* is a 1963 film based on a escape of British Commonwealth prisoners of war from a German POW camp during World War II.

The film is based on Paul Brickhill's 1950 book of the same name, a non-fiction first-hand account of the mass escape from Stalag Luft III in Sagan (now Żagań, Poland), in the province of Lower Silesia, Nazi Germany.

In 1943 the Germans are perturbed about the number of escaping Allied POWs. They have had to expend large resources on recapturing them.

Allied flyers fall under the Luftwaffe and they decided to built a new, high-security prison camp named Stalag Luft III to house the serial offenders.

As the camp commandant, Luftwaffe Colonel von Luger puts it, "We have decided to put all our rotten eggs in one basket."

The prisoners have an escape committee and most of them have ended up in the new camp. RAF Squadron Leader Roger Bartlett is brought to the camp under the guard of the Gestapo and SS. Bartlett is the head of the escape committee and is known as Big X. He immediately begins to plan an escape from the camp.

His plan is to dig not one, but three escape tunnels nicknamed Tom, Dick and Harry. He aims

to have 200 POWs escape at the same time.

The POWs are organised into teams. Flight Lieutenant Robert Hendley is "the scrounger". His job is to get hold of needed materials from a camera to clothes and identity cards.

Australian Flying Officer Louis Sedgwick, "the manufacturer". He makes tools from picks for digging to a pump to provide air to the tunnels.

Flight Lieutenants Danny Valinski and William "Willie" Dickes are "the tunnel kings" in charge of the digging.

Flight Lieutenant Colin Blythe is the "forger" responsible for identity documents, railway tickets and maps.

The Great Escape is a film that has stood the test of time. Most of the characters in the movie are based on real people or a composite of a few people.

Roger Bartlett, for example, is based on Squadron Leader Roger Bushell, a South African who planned the great escape.

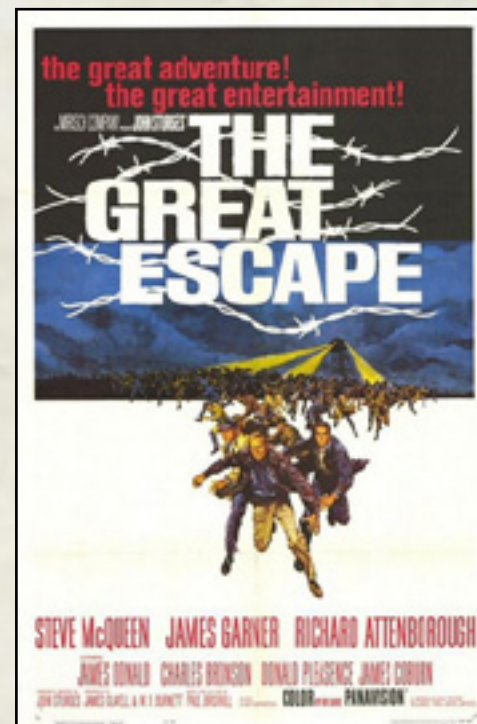
However, many details of the actual escape attempt were changed for the film, and the role of American personnel in both the planning and the escape was largely fabricated.

In the end 76 prisoners managed to escape. Only three made it to safety and 50 of those recaptured were executed by the Gestapo.

Click on the movie poster to watch a trailer of the film.

The Cast

Richard Attenborough - Sqn. Ldr. Roger Bartlett, "Big X"
 Steve McQueen - Capt. Virgil Hilt, the "Cooler King"
 James Garner - Flt. Lt. Robert Hendley, the "Scrounger"
 Charles Bronson - Flt. Lt. Danny Velinski, the "Tunnel King"
 James Coburn - Flt. Off. Louis Sedgwick, the "Manufacturer"
 Donald Pleasence - Flt. Lt. Colin Blythe, the "Forger"
 David McCallum - Lt. Cmdr. Eric Ashley-Pitt, "Dispersal"
 Gordon Jackson - Flt. Lt. Andrew MacDonald, "Intelligence"
 James Donald - Gp. Capt. Ramsey, the Senior British Officer (SBO)
 John Leyton - Flt. Lt. William Dickes, the "Tunnel King"
 Angus Lennie - Flt. Off. Archibald Ives, the "Mole"
 Nigel Stock - Flt. Lt. Dennis Cavendish, the "Surveyor"



Cuito Cuanavale

12 Months of War that Transformed a Continent

I read Fred Bridgland's book, then titled 'The War for Africa: Twelve Months that Transformed a Continent' when it was first published in 1990.

