



Military Despatches

Vol 41 November 2020

How long would they last?

The ten weakest military forces in the world

Feared and respected

Five World War II German legends

Up close and personal

Unconventional weapons of WWI trench warfare

Harold Akroyd

Nominated 34 times for the Victoria Cross

For the military enthusiast

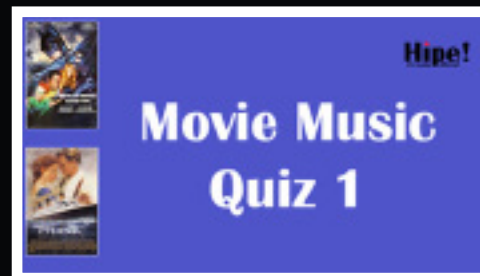


Click on any video below to view



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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The Russian Club commemorated the 20th anniversary of the tragic sinking of the Russian submarine K-141. Next month we will have a more in-depth article on this story.



Editor's Sitrep

So already I've received a number of e-mails saying "It's the 1st of the month - where's Military Despatches?"

Now normally I try and send out the magazine as close to mid-night as possible on the last day of the month. This month, however, I lost an entire week because of a large project that I was busy with.

Anyway, it's still the 1st of the month. It's just a few hours later than normal.

It's hard to believe that it's already November and Christmas is just around the corner. Most shops have already put up their Christmas decorations - some of them on the 1st of October already.

I guess that this year Christmas may be a little different to normal. Most people will not have money to splash out on huge meals and expensive gifts that to the current economic situation.

There is an old Chinese curse that says, "May you live in interesting times". And let's face it, 2020 has been an interesting time hasn't it.

In October I attended our local MOTH Shellhole meeting, the first one I have attended in seven months. I realised that it was also the first time in seven months that I've put on a jacket and tie.

On Sunday 8 November we will

be observing Remembrance Day here in South Africa. I guess that it will be a rather subdued event due to the Covid-19 restrictions, and that numbers attending will be limited.

I won't be attending the parade because I do a radio show on Sunday mornings from 09h00 to 12h00. But on Wednesday afternoon on the 11th we will be doing a segment on the afternoon Drive Show about Remembrance Day. So tune in if possible.

I want to try and get the December issue of Military Despatches to bed as early as possible. This will at least allow me to get away for a week or two and have a bit of a holiday. Well, that's the plan anyway.

I trust that everyone is still wearing a face mask, washing their hands, and maintaining social distancing. This Covid-19 thing is not over yet. Not by a long way. So please keep safe. Who would have ever thought that something made in China could last this long.

Until next time.

Matt

Hipe!

media

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Front Cover

Wounded British soldiers make their way back to the reserve lines for treatment. This is our very first black and white front cover.



10 Weakest Militaries

We take a closer look at the ten weakest military forces in 2020.

Many military forces around the world like to show off now and again. Many have a long history and proud traditions.

In past articles we have looked at the ten strongest military forces in the world, as well as looking at the ten strongest military forces in Africa.

This month, however, we're going to do something a bit different. We're going to look at what are regarded as the ten weakest military forces in 2020.

Global Firepower is a website that utilizes over 50 individual factors to determine a given nation's PowerIndex ('PwrIndx') score with categories ranging from military might and financials to logistical capability and geography.



10. Central African Republic

The Central African Republic is a landlocked country in Central Africa. It is bordered by Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Cameroon.

The primary role of the Central African Armed Forces is to maintain internal security. Approximately 5,000 person-

nel serve in the Central African Armed Forces, and they are divided into an Army (2,750 personnel), an Air Force, and paramilitary outfits. The president is the commander in chief of the Armed Forces and the Army chief of staff.

The country has a total of 7,150 military personnel. The army has four tanks, 55 armoured vehicles, and 20 towed artillery pieces.

The air force consists of two transport planes and a single helicopter.

The annual defence budget is \$20,000,000.



9. Gabon

Gabon, officially the Gabonese Republic, is a country on the west coast of Central Africa. Located on the equator, Gabon is bordered by Equatorial Guinea to the northwest, Cameroon to the north, the Republic of the Congo on the east and south, and the Gulf of Guinea to the west.

The Armed Forces of Gabon or the Gabonese Defence and Security Forces is the national professional military of the Republic of Gabon, divided into the Army, Air Force, Navy, and

a National Gendarmerie, consisting of about 5,000 personnel.

Gabonese forces are oriented to the defence of the country and have not been trained for an offensive role. The armed forces includes a well-trained, well-equipped 1,800-member guard that provides security for the President of Gabon.

Gabon has 70 armoured vehicle and 16 towed artillery pieces. The air force consists of six fighters, two transport aircraft, and 15 helicopters.

The navy has ten assets, including three patrol craft. The annual defence budget is \$83,000,000.



8. Laos

Laos, officially the Lao People's Democratic Republic, is a socialist state and the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia.

At the heart of the Indochinese Peninsula, Laos is bordered by Myanmar and China to the northwest, Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the southeast and Thailand to the west and southwest.

The Laos Military consists of the Lao People's Armed For-

ces (LPAF), Lao People's Army (LPA, includes Riverine Force), Air Force, and the Self-Defence Militia Forces.

They have 30,000 military personnel and have 65 tanks, 30 armoured vehicles and 62 towed artillery pieces.

The air force has 27 helicopter, two transport aircraft, and four trainers.

The navy has 36 assets of which 35 are patrol boats. Their annual defence budget is \$18,500,000.



7. Panama

Panama, officially the Republic of Panama, is a trans-continental country in Central America and South America, bordered by Costa Rica to the west, Colombia to the southeast, the Caribbean Sea to the north, and the Pacific Ocean to the south.

The Panamanian Public Forces are the national security forces of Panama. Panama is the second country in Latin America (the other being Costa Rica) to permanently abolish standing armies, with Panama retaining a small para-military security force.

This came as a result of a U.S. invasion that overthrew a military dictatorship which ruled Panama from 1968 to 1989.

The final military dictator, Manuel Noriega, had been bel-

ligerent toward the U.S. culminating in the killing of a U.S. Marine lieutenant and U.S. invasion ordered by U.S. President George H. W. Bush.

Panama maintains armed police and internal security forces, and small air and maritime forces. They are tasked with law enforcement and can perform limited military actions. Since 2010 they have reported to the Ministry of Public Security.

They have 10,000 military personnel and 65 armoured vehicles. Air power consists of 23 helicopters, 11 transport aircraft and two trainers. Naval power consists of 20 assets.

The annual defence budget is \$500,000,000.



6. Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina, sometimes called Bosnia-Herzegovina and often known informally as Bosnia, is a country in South and Southeast Europe, located within the Balkans. Sarajevo is the capital and largest city.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is bordered by Serbia to the east, Montenegro to the southeast, and Croatia to the north and southwest. It is not entirely landlocked; to the south it has a narrow coast on the Adriatic Sea, which is about 20 kilometres long and surrounds the

town of Neum.

The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the official military force of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The BiH armed forces were officially unified in 2005 and are composed of two founding armies: the Bosniak-Croat Army of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bosnian Serbs' Army of Republika Srpska (VRS).

The Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, founded in 2004, is in charge of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

They have an estimated total of 10,500 military personnel. The army has 320 tanks, 332 armoured vehicles, 24 self-propelled artillery pieces, 837 towed artillery pieces, and 143 rocket launchers.

Air power consists of 19 helicopters. They have no naval assets. The annual defence budget is \$165,000,000.



5. Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone, officially the Republic of Sierra Leone, informally Salone, is a country on the southwest coast of West Africa. It is bordered by Liberia to the southeast and Guinea to the northeast. Sierra Leone has a tropical climate with a diverse environment ranging from savannah to rainforests, a total area of 71,740 km2 and a pop-

ulation of 7,092,113 as of the 2015 census.

The capital and largest city is Freetown. The country is divided into five administrative regions which are subdivided into sixteen districts.

The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) is the armed forces of Sierra Leone, responsible for the territorial security of Sierra Leone's border and defending the national interests of Sierra Leone, within the framework of its international obligations.

The armed forces were formed after independence in 1961, on the basis of elements of the former British Royal West African Frontier Force, then present in the country. The Sierra Leone Armed Forces currently consist of around 13,000 personnel.

Before Sierra Leone gained independence in 1961, the military was known as the Royal Sierra Leone Military Force.

The military seized control in 1968, bringing the National Reformation Council into power. On 19 April 1971, when Sierra Leone became a republic, the Royal Sierra Leone Military Force was renamed as the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Force (RSLMF).

The RSLMF remained a single service organisation until 1979 when the Sierra Leone Navy was established. It then remained largely unchanged for 16 years until in 1995 when Defence Headquarters (DHQ) was established and the Sierra Leone Air Wing (SLAW) formed.

The RSLMF was renamed the Armed Forces of the Republic of Sierra Leone (AFRSL).

The army has 13 armoured vehicles while the navy has seven patrol boats.

Air power consists of five helicopters, of which two are attack helicopters. The annual defence budget is \$75,500,000.



4. Suriname

Suriname, officially known as the Republic of Suriname, is a country on the northeastern Atlantic coast of South America. It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the north, French Guiana to the east, Guyana to the west and Brazil to the south. At just under 165,000 square kilometres, it is the smallest sovereign state in South America.

After the creation of the Statute of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Royal Netherlands Army was entrusted with the defence of Suriname, while the defence of the Netherlands Antilles was the responsibility of the Royal Netherlands Navy.

The army set up a separate Troepenmacht in Suriname (Forces in Suriname, TRIS). Upon independence in 1975, this force was turned into the Surinaamse Krijgsmacht (SKM) (Surinamese Armed Forces).

On 25 February 1980, a

group of 15 non-commissioned officers and one junior SKM officer, under the leadership of sergeant major Dési Bouterse, staged a coup d'état and overthrew the Government. Subsequently, the SKM was re-branded as Nationaal Leger (NL) (National Army).

Suriname has only 1,850 military personnel. The army has 66 armoured vehicles. The air force has three helicopters and the navy has three patrol boats.

The annual defence budget is \$63,000,000.