It was written only two years after the events had taken place. The book deals with Angolan campaign to capture Jamba, the headquarters of the rebel group Unita.

The Angolans had the support of Cuban troops and Soviet advisors, while Unita was supported by the South African Defence Force (SADF).

A force of around 3,000 SADF troops and 8,000 Unita fighters went up against a force of more

than 50,000. The battles centred around the small town of Cuito Cuanavale.

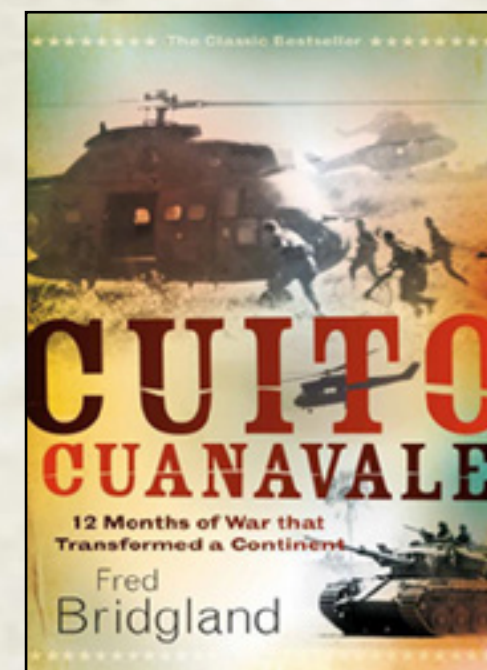
Bridgland put together his story through scores of interviews with SADF men who were on the front line.

New South African developed and produced weapons such as the G5 and G6 cannon as well as the Valkiri MRL (Multiple Rocket Launcher) were tested for the first time in battle and proved devastating.

The Oliphant tank was also used, the first time the South Africans had deployed tanks since World War II.

The rewrite of this book, pub-

lished in 2017 has a new foreword as well as additional information.



We Fear Naught but God

The Pictorial Edition of the South African Special Forces

Paul Els, the author of the book, served in Special Forces as a signaller for 5

Reconnaissance Regiment and then Special Forces Headquarters for a number of years.

This book on South African Special Forces is the forth edition and the first pictorial version of the history of the South African Special Forces, Operators and Operations.

There are more than 2,000 photographs showing events never before captured in one print.

It deals with the history of the Special Forces from their start in 1970, the establishment of 1 Reconnaissance Commando in 1972, and the move to Durban in 1974.

It was then decided to form an airborne element (1 Reconnaissance Commando in Durban), a seaborne element (4 Reconnaissance Commando in Langebaan) and a pseudo element (5 Reconnaissance Commando in Dukuduku, Zululand).

A Citizen Force unit, 2 Reconnaissance Commando, was established in 1975.

This book is a must for those interested in Special Forces and for military collectors.

Both books are available at <https://www.warbooks.co.za/>



Ready for inspection

Soldiers in any army around the world will normally have one thing in common - their intense dislike for inspections. And the old South African Defence Force seemed to love holding inspections.

For those who have never experienced a military inspection it is difficult to even try and begin explaining what it was like.

Harry (18) did his basic training at the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg during 1976. Let's hear his thoughts on inspections.

If there is one thing I will never forget from my national service then it's those bloody inspections.

Look, I've got nothing against being neat and tidy, but those inspections went totally overboard.

During basics we would have a bungalow inspection every morning. These were carried out by our corporal.

Friday mornings were the worst because those were not normal inspections, but were carried out by the company commander, the company sergeant major and our corporal. If they found something wrong on a Friday then you could bet that you would have a real bad weekend.

It's hard to explain to someone who wasn't there what it was really like.

I can remember more than one Thursday night when we didn't sleep at all. The entire

night was taken up with preparing ourselves and our bungalow for inspection. There was just so much that had to be done.

First of all we had our individual equipment and clothing to sort out. All of your clothing had to be cleaned and ironed just so. There was no such thing as dirty laundry for an inspection.

We didn't have a washing machine, so we used to do our washing in the bath. We would fill the bath with cold water, pour in some washing powder, and then climb into the bath. What you did was walk up and down, almost stamping your feet. This was done before supper so that your clothes had at least a chance of getting dry.

We had washing lines that were shared by the entire company, so you had to rush to make sure that you got a space.

We used to chain our washing to the line and lock it with a padlock. This may sound ridiculous but trust me it was necessary. If someone from another squad were missing an item of clothing, they would merely come to the washing line and replace it. If your washing was not chained to the line then you can bet that some of it would go missing.

While your washing was

hanging to dry you would busy yourself with other tasks. All boots and shoes had to be polished and shinned so that they gleamed.

Then you would clean and polish the badges on your beret and step-out jacket, as well as the silver buttons on the jacket.

Next was your webbing. You had to see that it was clean and that nothing was missing.

Cleaning your rifle was always a time consuming and dirty task. We would normally sit on the floor on a blanket or, if the weather was not too cold, sit outside the bungalow.

You would first remove the dust cover from the weapon and take out the breach-block and slide. Then you would take off the foresight, allowing you to remove the gas piston and spring.

You would then sit with a small steel brush, an old toothbrush and some cleaning fluid. I personally found that diesel was the best thing to clean your rifle with.

Every part had to be cleaned thoroughly. The gas piston was sometimes a pain in the butt to clean. Especially if you had been to the shooting range and fired the weapon. Carbon used to build up on the gas piston and it was difficult to remove.



RUB-A-DUB-SCRUB: A conscript tackles the job of scrubbing the bungalow floor.

For some reason, and I think it was planned that way, we would always go shooting on a Thursday, the day before the big inspection.

Finally, when everything was spotless, you would lightly oil the weapon and then wipe off any excess oil.

By then it was hoped that your clothes would be dry. More often than not your clothes would still be damp and you would have to use an iron to iron them dry.

Ironing wasn't just a matter of giving your clothes a quick once over. Forget that for a laugh. Creases had to be ironed into pants and shirts. You would then pack your cupboard and again this wasn't a simple matter of just folding and hanging stuff. Everything in the cupboard had to be in a specific place and hung or folded just so.

Now that your individual equipment was sorted out you had to begin work on the bungalow. Everyone was allocated a specific task such as cleaning windows, sweeping and mopping the floor, polishing the

floor, cleaning the toilets and showers, and a hundred and one other tasks.

Floors had to be polished and shined. We all had two small squares of blanket and these were called 'taxies'. You put them under your boots when you walked around, or I should rather say slid around, the bungalow.

These taxis served a dual purpose. First of all you helped polish the floor and keep it shining. Secondly they prevented anyone scuffing the polished floor with their boots.

Finally when everything was clean, and if there was still time, you got into bed for a few hours sleep.

The following morning began early, whether you had slept or not. You went and had a shower and shave and then gave the bathroom and toilets a final clean.

Then it was off to breakfast. Many a Friday morning we did not even bother going to breakfast because there was still too much work to be done. One of the last things you did was make your bed.

Now this was no simple matter of pulling the blankets straight. Making a bed in the army was a mission of its own. The part where the sheet folds over the blanket had to be a certain measurement, as did the distance between the top sheet and the bottom sheet. The blankets had to be squared at the sides and hospital corners had to be at each corner at the foot of the bed. Your blanket had to be tight enough for the corporal to bounce a coin off of it. Your towel was then folded across the bottom of the bed.

I know many guys that used to sleep on the floor on a spare blanket rather than sleep on the bed that had taken so much effort to make. Of course if you were caught sleeping on the floor you landed in big trouble.

Finally you placed your rifle and working parts (breach-block and slide) on the bed. Then you stood next to your bed, waiting for the inspection.

Our company commander was a permanent force lieutenant and he wasn't too bad. Except when it came to inspections. Then he was like a dog on heat.

He would walk into the bungalow with the corporal and usually took no more than ten steps before he spotted something wrong.