3. Somalia

Somalia, officially the Federal Republic of Somalia is a sovereign country in the Horn of Africa. It is bordered by Ethiopia to the west, Djibouti to the northwest, the Gulf of Aden to the north, the Indian Ocean to the east, and Kenya to the southwest. Somalia has the longest coastline on Africa's mainland.

The Somali Armed Forces are the military forces of the Federal Republic of Somalia. Headed by the President as Commander in Chief, they are constitutionally mandated to ensure the nation's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

The SAF was initially made up of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Police Force. In the post-independence period, it grew to

become among the larger militaries in Africa.

Due to Barre's increasing reliance on his own clans, repressive policies, and the Somali Rebellion, the military had by 1988 begun to disintegrate. By the time President Siad Barre fled in 1991, the armed forces had dissolved.

An unsteady rebuilding process began after 2000. As of January 2014, the security sector is overseen by the Federal Government of Somalia's Ministry of Defence, Ministry of National Security, and Ministry of Interior and Federalism. Somaliland, Puntland, and Jubaland maintain their own separate military forces.

Somalia has an estimated 20,000 military personnel. The army has 10 tanks, 100 armoured vehicles, 30 towed artillery pieces, and 10 rocket launchers.

Somalia has no air power and naval power consists of 11 patrol boats. The annual defence budget is \$62,200,000.



2. Somalia

Liberia, officially the Republic of Liberia, is a country on the West African coast. It is bordered by Sierra Leone to its northwest, Guinea to its north, Côte d'Ivoire to its east, and the Atlantic Ocean to its

south-southwest.

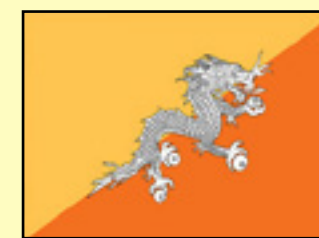
It has a population of around five million and covers an area of 111,369 square kilometres.

The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) are the armed forces of the Republic of Liberia. Tracing its origins to a militia that was formed by the first black colonists in what is now Liberia, it was founded as the Liberian Frontier Force in 1908, and retitled in 1956.

As of 2014, the AFL consists of two infantry battalions, a Service Support Company, a Military Police Company, a Logistics Command, and the Liberian National Coast Guard.

The country has 2,100 military personnel. The army does not have any heavy equipment such as tanks, armoured vehicles or artillery pieces. Neither does it have any air or naval assets.

The annual defence budget is \$13,000.



1. Bhutan

Bhutan, officially known as the Kingdom of Bhutan, is a landlocked country in South Asia. Located in the Eastern Himalayas, it is bordered by Tibet in the north, the Chumbi Valley of Tibet and the Indian states of Sikkim and West Bengal in the west, and the Indian states of Assam, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh in the

south and east.

The branches of the armed forces of Bhutan are the Royal Bhutan Army (RBA), Royal Bodyguards, and Royal Bhutan Police. Being a landlocked country, Bhutan does not have a navy. Additionally, Bhutan does not have an air force.

India is responsible for military training, arms supplies and the air defence of Bhutan. The Bhutan army is trained by Indian Armed Forces.

Bhutan has an armed force of 7,000 personnel and has 27 armoured vehicles. As far as air power goes, they have two helicopters.

Their annual defence budget is \$25,120,000.

So there you have it, the 10 weakest military forces in 2020. All annual defence budgets are given in US Dollars.

Most of these countries would not last long in a war against any of the super-powers such as America, Russia or China.

For example the American aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford has almost twice as many crew members as the entire Suriname military.

When it comes to Africa, Egypt is regarded as the strongest military force on the continent and is ranked at number nine by Global Firepower.

Algeria is ranked at number 28, while South Africa is ranked at number 29.

Special Forces - Special Forces Command

Part twenty one of a series that takes a look at Special Forces units around the world. This month we look at the Special Forces of Switzerland.

The Swiss Armed Forces operate on land and in the air. Under the country's militia system, regular soldiers constitute a small part of the military and the rest are conscripts or volunteers aged 19 to 34 (in some cases up to 50).

Because of Switzerland's long history of neutrality, the Swiss Armed Forces do not take part in conflicts in other countries, but do participate in international peacekeeping missions. Switzerland is part of the NATO Partnership for Peace programme.

The regulations of the Swiss militia system stipulate that the soldiers keep their own personal equipment, including all personally assigned weapons, at home (until 2007 this also included ammunition), or in an armoury.

Compulsory mil-

itary service applies to all male Swiss citizens, with women serving voluntarily. Males usually receive initial orders at the age of 18 for military conscription eligibility screening.

About two-thirds of young Swiss men are found suitable for service, while alternative service exists for those found

unsuitable.

Annually, approximately 20,000 persons are trained in basic training for 18 weeks (23 weeks for special forces).

Special Forces Command

The Special Forces Command (German: *Kommando Spezialkräfte*) is

an infantry corps of the Swiss Armed Forces specialised in rapid offensive operations, intel gathering and operations in urban areas, open fields and other difficult terrains, capable of acting on short notice.

Grenadiers are subjected to considerable physical strain, applicants are required to be in excel-

lent physical conditions, and recruits are chosen through a strict selection process.

The Grenadiers have been part of the Grenadier Command 1 since the "Army XXI" reform in late 2004, before which

Gren-



adier units were integrated in other regiments. Grenadier Command 1, subordinated to the “Reconnaissance Formations of the Armed Forces and Grenadiers”, is head-quartered in Rivera. The Grenadiers’ motto, shared with many other military institutions and most famously with the US Marines, is “Semper Fidelis”.

History

Soldiers denominated “grenadiers” have long been part of Switzerland’s military tradition: even before the 19th century, grenadiers served as part of the cantonal contingents of the Swiss Confederacy.

Modern Grenadiers were formed in the early 1940s, originating from the “Infantry Pioneers” trained by Chief instructor Matthias Brunner, the commander of a riflemen company who developed a close combat technique in the shooting schools of Walenstadt.

This company, made up of volunteers, faced a stricter and more intensive training than other infantry companies.

In 1943, General Henri Guisan, convinced of the necessity of shock troops specially trained for close combat, decided to form a similar company in each of the 37 infantry regiments of the army.

In the same year, the designation of “Grenadiers” replaced that of “Pioneers”, marking the birth of the corps. Also in 1943, the first recruit school of Grenadiers were held in Locarno and Solduno.

After the war, the makeshift training grounds were relocat-



Special Forces Command

ed twice, first to Losone, but after complains about having a military installation in a touristic area they were moved again to Isonne, where they remain to this day.

In 1968, to answer the necessity of a specific training for combat and deployment in difficult terrains, units of Mountain Grenadiers were created. In 1970 Airborne Grenadiers, while subordinated to aviation troops, were first trained in the Grenadier recruit school.

In 1971, companies of motorised Grenadiers were created. In the 1970s, the guerrilla tactics first introduced in 1943 were resumed and adapted with the name of “hunting war” (German: *Jagdkrieg*).

The Army XXI reform of 2004 reassembled all Grenadier formations of the previous “Army 95” model in the Grenadier Command 1.

Structure

The Special Forces Command is an infantry formation of about 3,000 soldiers

and consists of the following units:

- Special Forces Command Staff Battalion
- Special Forces Training Centre
- Army Reconnaissance Detachment 10 (Professional Unit)
- Military Police Special Detachment (Professional Unit)
- Grenadier Battalion 20 (Militia Unit)
- Grenadier Battalion 30 (Militia Unit)
- Parachute Reconnaissance Company 17 (Militia Unit)

Training

The recruitment process of Grenadier units takes place one year before recruit school, and generally matches the ones of other corps, with the exception that one must volunteer to become a Grenadier. Those interested are subjected to comprehensive medical and psychological tests.

Recruit school, extending over a period of 23 weeks, is very demanding, both physically and psychologically. Those who, during the first 11 weeks, prove incapable of the necessary performances, are moved to other incorporations.

Training for NCOs and officers begins after nine weeks of recruit school, who undertake respectively 41 and 56 additional weeks of grade-specific training.

Additional courses offered to recruits include basic training of shotguns (notably the Remington 870, which is designated as MzGw 91, Mehr-

zweckgewehr 91) and for marksmen/snipers (for the 8.6 mm Sako TRG) (SSGw 04, Scharfschützengewehr 04) and 12.7 mm PGM Hecate II rifle 12.7mm PGw 04 (12.7 mm Präzisionsgewehr 04) and survival techniques.

FSK-17

The Parachute Reconnaissance Company 17, nicknamed FSK-17, is Switzerland’s principal special forces unit. They are organized as a militia long-range reconnaissance patrol scout type unit, unlike the full-time counter-terrorism Army Reconnaissance Detachment 10 (ARD 10) unit. Formed in the 1970s, they fall under the operational control of the Swiss Air Force.

The Parachute Reconnaissance Company 17 (FSK-17) of today, comes from the Remote Reconnaissance Company 17 (Fernspäh Kp 17) which came from the first and only Swiss parachute company, the Parachute Grenadier Company 17 (Fallschirmgrenadier Kp 17).

While the names have changed, the number 17 has been a constant in Switzerland’s only parachute company, leading current and former members to refer to themselves as a “17-er”.

Training

FSK-17, like most of the Swiss Air Force, is a militia based service, which makes selection and training different from in most militaries. At about age 16 a candidate will register online for the



Parachute Reconnaissance Company 17

SPHAIR course with the Aero-Club der Schweiz.

About 500 to 700 candidates will generally apply. Over the following year the candidate will provide documentation to prove their Swiss citizenship and will attend a one-day screening in Dübendorf near Zürich.

About 300 candidates will attend the screening but only 90 of them will pass the screening and educational requirements and be allowed to enrol in the parachute courses.

At age 18 the candidate attends the first two-week parachute course. While most of the cost of the course is covered by the Swiss Army, candidates have to buy some of their own equipment and books, which cost the candidate about CHF 750.

Successful completion of the first parachute course allows the candidate to attend the second course when they are about 19 years old. This course also costs the candi-

date about CHF 500.

Following two successful parachute courses the candidate will have to pass a series of physical and psychological exams of which only about 20 will pass. Throughout all this training the candidate is still a civilian.

If the candidate is successful in their pre-military training, they then enter either a 43-week (enlisted) or 59-week (officer) training program. Following recruitment into the military the candidate attends a five-week selection training course.

This course includes firearms training as well as physical fitness, obstacle courses, and marching. While portions of the standard Swiss Army basic training are included, this course focuses on the elements that are relevant for the company. There are weekly marches of increasing length and difficulty, culminating in the “Ironman” exercise which must be passed by each candidate. Those that fail the training at this point are shifted into another specialization.

Following the five-week course a candidate then enters the second selection phase, a four-week examination of their parachute-related abilities. This course also builds on their civilian parachute experience to train them in military parachuting. Therefore, in the first week they complete a night parachute jump.

The course also includes further weapons training, physical training, and computer-aided intelligence training. At the end of the course,

Weapons used by the Swiss Special Forces



SIG SG 550



Glock 17 / 19



Heckler & Koch MP5



Sako TRG

some candidates will be dismissed from the training and will complete their military service in another speciality.

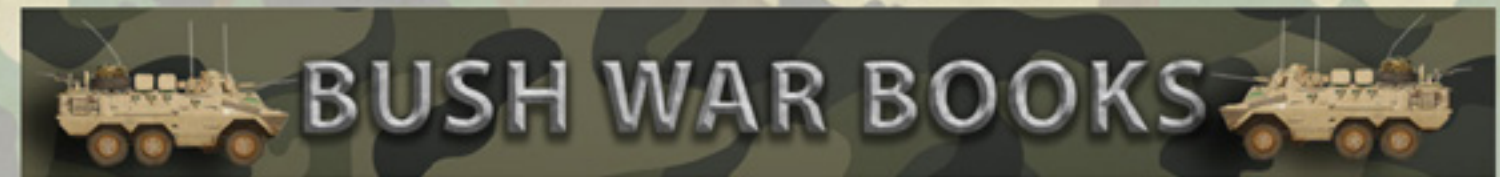
The remaining training time is spent working mostly as part of a team. Some individual training relates to building of bivouacs, behaviour and patrolling in the hostile area as well as approaches with contact with dogs. They train with round-canopy T-10 parachutes for low altitude jumps (about 200 metres) above ground level) as well as HALO/HAHO from over 7,000 metres).

Training also includes parachuting into landing zones in the mountains as well as in water.

The culmination of this training is a multi-day training exercise in which the different elements of the training in the general context are used.

Following successful completion of the entire training course the candidate is breveted and joins the company.

The parascouts Company 17 is also in addition, to the Patrouille Suisse, F/A-18 Hornet Solo Display the PC-7 Team, the Hornet Solo Display and the Super Puma Display Team alone or in combination with one or more of these teams an "Air Show Team" of the Swiss Air Force. Regularly occurring events and air shows such as the Air14 or the Flight demonstration Axalp.



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"

World War I

Facts, figures and trivia

A few facts, figures and trivia about World War I. On 11 November it will mark 99 years since 'The Great War' ended. This article was originally published in the November 2017 issue.

It was called 'The Great War' and 'The War to end all Wars'. Later it became known simply as World War I.

From 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918 more than 70 million military personnel were mobilised in one of the largest wars in history.

It was a war fought on a global scale and would result in the deaths of over nine million combatants and seven million civilians.

It was one of the deadliest conflicts in history, and paved the way for major political changes, including revolutions in many of the nations involved. It would also contribute to the start of the Second World War only twenty-one years later.

Here are some facts, figures and trivia from World War I.

Largest armed forces of World War I

1. USSR - 12,000,000
2. Germany - 11,000,000
3. British Empire - 8,904,467
4. France - 8,410,000
5. Austria-Hungary - 7,800,000
6. Italy - 5,615,000
7. USA - 4,355,000
8. Turkey - 2,850,000
9. Bulgaria - 1,200,000
10. Japan - 800,000

Smallest armed forces of World War I

1. Montenegro - 50,000
2. Portugal - 100,000
3. Greece - 230,000
4. Belgium - 267,000
5. Serbia - 707,343
6. Romania - 750,000

Greatest military losses of World War I

1. Germany - 1,773,700
2. Russia - 1,700,000
3. France - 1,357,800
4. Austria-Hungary - 1,200,000
5. British Empire - 908,371
6. Italy - 650,000
7. Romania - 335,706
8. Turkey - 325,000
9. USA - 116,516
10. Bulgaria - 87,500

Greatest merchant shipping losses in World War I

1. UK - 2,038 ships sunk
2. Italy - 228 ships sunk
3. France - 213 ships sunk
4. Germany - 188 ships sunk
5. Denmark - 126 ships sunk
6. Sweden - 124 ships sunk
7. Greece - 115 ships sunk
8. USA - 93 ships sunk
9. Netherlands - 74 ships sunk
10. Spain - 70 ships sunk

Top Air Aces of World War I

1. Rittmeister Manfred von Richthofen (Germany) 80
2. Capitaine Rene Fonck

(France) 75

3. Major William Bishop (Canadian) 72
4. Major Edward 'Mick' Mannock (British) 68
5. Major Raymond Collishaw (Canadian) & Oberleutnant Ernst Udel (Germany) 62
6. Major James McCudden (British) 57
7. Captain Anthony Beauchamp-Proctor (South African), Captain Donald MacLaren (Canadian) & Capitaine George Guynemer (France) 54

World War I Trivia

- Germans were the first to use flamethrowers in WWI. Their flamethrowers could fire jets of flame as far as 40 metres.
- More than 70 million men from 30 countries fought in WWI. Nearly 10 million died. The Allies (The Entente Powers) lost about six million soldiers. The Central Powers lost about four million.
- Nearly two-thirds of military deaths in World War I were in battle. In previous conflicts, most deaths were due to disease.
- In August 1914, German troops shot and killed 150 civilians at Aerschot. The killing was part of war poli-

cy known as *Schrecklichkeit* ("frightfulness"). Its purpose was to terrify civilians in occupied areas so that they would not rebel.

- During World War I British tanks were initially categorized into "males" and "females." Male tanks had cannons, while females had heavy machine guns.
- "Little Willie" was the first prototype tank in World War I. Built in 1915, it carried a crew of three and could travel as fast as 4.8 km/h.
- Artillery barrage and mines created immense noise. In 1917, explosives blowing up beneath the German lines on Messines Ridge at Ypres in Belgium could be heard in London, 220 km away.
- The Pool of Peace is a 12-m deep lake near Messines, Belgium. It fills a crater made in 1917 when the British detonated a mine containing 45 tons of explosives under the German lines.
- The most successful fighter pilot of the entire war was German fighter pilot Manfred Albrecht Freiherr von Richthofen (1892-1918), or the "Red Baron." He shot down 80 planes, more than any other World War I pilot. He died after being shot down near Amiens. France's René Fonck (1894-1953) was the Allies' most successful fighter pilot, shooting down 75 enemy planes.
- During World War I, dogs were used as messengers and carried orders to the front lines in capsules attached to their bodies. Dogs were also used to lay down

telegraph wires.

- Big Bertha was a 48-ton howitzer used by the Germans in World War I. It was named after the wife of its designer Gustav Krupp. It could fire a 930 kg shell a distance of 15 km. However, it took a crew of 200 men six hours or more to assemble. Germany had 13 of these huge guns or "wonder weapons."
- Tanks were initially called "landships." However, in an attempt to disguise them as water storage tanks rather than as weapons, the British decided to code name them "tanks."
- French Second Lieutenant Alfred Joubaire wrote in his diary about World War I just before he died that "Humanity is mad! It must be mad to do what it is doing. What a massacre. What scenes of horror and carnage! I cannot find words to translate my impressions. Hell cannot be so terrible! Men are mad!"
- Some Americans disagreed with the United States' initial refusal to enter World War I and so they joined the French Foreign Legion or the British or Canadian army. A group of U.S. pilots formed the *Lafayette Escadrille*, which was part of the French air force and became one of the top fight-

ing units on the Western Front.

- In early 1917, British cryptographers deciphered a telegram from German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann to Germany's minister in Mexico. The telegram encouraged Mexico to invade U.S. territory. The British kept it a secret from the U.S. for more than a month. They wanted to show it to the U.S. at the right time to help draw the U.S. into the war on their side.
- Woodrow Wilson's campaign slogan for his second term was "He kept us out of war." About a month after he took office, the United States declared war on Germany on April 6th 1917.
- To increase the size of the U.S. Army during World War I, Congress passed the Selective Service Act, which was also known as the conscription or draft, in May 1917. By the end of the war, 2.7 million men were drafted. Another 1.3 million volunteered.
- During World War I, people of German heritage were suspect in the U.S. Some protests against Germans were violent, including the burning of German books, the killing of German shepherd dogs, and



Little Willie

- even the murder of one German-American.
- Herbert Hoover, who would become president in 1929, was appointed U.S. Food Administrator. His job was to provide food to the U.S. army and its allies. He encouraged people to plant "Victory Gardens," or personal gardens. More than 20 million Americans planted their own gardens, and food consumption in the U.S decreased by 15%.
- The total cost of World War I for the U.S. was more than \$30 billion.
- The war left thousands of soldiers disfigured and disabled. Reconstructive surgery was used to repair facial damage, but masks were also used to cover the most horrific disfigurement. Some soldiers stayed in nursing homes their entire lives.
- World War I is the sixth deadliest conflict in world history.
- British author T.E. Lawrence (1888-1935), also known as Lawrence of Arabia, worked for Allied intelligence in the Middle East. He also led