"Corporal, is that a smudge on the window? No corporal, what's wrong with these people? Are they pigs? Totally unsatisfactory corporal, it just won't do. I suggest that tomorrow you take them for a bit of extra training."

Our corporal would take this as an affront against him and we

knew that the following day we would have the dubious pleasure of extra drill or a few trips around the obstacle course.

It seemed that nothing you could do would ever please the corporal when it came to inspections. According to Colin (18) this was all part of the game plan and that no matter how much effort you put in, it still wouldn't be good enough. Colin explains his theory.

Try as you might, our corporal would always find something wrong with the bungalow. Yet somehow I think that he would have always found something to moan about, no matter what you did. Here's a perfect example of what I'm talking about.

One Thursday night we were preparing for the Friday morning inspection.

This was the big inspection that was carried out by the corporal along with our company commander and company sergeant major. We would always go full out for that one because if we had a bad inspection we knew that we would be in deep trouble.

Anyway we cleaned like crazy and I must say that the bungalow was looking good. At about eight that evening the corporal walked in, took one look at the place, and went crazy.

"Look at this place," he shouted. "It looks like a bloody pigsty. Now I'm going to come back in about two hours time and this place had better be clean!"

We were disappointed because we had really worked hard getting the place clean.



INSPECTION BED: Everything had to be laid out and spaced precisely.

Muttering and mumbling we started to clean again. We redid the windows, polished the floors again, and redid everything that had been done earlier.

True to his word, he came back just after ten that night. His reaction was even worse.

"Rubbish!" he ranted and raved. "This is rubbish. Do you call this clean? This place looks like a whore's handbag. You troops are looking for me. I'm going to give you one last chance. I will come back at midnight and if this place is not clean then you and me will talk at the obstacle course this weekend."

He stormed out, slamming the bungalow door behind him.

We were so disheartened. Personally, I thought that the bungalow was looking cleaner than it ever had.

"Screw that," one of the guys said, and lay down on his bed. As if on a signal we all lay down on our beds and did absolutely nothing for the next two hours.

Just before midnight one of the guys who was waiting outside came running in and said that our corporal was on his

way. We stood up and grabbed a cloth, a broom, anything to look busy.

He walked into the bungalow and looked around.

"Yes," he proclaimed with a smile. "That's one hundred times better. Now this bungalow is looking ready for inspection. Why can't you get it right first time? Okay, you can get some sleep now."

The lying, low-down piece of slime! Between ten o'clock and midnight we had not lifted a finger. The bungalow was exactly the same as it was when he told us that it looked like a whore's handbag. Yet suddenly he thought it was one hundred times better.

It was then that I started to understand a little bit about beating the system.

Yet even though conscripts hated inspections with a passion, there were always one or two bizarre or funny moments. Mark (17) recalls one of them.

Every Friday morning was our big inspection. If we had a bad inspection our corporal



ANOTHER INSPECTION BED: How the beds were laid out differed from unit to unit.

would have no hesitation in cancelling our weekend pass.

So we used to work damn hard on a Thursday night to make sure that everything was up to standard.

One particular Thursday night we were polishing the floors and cleaning the windows. One of the guys cleaning the windows asked someone to throw him the bottle of window cleaner.

The bottle came sailing through the air and the guy that had asked for it somehow managed to miss his catch. The bottle crashed straight through the window.

We were in a flat panic. The window was one of those that had four separate panes of glass divided by a frame and one of these panes had been shattered. There would be no way that we could replace it before inspection the next morning.

We wracked our brains until one of the guys in the bungalow came up with a suggestion.

"Let's break out the remain-

ing three panes of glass in the frame. At least then it won't look so obvious."

He took one of his army boots and, using the heel as a hammer, broke the three remaining panes of glass. We picked up all the glass and threw it away.

The following morning the company commander, with our corporal in tow, carried out the inspection. I was certain that he would notice that one of the windows had no glass in it.

He completed the inspection and we breathed a collective sigh of relief. Just as he was about to leave he turned to us and nodded his head.

"Do you see that window," he pointed straight at the broken window and our hearts sank. "Next week I want to see all the windows looking as clean as that."

Given the fact that conscripts came from all walks of life, you would always get those from the wrong side of the line. Those that just couldn't seem to

follow rules and regulations.