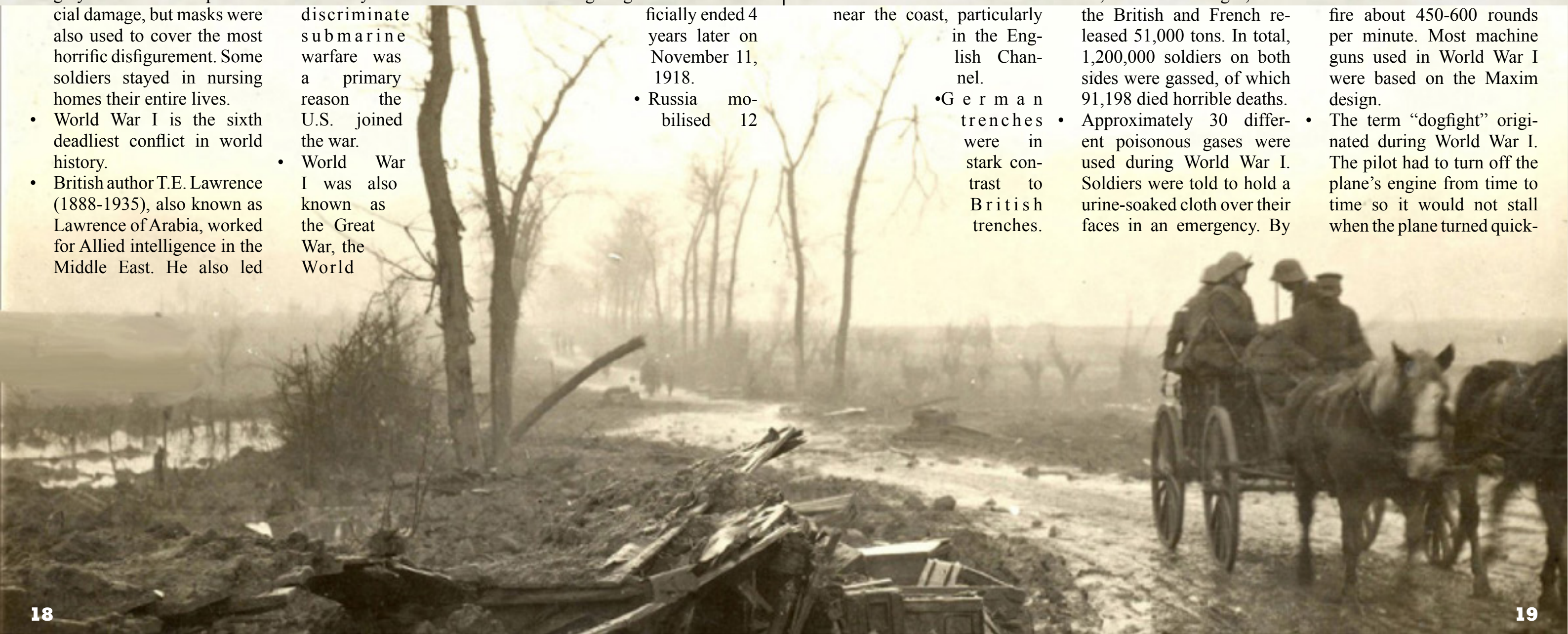
- an Arab revolt against the Turks and wrote about it in his book *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.
- Four empires collapsed after World War I: Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian.
- While the first military submarine (named the Turtle) was first used by the Continental Army during the American Revolution, submarines only made a large military impact during World War I when Germany launched its fleet of U-boats. Its submarines mostly stayed on the surface and submerged only to attack ships with torpedoes. Germany's indiscriminate submarine warfare was a primary reason the U.S. joined the war.
- World War I was also known as the Great War, the World

- War, the War of the Nations, and the War to End All Wars.
- World War I was fought from 1914-1918 on every ocean and on almost every continent. Most of the fighting, however, took place in Europe.
- World War I began on June 28, 1914, when a Serbian terrorist shot and killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on July 28, 1914. Russia and France sided with Serbia, and Germany supported Austria-Hungary. Other countries around the world were soon pulled into the fighting. World War I officially ended 4 years later on November 11, 1918.
- Russia mobilised 12

- million troops during World War I, making it the largest army in the war. More than three-quarters were killed, wounded, or went missing in action.
- The terrorist group responsible for the assassination of Franz Ferdinand was called Black Hand, Sarajevo.
- The United States joined World War I during the final year and half of fighting.
- For the span of World War I, from 1914-1918, 274 German U-boats sank 6,596 ships. The five most successful U-boats were U-35 (sank 224 ships), U-39 (154 ships), U-38 (137 ships), U-34 (121 ships), and U-33 (84 ships). Most of these were sunk near the coast, particularly in the English Channel.
- German trenches were in stark contrast to British trenches.

- German trenches were built to last and included bunk beds, furniture, cupboards, water tanks with taps, electric lights, and doorbells.
- France, not Germany, was the first country to use gas against enemy troops in World War I. In August 1914, they fired the first tear gas grenades (xylyl bromide) against the Germans. In January 1915, Germany first used tear gas against Russian armies, but the gas turned to liquid in the cold air. In April 1915, the Germans were the first to use poisonous chlorine gas.
- During World War I, the Germans released about 68,000 tons of gas, and the British and French released 51,000 tons. In total, 1,200,000 soldiers on both sides were gassed, of which 91,198 died horrible deaths.
- Approximately 30 different poisonous gases were used during World War I. Soldiers were told to hold a urine-soaked cloth over their faces in an emergency. By

- 1918, gas masks with filter respirators usually provided effective protection. At the end of the war, many countries signed treaties outlawing chemical weapons.
- During the war, the U.S. shipped about 7.5 million tons of supplies to France to support the Allied effort. That included 70,000 horses or mules as well as nearly 50,000 trucks, 27,000 freight cars, and 1,800 locomotives.
- World War I introduced the widespread use of the machine gun, a weapon Hiram Maxim patented in the U.S. in 1884. The Maxim weighed just over 45 kg and was water cooled. It could fire about 450-600 rounds per minute. Most machine guns used in World War I were based on the Maxim design.
- The term "dogfight" originated during World War I. The pilot had to turn off the plane's engine from time to time so it would not stall when the plane turned quick-



ly in the air. When a pilot restarted his engine mid-air, it sounded like dogs barking.

- The French had what German soldiers called the Devil Gun. At 75 mm, this cannon was accurate up to almost 6,5 kilometres. The French military commanders claimed that its Devil Gun won the war.
- During U.S. involvement in World War I, more than 75,000 people gave about 7.5 million four-minute pro-war speeches in movie theatres and elsewhere to about 314.5 million people.
- “Hello Girls,” as American soldiers called them, were American women who served as telephone operators for Pershing’s forces in Europe. The women were fluent in French and English and were specially trained by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. In 1979, the U.S. Army finally gave war medals and veteran benefits to the few Hello Girls who were still alive.
- During World War I, American hamburgers (named after the German city of Hamburg) were renamed Salisbury steak. Frankfurters, which were named after Frankfurt, Germany, were called “liberty sausages,” and dachshunds became “liberty dogs.” Schools stopped teaching German, and German-language books were burned.
- Millions of soldiers suffered “shell shock,” or post-traumatic stress disorder, due to the horrors of trench warfare. Shell-shocked



HOME SWEET HOME: Life in the trenches was often muddy and miserable.

men often had uncontrollable diarrhoea, couldn’t sleep, stopped speaking, whimpered for hours, and twitched uncontrollably. While some soldiers recovered, others suffered for the rest of their lives.

- Even though the U.S. government didn’t grant Native Americans citizenship until 1924, nearly 13,000 of them served in World War I.
- There were over 35 million civilian and soldier casualties in World War I. Over 15 million died and 20 million were wounded.
- More than 200,000 African Americans served in World War I, but only about 11 percent of them were in combat forces. The rest were put in labour units, loading cargo, building roads, and digging ditches. They served in segregated divisions (the 92nd and 93rd) and trained separately.
- The Germans were skilled at intercepting and solving Allied codes. Germans also captured one out of four pa-

per messengers. However, when a U.S. commander used Choctaw tribe members from the Oklahoma National Guard unit, they used an extremely complex language that the Germans could not translate. The eight Choctaw men and others who joined them became known as the Choctaw Code Talkers.

- More than 500,000 pigeons carried messages between headquarters and the front lines. Groups of pigeons trained to return to the front lines were dropped into occupied areas by parachutes and kept there until soldiers had messages to send back.
- On Christmas Eve in 1914, soldiers on both sides of the Western Front sung carols to each other. On Christmas Day troops along two-thirds of the Front declared a truce. In some places the truce lasted a week. A year later, sentries on both sides were ordered to shoot anyone who attempted a repeat performance. The British High

Command ordered artillery bombardments to start on Christmas Eve and carry on for three days.

- Edith Cavell (1865- October 12 1915) was a British nurse who saved soldiers from all sides. When she helped 200 Allied soldiers escape from German-occupied Belgium, the Germans arrested her and she was executed by a German firing squad. Her death helped turn global opinion against Germany.
- Margaretha Zelle (1876-1917), also known as Mata Hari, was a Dutch exotic dancer accused of being a double agent. Though she always denied being a spy, the French executed her in 1917.
- The most decorated American of World War I was Alvin Cullum York (1887-1964). York led an attack on a German gun nest, taking 32 machine guns, killing 28 German soldiers, and capturing 132 more. He re-

turned home with a Medal of Honor, a promotion to Sergeant, the French *Croix de Guerre*, and a gift of 400 acres of good farmland.

- U.S. troops fought their first battle of World War I on November 2, 1917, in the trenches at Barthelemon, France.
- The greatest single loss of life in the history of the British army occurred during the Battle of Somme, when the British suffered 60,000 casualties in one day. More British men were killed in that one World War I battle than the U.S. lost from all of its armed forces and the National Guard combined.
- World War I transformed the United States into the largest military power in the world.
- Although Germany may have forced the hand of the European powers in the summer of 1914, it did not cause war. Germany was not responsible for creating the



IN FLANDERS FIELD: No Man’s Land, the area between the trenches was littered with shellholes, barbed wire, and bodies. This was what remained of a forest in Flanders Field.

atmosphere in which war was a probability. World War I broke out against a background of rivalry between the world’s great powers, including Britain, Germany, France, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy, the Ottoman Empire, and Japan. The previous 40 years were characterized by increasing nationalism, imperialism, militarism, and various alliances.

- World War I helped strengthen the power of central government in the United States and Europe, which meant that 19th-century liberalism that emphasized individual responsibility was gone forever. In fact, one of the chief legacies of the war is the lasting power of the state over its citizens.
- World War I increased people’s suspicions of minority groups. All outsiders were considered a potential threat, especially the Jews, who were seen as sleek profiteers of the armaments industry.
- The Harlem Hell Fighters were one of the few African American units that saw the front lines. For their extraordinary acts of heroism, the soldiers received the French *Croix de Guerre*, a medal awarded to soldiers from Allied countries for bravery in combat. However, in the U.S their deeds were largely ignored.
- During World War I, the Turks slaughtered approximately 1.5 million Armenians. This act of genocide would later attract the attention of Hitler and was partly

responsible for sowing the seeds of the Holocaust.

- After World War I, Britain's leadership in the world economy was gone forever. It had huge debts, high unemployment, and slow growth. France suffered as well. Most of the loans it had made to czarist Russia were never repaid, inflation was rampant, and large parts of the country were ruined.
- World War I brought a new era of warfare. The most significant development was air power, which brought civilians in the line of fire. By 1918, it was clear that the days of cavalry as a realistic fighting force were over with the introduction of poisonous gas. Tanks heralded a new era of offensive war. Finally, the Nazi blitzkrieg tactic of World War II grew out of the final Allied offensive of 1918 in which tanks, aircraft, artillery, and men were carefully coordinated.
- Because mustard gas was unpredictable, it was never the war-winning weapon

GOING OVER THE TOP: Attacks on opposition trenches would normally lead to heavy casualties. Most men were cut down before they had gone more than a few steps.

- its users hoped it would be in World War I. Neither side used it in World War II.
- World War I helped bring about the emancipation of women. Women took over many traditionally male jobs and showed that they could perform them just as well as men. In 1918, most women over the age of 30 were given the vote in the British parliamentary elections. Two years later, the 19th amendment granted American women the vote.
- World War I helped bring about the emancipation of African Americans. For example, Henry Ford recruited black people from the South to work in his factories. The migration of African Americans from the South to the North during World War I was one of the most significant population shifts in the 20th century.
- Post-World War I literature includes John McCrae's *In Flanders Fields*, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*,

Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and Wilfred Owen's tragic poem, *Anthem for Doomed Youth*.

- World War I helped hasten medical advances. Physicians learned better wound management and the setting of bones. Harold Gillies, an English doctor, pioneered skin graft surgery. The huge scale of those who needed medical care in World War I helped teach physicians and nurses the advantages of specialization and professional management.
- World War I was the catalyst that transformed Russia into the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). It was the creation of the world's first communist state and ushered in a new phase in world history. Historians note that this was the most



DOGFIGHT: British SE5 fighter planes swoop down to attack a German formation.

startling and important consequence of World War I.

- After World War I, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland emerged as independent nations.
- The collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I helped the Allies extend their influence into the Middle East. Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Palestine were declared "mandates" under the League of Nations. France essentially took control of Syria and Britain took control over the remaining three mandates.
- The trench network of World War I stretched approximately 25,000 miles (40,200 km) from the English Channel to Switzerland. The area was known as the Western Front. British poet Siegfried Sassoon wrote, "When all is done and said, the war was mainly a matter of holes and ditches."
- Journalists faced execution. A handful of journalists risked their lives to report on the realities of war. As the

Government sought to control the flow of information from the frontline at the start of the war, journalists were banned. Reporting on the conflict was, in the opinion of the War Office, helping the enemy. If caught, they faced the death penalty.

- Two million letters were delivered to the front every week. Astonishingly, it only took two days for a letter from Britain to reach the front in France. The journey began at a purpose-built sorting depot in Regent's Park before being shipped to the trenches. By the end of the war, two billion letters and 114 million parcels had been delivered.
- War work turned some women's skin yellow. When a generation of men went to fight the war, more than a million women took their place in the workforce. They worked long hours, often in poor conditions and with dangerous chemicals. The so-called 'canaries' were women who worked with

TNT, which gave them toxic jaundice and turned their skin yellow.

- Wilfred Owen was unknown at the end of the war. Wilfred Owen is one of the best known poets of the World War I, but when he died on the frontline, just a week before the end of the war, he was relatively unknown. At the time, his view of the war as one of pity and horror was in the minority. It wasn't until the 1960s that a literary elite decided this was the most authentic view of the conflict because it chimed with their own anti-war feelings. This resulted in the publication of two key war poetry anthologies which heavily featured Owen.



ACES: Manfred von Richthofen and Rene Fonck were the top German and Allied fighter pilots of World War I with 80 and 75 kills respectively.

- Blood banks were developed during World War I. The British Army began the routine use of blood transfusion in treating wounded soldiers. Blood was transferred directly from one person to another. A US Army doctor, Captain Oswald Robertson, established the first blood bank on the Western Front in 1917, using sodium citrate to prevent the blood from coagulating and becoming unusable. Blood was kept on ice for up to 28 days and then transported to casualty clearing stations for use in life-saving surgery where it was needed most.
- Nine out of 10 soldiers survived the trenches. Being in the firing line was rare for a British soldier. They constantly moved around the trench system - meaning more often than not they were kept from the dangers of enemy fire. The more typ-

ical experience for the British Tommy would have been a life of boredom and regular routine.

- Generals were banned from going over the top. The stereotype is that the ordinary soldiers of World War I were lions led by donkeys - the donkeys being incompetent generals who sat out the war in comfort while thousands died unnecessary deaths. In fact, so many of the generals wanted to be closer to the fighting they had to be banned from going over the top because they kept getting killed. The experience required to be a general was too significant to lose.
- The Treaty of Versailles stated that Germany had started World War I. It gave Alsace and Lorraine back to France. Poland picked up

CASUALTIES OF WAR: British troops that have been blinded by gas are led to a first aid station.

German territory in the east, and other territories were given to Belgium and Lithuania. The treaty also transferred the Hultschin area of Upper Silesia to Czechoslovakia. The eastern part of Upper Silesia was assigned to Poland. Lower Silesia, meanwhile, was left entirely to Germany. The key Baltic port of Danze, the industrial region of the Saar Basin, and the strategically important Rhineland were also taken from Germany. Its armed forces were strictly limited and its colonies were made League of Nations mandates. A 1921 Reparations Committee decided that Germany should pay \$33 billion in compensation to the Allies for the damage it caused. The Treaty left Germany humiliated and impoverished, which left the world vulnerable to another world war.

World War I

28 Jul 1914 – 11 Nov 1918

*When you go home
Tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrow
We gave our today.*



Feared and respected

In the first of five articles we look at members of the German Wehrmacht that were both feared and respected by their enemies.

When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winner writes the history books - books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe.

"History is written by the victors," was a quote made by none other than Winston Churchill and he is often credited with being the originator of this quote.

Yet a similar quote was made prior to this. At the Nuremberg trials Hermann Göring voiced the sentiment "*Der Sieger wird immer der Richter und der Besiegte stets der Angeklagte sein.*" This roughly translates as "The victor will always be the judge, and the vanquished the accused."

So who said it first, the victorious Churchill or the vanquished Göring? As it transpired - neither of them.

The quote goes back a long time and no-one is entirely sure who first made the quote. Even Napoleon Bonaparte once said "What is history, but a fable agreed upon?"

There is a ring of truth to the quote. The victors of a conflict usually do get to write the history. They are more often than not portrayed as the 'good guys', while the losers are the 'bad guys'.

This is especially true of World War II. In the majority of Hollywood movies German soldiers are portrayed as Nazi fanatics that goose-stepped into

battle with their arms raised in a Nazi salute while screaming "Heil Hitler!"

Even respected history books will often refer to 'this Nazi general or that Nazi admiral'. Yet while the German *Wehrmacht* was the unified armed forces of Nazi Germany from 1935 to 1945, the majority of them were never members of the Nazi party.

In fact many of them had little time for Adolf Hitler or his party. So much so that a number of high ranking generals plotted to overthrow or assassinate Hitler on numerous occasions.

Many of them were professional soldiers fighting for their country because their country was at war.

Many German soldiers were not only feared by the Allies, there was also a grudging respect for them. In this article we will be looking at five of the most feared and respected German soldiers of World War II.

Kurt Knispel

Kurt Knispel was a Sudeten German *Heer* (Army) panzer loader, gunner and later commander, and was the highest scoring tank ace of World War II with a total of 168 confirmed tank kills. He is regarded by many as the top tank 'ace' in history.

He was known for often crediting his kills to other tank crews in order to boost their morale. His actual number of tank kills



Kurt Knispel

may have been as high as 250. He once knocked out a Russian T-34 tank at 3,000 metres.

He was awarded the Iron Cross, First Class, after destroying his fiftieth enemy tank and the Tank Assault Badge in Gold after more than 100 tank battles.

When Knispel had destroyed 126 enemy tanks (with another 20 unconfirmed kills), he was awarded the German Cross in Gold.

He became the only non-commissioned officer of the German tank arm to be named in a *Wehrmacht* communique.

Though he was recommended for it four times, Knispel never received the coveted Knight's Cross, a standard award for most other World War II German tank aces.

He never rose above the rank of *feldwebel* (sergeant) and was often in conflict with his superiors.

Knispel's slow promotion is attributed to several conflicts with higher Nazi authorities and his general lack of military bearing, sporting a goatee and hair longer than regulations.

On one occasion he assaulted an *Einsatzgruppen* (Nazi SS security forces that acted as mobile killing units during the invasions of Poland and the Soviet Union) officer whom he saw mistreating Soviet POWs.

Only his impressive track-record and the fact that he was a bit of a legend among the troops saved him from ending up in a military prison.

Knispel fought on the Eastern Front as well as in Normandy. On 28 April 1945, nine days before the war in Europe ended, Knispel was severely wounded by shrapnel to his head when his Tiger II was hit in battle with Soviet tanks and the ammunition exploded. He died two hours later in a German field hospital.

On 10 April 2013, Czech authorities said that Knispel's remains were found with 15 other German soldiers behind a church wall in Vrbovec, identified by his dog tags.

On 12 November 2014, the German War Graves Commission reburied his remains at the Central Brno military cemetery in Brno.