Martin (18) recalls one of the troops in his squad that always seemed to be in trouble.

We had a guy in our squad by the name of Manny. He was Portuguese and from the south of Johannesburg. He was trouble with a capital T.

I actually liked Manny. He had this dry sense of humour and always had something to say. Our corporal hated him with a passion.

We had our first weekend pass and when Manny came back he had brought a bottle of brandy with him.

Now this was against all rules and standing orders. First of all as national servicemen we were not allowed to drink spirits. Secondly you were not allowed to keep alcohol in the barracks. And you were not allowed to drink in your bungalow.

Manny was saving his bottle for the following weekend so he could sneak a few drinks.

On the Friday morning it was the inspection from the company commander and company sergeant major.

Your bed had to be made with just one blanket but, because it was winter, we were issued with three blankets. For inspection two of the blankets had to be folded and stored on the top shelf of your cupboard.

While inspecting Manny's cupboard the sergeant major noticed that the blankets were not straight. So he ripped them from the cupboard.

The only problem was that Manny had hidden his full bottle of brandy between the folds of one of the blankets.

The bottle came flying out at a speed and hit the sergeant major right between the eyes before falling to the floor and breaking.

It knocked the sergeant major straight onto his bum and he sat there on the floor and for at least five minutes cursed at the top of his voice. A sailor would have paid a month's salary to learn language like that.

Manny was charged with a whole list of offences and given a summary trial that same day. He ended up being sentenced to seven days in detention barracks.

And it took us weeks to get rid of the smell of brandy.

Some troops were not even fortunate enough to stay in a bungalow during basic training. Wayne (17) spent his basic training in a tent along with seven other troops.

There weren't enough bungalows to accommodate our intake, so about 80 of us were housed in tents.

We had a canvas ground-

sheet that covered the floor, so one big advantage was that we didn't have to polish the floor.

There were serious disadvantages though. First of all it was winter and at night it was freezing inside the tent.

Even with the tent flaps closed I would often wake up shivering in the early hours of the morning. I just couldn't get warm.

The other thing was the dust. It was very dry and there was no grass where our tents were, just this red dirt. When the wind used to blow, which it seemed to do all the time, everything would get coated with this fine layer of dust.

We would get ready for inspection in the mornings and our tent would be perfect.

By the time the corporal arrived for inspection, however, everything would be covered with dust and we would fail inspection. It used to drive us mad.

Inspections usually got the day off to a bad start and from



NEAT & TIDY: Everything had to be packed just so.

there it became progressively worse. When asked to sum up his basic training, Harry (18) had the following thoughts.

If you had to ask me for a phrase or saying that I remember best from basic it would have to be "*Staan lanks julle beddens gereed vir inspeksie.*" (Stand next to your beds ready for inspection).

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Aircraft Identification - Quiz Answers

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Mitsubishi A6M "Zero" (Japan) | 10. Boulton Paul Defiant (Britain) |
| 2. Gloster Gladiator (Britain) | 11. Heinkel He 177 Greif (Germany) |
| 3. Ambrosini SAI.207 (Italy) | 12. Junkers Ju 87 "Stuka" (Germany) |
| 4. GAL. 49 Hamilcar (Britain) | 13. Avro Lancaster (Britain) |
| 5. Fieseler Fi 156 Storch (Germany) | 14. de Havilland DH.98 Mosquito (Britain) |
| 6. Short S.25 Sunderland (Britain) | 15. Boeing B-29 Superfortress (USA) |
| 7. Tupolev TB-3 (Russia) | |
| 8. Hawker Typhoon (Britain) | |
| 9. Messerschmitt Me 262 (Germany) | |



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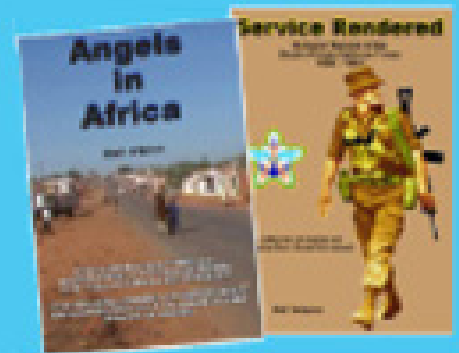
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