Erich Hartmann

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

He flew 1,404 combat missions and participated in aerial



Erich Hartmann

combat on 825 separate occasions. He was credited with shooting down 352 Allied aircraft - 345 Soviet and seven American - while serving with the Luftwaffe.

During the course of his career, Hartmann was forced to crash-land his fighter 16 times due to either damage received from parts of enemy aircraft he had just shot down or mechanical failure.

He joined the Luftwaffe in 1940 and completed his fighter pilot training in 1942. He was posted to the veteran Jagdgeschwader 52 (JG 52) on the Eastern Front and was fortunate to be placed under the supervision of some of the Luftwaffe's most experienced fighter pilots. Under their guidance, Hartmann steadily developed his tactics.

On 29 October 1943 he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for 148 enemy aircraft destroyed and the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross for 202 enemy aircraft on 2 March 1944, followed by the Swords

to the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves exactly four months later for 268 enemy aircraft shot down.

Ultimately, Hartmann earned the coveted Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds on 25 August 1944 for claiming 301 aerial victories. At the time of its presentation to Hartmann, this was Germany's highest military decoration.

Hartmann achieved his 352nd and last aerial victory at midday on 8 May 1945, hours before the German surrender. Along with the remainder of JG 52, he surrendered to United States Army forces and was turned over to the Red Army.

In an attempt to pressure him into service with the Soviet-friendly East German National People's Army, he was tried on war crimes charges and convicted. He was initially sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment, later increased to 25 years, and spent 10 years in various Soviet prison camps and gulags until he was released in 1955. In 1997, the Russian Federation (posthumously) relieved him of all charges.

In 1956, Hartmann joined the newly established West German Air Force in the Bundeswehr, and became the first Geschwaderkommodore of Jagdgeschwader 71 "Richthofen".

He was retired in 1970, due to his opposition to the procurement of the F-104 Starfighter. In his later years, after his military career had ended, he became a civilian flight instructor. Erich Hartmann died on 20 September 1993 aged 71.



Hans-Ulrich Rudel

Hans-Ulrich Rudel

Not only was Hans-Ulrich Rudel a committed and dedicated Nazi, he would remain unrepentant until his death on 18 December 1982.

Yet while one may loath the principles he stood for, there is no denying that he was a brilliant pilot who was both feared and respected for his skills.

During World War II he was probably the Luftwaffe's most successful ground-attack fighter.

He was credited with the destruction of 519 tanks, as well as a number of ships. He claimed 51 aerial victories and the destruction of more than 800 vehicles of all types.

He flew 2,530 ground-attack missions exclusively on the Eastern Front, usually flying the Junkers Ju 87 "Stuka" dive bomber.

He was the most decorated German serviceman of World War II receiving the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Golden Oak Leaves, Swords, and Diamonds in January 1945, a decoration created specifical-

ly for him. He was the only person ever to receive the award.

While never charged with war crimes, like many other Nazi's Rudel was interned after the war. He was released in April 1946 and went into private business.

After the war he became a prominent neo-Nazi activist in Latin America and West Germany until his death.



Otto Kretschmer

Otto Kretschmer

Otto Kretschmer was a German naval officer and submariner in World War II and the Cold War.

From September 1939 until his surrender in March 1941, he sank 47 ships, a total of 274,333 tons. For this he received the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords, among other awards.

He earned the nickname "Silent Otto" both for his successful use of the "silent running" capability of U-boats as well as

for his reluctance to transmit radio messages during patrols.

After the war, he served in the German Federal Navy and retired in 1970 with the rank of *Flottillenadmiral* (flotilla admiral).

As commander of U-99, Kretschmer commenced attacking convoys at night on the surface, sinking merchant ships with highly accurate shots, using only one torpedo per target ship; the quote "one torpedo ... one ship" is attributed to Kretschmer around this time. Kretschmer's tactics were widely copied throughout the U-Boat force, although they achieved mixed results.

Kretschmer was meticulous in his conduct towards the crews of torpedoed ships. When attacking lone merchantmen in the days before wolfpack tactics began in earnest, he had been known to hand down bottles of spirits and blankets into lifeboats and give them a course to the nearest land.

On one patrol in September 1940, Kretschmer had also recovered a survivor of another torpedo attack who was alone in the Atlantic on a small raft and took him aboard, transferring him to a lifeboat after his next successful attack.

On his last patrol in March 1941, he sank 10 more ships, but these were to be his last victims.

On 17 March 1941, during a counter-attack by the British escorts of Convoy HX-112, U-99 was disabled after repeated depth charge attacks by the destroyers Walker and Vanoc.

Kretschmer surfaced and, under fire from the British vessels,

scuttled his boat. Three of his men were lost, but Kretschmer and the remainder of U-99's crew were captured.

Kretschmer's usual standards of conduct were evident during the sinking of his boat; he signaled Walker asking for rescue for his men, taking care to ensure as many left the submarine as possible, and assisted some of his crew towards the rescue nets hung from the British destroyer.

Kretschmer's strength was evidently failing in the cold ocean; his own rescue was at the hands of a British sailor who climbed down the nets and plucked him from the water.

On 5 August 1998, while on vacation in Bavaria in the summer of 1998, he died in an accident on a boat on the Danube, while celebrating his 50th wedding anniversary, aged eighty-six. He was cremated and his ashes were scattered at sea. He was 86 years old.

Matthäus Hetzenauer

Born in Austria in December 192, Matthäus Hetzenauer was drafted in September 1942 at age 17 into the 140th Mountain Rifle Reinforcement Battalion based at Kufstein.

Hetzenauer arrived at Kufstein in 1942 and trained for two years as a Gebirgsjäger in the city and in the nearby Wilder Kaiser mountains, which his upbringing in the Tyrol had conditioned him for, then he received further instruction at the Gebirgsjäger (Alpine Infantry) school in Mittenwald, Hochgebirgsjäger school in the Stubaital, and the Army NCO Gebirgsjäger school in Wörgl.



Matthäus Hetzenauer

Hetzenauer then trained as a sniper during March - July 1944 at the Truppenübungsplatz Seetal-Alpe in Steiermark, before being assigned as a Gefreiter (Corporal) to the 3rd Gebirgsjäger Division.

He utilized both a Karabiner 98k sniper variant with 6x telescopic sight and a Gewehr 43 with ZF4 4x telescopic sight. He saw action against Soviet forces in the Carpathians, Hungary, and Slovakia.

On 6 November 1944 he suffered head trauma from artillery fire, and was awarded the

Wound Badge three days later.

At the age of just 20 Gefreiter Hetzenauer received the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross on 17 April 1945. Generalleutnant and Divisions commander Paul Klatt had recommended Hetzenauer because of his numerous sniper kills, which totalled two enemy companies, without fear for his own safety under artillery fire and enemy attacks.

This recommendation was approved by General der Gebirgstruppe Karl von Le Suire and General der Panzertruppe Walter Nehring.

Hetzenauer was captured by Soviet troops the following month, and served five years in a Soviet prison camp.

During the war Hetzenauer was credited with 345 kills. His longest confirmed kill was reported at 1,100 meters.

He died on 3 October 2004 at the age of 79. His wife Maria died in 2006.

In forthcoming issues of Military Despatches we will look at the most feared and respected British, American, Russian and Japanese soldiers in World War II.

Bloodiest battles of World War I

There were 20 million deaths and 21 million wounded during World War I. Two battles during the war resulted in almost one million casualties each, while two offensives cost well in excess of a million casualties.

The total number of military and civilian casualties in World War I was about 40 million: estimates range from around 15 to 22 million deaths and about 23 million wounded military personnel, ranking it among the deadliest conflicts in human history.

The total number of deaths includes from nine to 11 million military personnel. The civilian death toll was about six to 13 million.

The Triple Entente (also known as the Allies) lost about six million military personnel while the Central Powers lost about four million. At least two million died from diseases and six million went missing, pre-

sumed dead.

About two-thirds of military deaths in World War I were in battle, unlike the conflicts that took place in the 19th century when the majority of deaths were due to disease. Nevertheless, disease, including the 1918 flu pandemic and deaths while held as prisoners of war, still caused about one third of total military deaths for all belligerents.

During the war there were certain battles, offensives and campaigns that resulted in huge losses. In this article we look nine of them.

Hundred Day Offensive

- Date: 8 August – 11 November 1918
 - Location: Amiens, France to Mons, Belgium
 - Result: Decisive Allied Victory; Collapse of the Western Front and the German Empire; End of World War I
- The Hundred Days Offensive

was a series of massive Allied offensives which ended the First World War. Beginning with the Battle of Amiens (8–12 August) on the Western Front, the Allies pushed the Central Powers back, undoing their gains from the Spring Offensive.

The Germans retreated to the Hindenburg Line, but the Allies broke through the line with a series of victories, starting with

the Battle of St Quentin Canal on 29 September.

The offensive, together with a revolution breaking out in Germany, led to the Armistice of 11 November 1918 which ended the war with an Allied victory.

The term “Hundred Days Offensive” does not refer to a battle or strategy, but rather the rapid series of Allied victories against which the German armies had no reply.

Casualties

There were 1,868,233 casualties in total.

The French suffered 531,000, the British 412,000, and the

USA 127,000.

The Germans suffered 785,733 of which 100,000 were killed. Austria-Hungary suffered 2,500 killed and 10,000 wounded.

Spring Offensive

- Date: 21 March – 18 July 1918
- Location: Northern France; West Flanders, Belgium
- Result: German Operational Failure

The 1918 Spring Offensive, or *Kaiserschlacht* (“Kaiser’s Battle”), also known as the Ludendorff Offensive, was a series of German attacks along the Western Front during the First World War, beginning on 21 March 1918.

The Germans had realised that their only remaining chance of victory was to defeat the Allies before the United States



could fully deploy its resources. The German Army had gained a temporary advantage in numbers as nearly 50 divisions had been freed by the Russian withdrawal from the war with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

There were four German offensives, codenamed Michael,orgette, Gneisenau, and Blücher-Yorck. Michael was the main attack, which was intended to break through the Allied lines, outflank the British forces (which held the front from the Somme River to the English Channel) and defeat the British Army. Once that was achieved, it was hoped that the French would seek armistice terms.

The other offensives were subsidiary to Michael and were designed to divert Allied forces from the main offensive effort on the Somme. No clear objective was established before the start of the offensives and once the operations were underway, the targets of the attacks were constantly changed according to the battlefield (tactical) situation.

Once they began advancing, the Germans struggled to maintain the momentum, partly due to logistical issues. The fast-moving stormtrooper units could not carry enough food and ammunition to sustain themselves for long, and the army could not move in supplies and reinforcements fast enough to assist them.

The Allies concentrated their main forces in the essential areas (the approaches to the Channel Ports and the rail junction of Amiens). Strategically worthless ground, which had been

devastated by years of conflict, was left lightly defended. Within a few weeks, the danger of a German breakthrough had passed, though related fighting continued until July.

Casualties

There were 1,551,715 casualties in total. The Germans suffered 688,341 casualties while the Allies suffered 863,374.

Battle of Verdun

- Date: 21 February – 18 December 1916
- Location: Région Fortifiée de Verdun (RFV) Verdun-sur-Meuse, France
- Result: French victory

The Battle of Verdun was fought from 21 February to 18 December 1916 on the Western Front in France.

The battle was the longest of the First World War and took place on the hills north of Verdun-sur-Meuse. The German 5th Army attacked the defences of the Fortified Region of Verdun (RFV, Région Fortifiée de Verdun) and those of the French Second Army on the right (east) bank of the Meuse.

Using the experience of the Second Battle of Champagne in 1915, the Germans planned to capture the Meuse Heights, an excellent defensive position with good observation for artillery-fire on Verdun.

The Germans hoped that the French would commit their strategic reserve to recapture the position and suffer catastrophic losses at little cost to the Germans.

Philippe Pétain ordered no retreat and that German attacks were to be counter-attacked, despite this exposing French in-

fantry to German artillery-fire. By 29 March, French guns on the west bank had begun a constant bombardment of Germans on the east bank, causing many infantry casualties.

The German offensive was extended to the left (west) bank of the Meuse, to gain observation and eliminate the French artillery firing over the river but the attacks failed to reach their objectives.

In September and December, French counter-offensives recaptured much ground on the east bank and recovered Fort Douaumont and Fort Vaux.

The battle lasted for 302 days, the longest and one of the most costly in human history.

Casualties

The Germans suffered between 336,000 and 355,000 casualties while the French suffered between 379,000 and 400,000.

Battle of Passchendaele

- Date: 31 July – 10 November 1917
- Location: Passchendaele, Ypres Salient, Belgium
- Result: British and Canadian victory

The Third Battle of Ypres, also known as the Battle of Passchendaele, was a campaign of the First World War, fought by the Allies against the German Empire.

The battle took place on the Western Front, from July to November 1917, for control of the ridges south and east of the Belgian city of Ypres in West Flanders, as part of a strategy decided by the Allies at conferences in November 1916 and May 1917.

Passchendaele lies on the last ridge east of Ypres, eight kilometres from Roulers (now Roselare) junction of the Bruges (Brugge) to Kortrijk railway.

The station at Roulers was on the main supply route of the German 4th Army. Once Passchendaele Ridge had been captured, the Allied advance was to continue to a line from Thourout (now Torhout) to Couckelaere (Koekelare).

The resistance of the 4th Army, unusually wet weather in August, the beginning of the autumn rains in October and the diversion of British and French resources to Italy, enabled the Germans to avoid the general withdrawal which had seemed inevitable in early October.

The campaign ended in November, when the Canadian Corps captured Passchendaele, apart from local attacks in December and early in the new year. The Battle of the Lys (Fourth Battle of Ypres) and the Fifth Battle of Ypres of 1918, were fought before the Allies occupied the Belgian coast and reached the Dutch frontier.

Casualties

The total number of casualties was estimated to have been around 848,614.

The Allies suffered between 240,000 and 448,614 casualties, while German casualties were between 217,000 and 400,000.

Serbian Campaign

- Date: 28 July 1914 – 24 November 1915
- Location: Serbia, Montenegro, Albania
- Result: Serbian victory in 1914; Central Powers victory in 1915; Serbian re-

took through Albania; Austro-Hungarian occupation; Bulgarian occupation

The Serbian Campaign is the series of campaigns launched against Serbia at the beginning of the First World War.

The first campaign began after Austria Hungary declared war on Serbia on 28 July 1914, the campaign to “punish” Serbia, under the command of Austrian Oskar Potiorek, ended after three unsuccessful Austro-Hungarian invasion attempts were repelled by the Serbs and their Montenegrin allies.

Serbia’s defeat of the Austro-Hungarian invasion of 1914 ranks as one of the great upsets of modern military history.

The Second Campaign was launched, under German command, almost a year later, on 6 October 1915, when Bulgarian, Austrian, and German forces, led by Field Marshall August von Mackensen, invaded Serbia from three sides, pre-empting the Allied advance from Salonica to help her.

This resulted in the Great Retreat through Montenegro and Albania, the evacuation to Greece and the establishment of the Macedonian front.

The defeat of Serbia gave the Central Powers temporary mastery over the Balkans, opening up a land route from Berlin to Istanbul, allowing the Germans to re-supply the Ottoman Empire for the rest of the war.

Mackensen declared an end to the campaign on 24 November 1915. Serbia was then divided and occupied by the Habsburg Empire and Bulgaria.

Casualties

In 1914 Austria-Hungary suf-

fered 273,804 casualties while Serbia suffered 163,557. In 1915 the Central Powers, consisting of Austria-Hungary, the Tsardom of Bulgaria and the German Empire, suffered a combined total of 67,000 casualties. The Allied Powers of Serbia and Montenegro suffered 241,000 casualties.

Other notable battles included:

First Battle of the Marne

- Date: 6–12 September 1914
- Location: Marne River near Brasles, east of Paris, France
- Result: Franco-British victory

Casualties

French - 250,000
British - 13,000
German - 250,000

Battle of Gallipoli

- Date: 17 February 1915 – 9 January 1916
- Location: Gallipoli Peninsula, Sanjak of Gelibolu, Adrianople Vilayet, Ottoman Empire
- Result: Ottoman victory

Casualties

French - 27,169
British - 160,790
Ottoman Empire - 250,000

Battle of Arras

- Date: 9 April – 16 May 1917
- Location: Arras, France
- Result: British victory

Casualties

British - 158,000
German - 130,000

Up close and personal

Throughout World War I, assaults on enemy positions almost inevitably ended in hand-to-hand combat in the confined spaces of trenches and dugouts.

Pistols came into their own in such circumstances, but were issued mainly to officers. Individual soldiers armed themselves with the rifle-and-bayonet, yet they were often difficult to use in confined spaces.

Weapons such as knives, axes, spades and clubs were chosen for their ability to disable or kill at a single stroke.

The design of early grenades, although not entirely satisfactory, soon improved dramatically.

The P08 or "Parabellum" - was the German officer's handgun of choice during World War I. Its 9mm Parabellum round (9×19mm) was more powerful than others of similar dimensions.

Most American officers preferred the .45 Colt New Service revolver over the Colt 'automatics' because they felt they were less likely to jam.

British officers prized the Webley Mk VI for its rugged reliability.



Luger P08



Colt New Service



Webley & Scott Mk VI

No. 36 Mills bomb

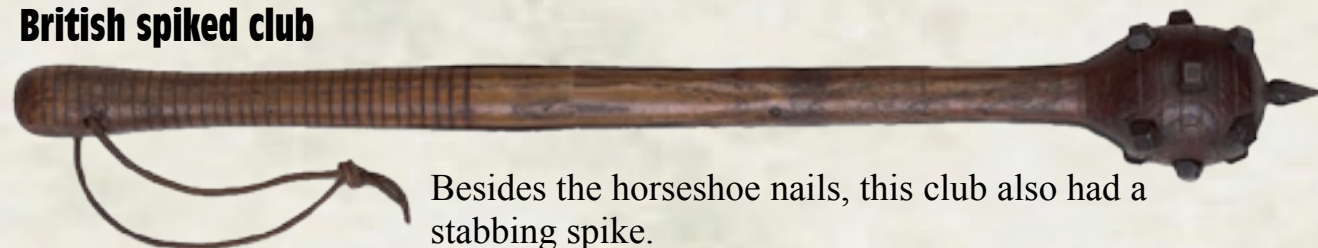


The German stielhandgranate became one of the Stormtroopers iconic weapons. The handle gave the thrower a significant range advantage over other grenades.



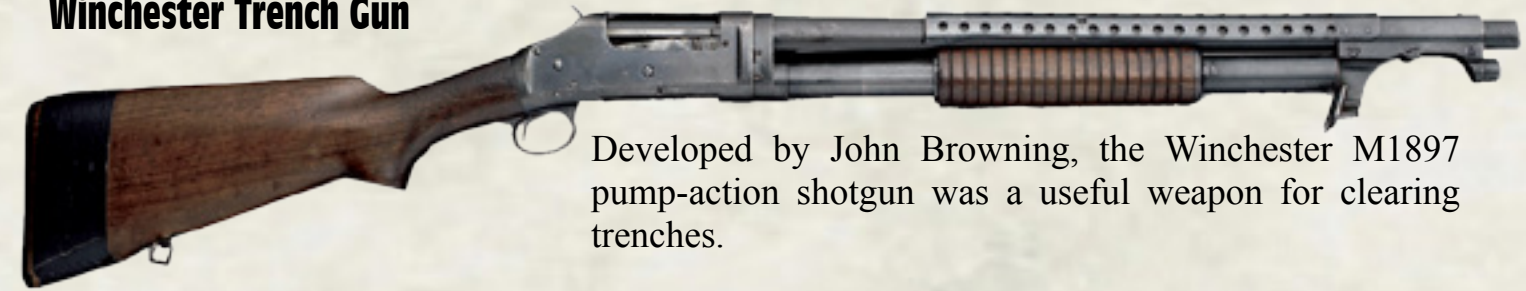
Stick grenade

British spiked club



Besides the horseshoe nails, this club also had a stabbing spike.

Winchester Trench Gun



Developed by John Browning, the Winchester M1897 pump-action shotgun was a useful weapon for clearing trenches.

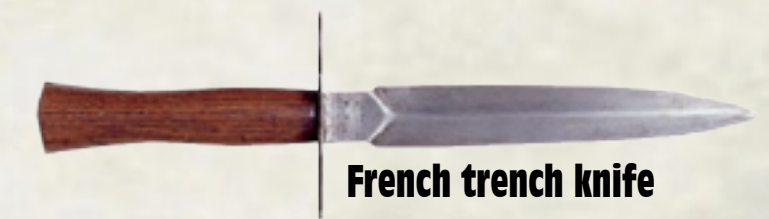


Nailed cosh

The simplest trench-fighting weapons were clubs and truncheons, often - as in this example - with nails or spikes added to increase their lethality, and usually with a retaining loop.



German 'Ersatz' knife bayonet

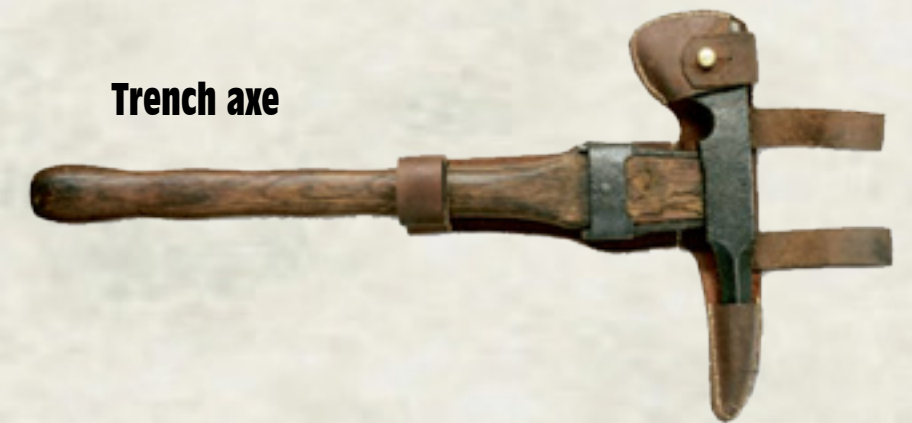


French trench knife



American knuckle-duster trench knife

Trench axe



The battlefields of World War I were festooned with barbed-wire entanglements, and many methods for dealing with this were tested. One involved fitting sprung cutting jaws to the muzzle of an SMLE rifle, but this proved ineffective.



SMLE Mk III Rifle with wire-cutting attachment

Rank Structure - Swiss Armed Forces

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

The Swiss Armed Forces operates on land and in the air. Under the country's militia system, regular soldiers constitute a small part of the military and the rest are conscripts or volunteers aged 19 to 34 (in some cases up to 50).

Because of Switzerland's long history of neutrality, the Swiss Armed Forces do not take part in conflicts in other countries, but do participate in international peacekeeping missions. Switzerland is part of the NATO Partnership for Peace programme.

The regulations of the Swiss

militia system stipulate that the soldiers keep their own personal equipment, including all personally assigned weapons, at home (until 2007 this also included ammunition, or in an armoury.

Compulsory military service applies to all male Swiss citizens, with women serving voluntarily. Males usually receive initial orders at the age of 18 for military conscription eligibility screening.

About two-thirds of young Swiss men are found suitable for service, while alternative service exists for those found



unsuitable. Annually, approximately 20,000 persons are trained in basic training for 18 weeks (23 weeks for special forces).

Non-commissioned Officers (NCO) and Warrant Officers (WO)



Soldat
(Private)



Gefreiter
(Appointee)



Obergefreiter
(Private First Class)



Korporal
(Corporal)



Wachtmeister
(Sergeant)



Oberwachtmeister
(Sergeant First Class)



Feldweibel
(Master Sergeant)



Fourier
(Quartermaster sergeant)



Hauptfeldweibel
(First Sergeant)



Adjutant Unteroffizier
(Warrant Officer second class)



Stabsadjutant
(Staff Warrant Officer)



Hauptadjutant
(Master Warrant Officer)



Chefadjutant
(Chief Warrant Officer)

Officers



Leutnant
(Second Lieutenant)



Oberleutnant
(Lieutenant)



Hauptmann
(Captain)



Major
(Major)



Oberstleutnant
(Lieutenant Colonel)



Oberst
(Colonel)



Fachoffizier
(Specialist Officer)



Brigadier
(Brigadier General)



Divisionär
(Major General)



Korpskommandant
(Lieutenant General)



General
(General)

Weapons & Equipment: WW I

This month we compare the weapons and equipment of the major combatants in the First World War.

British Army

The British Army during World War I fought the largest and most costly war in its long history.

At the outbreak of the war in August 1914, the British regular army was a small professional force. It consisted of 247,432 regular troops organised in four regiments of Guards (Grenadier, with three Battalions; Coldstream, with three Battalions; Scots, with two Battalions; Irish with one Battalion), 68 regiments of the line and the Rifle Brigade (despite its name, this was an infantry regiment), 31 cavalry regiments, artillery and other support arms.

Up until conscription was introduced in January 1916, British soldiers were volunteers.

The standard uniform had changed since the lessons learnt during the Anglo Boer Wars. No longer did they wear the traditional 'red coat', but rather a khaki uniform.

Most troops were armed with bolt-action rifles, such as the Lee-Enfield.

With the introduction of gas to the battlefield, gas masks became vital items.

Another unique weapon was the trench knife. If troops managed to breach an enemy trench, the fighting would be at close quarters, and knives and clubs

were useful for this type of combat. Some trench knives incorporated a 'knuckle duster'.

Infantry Equipment

- A - Combat boots.
- B - Brodie helmet.
- C - Lee-Enfield Mk I.
- D - Webley Mk IV.
- E - Mills bomb.
- F - Lee-Enfield Bayonet.
- G - Trench knife.
- H - Gas mask and case.
- I - Canteen.
- J - Trenching tool.
- K - Mess kit.
- L - Puttee.
- M - Ammo bandolier.
- N - Backpack.

German Army

The Deutsches Heer (German Imperial Army) was the name given to the combined land and air forces of the German Empire.

The Germans wore a field grey uniform. At the start of the war most troops still wore the *pickelhaube*, a spiked helmet. This was later replaced by the distinctive *stahlhelm* (steel helmet).

The Germans used a number of bolt-action rifles during the war, with the Gewehr 98 become the standard issue.

Many troops would make use of a sidearm and a trench knife for *mêlée* combat.

The gas mask was also a vital component of equipment for German troops.

The trenching tool was not only used to dig holes. It was also useful for *mêlée* combat. Some troops would even sharpen the edges of the shovel.

While the standard hand grenade was the M1915 *Stielhandgranate*, the M1917 *Eierhandgranate* was also popular because it was smaller and easier to throw.

Infantry Equipment

- A - Combat boots.
- B - Stahlhelm (Steel helmet).
- C - Gewehr 98.
- D - Mauser C96.

- E - M1915 Stielhandgranate.
- F - Gewehr 98 Bayonet.
- G - Trench knife.
- H - Gas mask and case.
- I - Canteen.
- J - Trenching tool.
- K - Mess kit.
- L - Ammo bandolier.
- N - Backpack.

Pickelhaube



French Army

During the early months of the war the French still wore blue coats and red pants. This, however, was soon changed.

They adopted a uniform that was a light grey/blue.

The standard infantry weapon was the Lebel M1886 bolt-action rifle. Some troops would also use sidearms such as the Ruby M1914.

One of the unique weapons used by the French was the 'French Nail'. These were locally fabricated and converted

bayonets, knives and stabbing weapons. They were crude stabbing spikes made by adding a point to a steel stake which had its rearmost section heated and bent into a crude handle. Three French Nail's could be made from a single Lebel bayonet. The early M2 gas mask was not very effective and these were later replaced by the Ars gas mask.

- C - Lebel M1886.
- D - *Pistolet Automatique* "Ruby".
- E - F1 grenade.
- F - Lebel Bayonet.
- G - 'French Nail' trench knife.
- H - Ars Gas mask and case.
- I - Canteen.
- J - Mess kit.
- K - Ammo bandolier.
- L - Backpack.

Infantry Equipment

- A - Combat boots.
- B - M15 *Casque Adrian* helmet.

US Army

U.S. service members in World War I came to be dubbed doughboys - the term most typically was used to refer to troops deployed to Europe as part of the American Expeditionary Forces.

The standard infantry weapons was the bolt-action Springfield M1903.

The most popular sidearm was the Colt M1911, a pistol that remained in service for many years.

The AEF gas mask and respi-

rator was standard issue to US troops.

Like the British, the Americans favoured a trench knife that was also a 'knuckle duster'. It was effective for *mêlée* combat.

Like the British and the French, US troops wore puttee., a name adapted from the Hindi *paṭṭī* (bandage). The consisted of a long narrow piece of cloth wound tightly and spirally round the leg from the ankle to the knee. They served to provide both support and protec-

tion.

Infantry Equipment

- A - Combat boots.
- B - Steel helmet.
- C - Springfield M1903.
- D - Colt M1911.
- E - Mk 1 Grenade.
- F - Springfield M1903 Bayonet.
- G - Trench knife.
- H - Gas mask and case.
- I - Canteen.
- J - Trenching tool.
- K - Mess kit.
- L - Ammo bandolier.
- N - Backpack.





United Kingdom



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K



L



N



M



Germany



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K



M



L



France



A



B



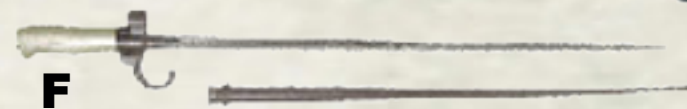
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United States



A



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K



L

Harold Ackroyd

The unassuming, bespectacled World War I medical officer that did everything in his power to save the lives of others. He was a hero in every sense of the word.

Instituted on 29 January 1856 by Queen Victoria to honour acts of valour during the Crimean War, the Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest award of the United Kingdom honours system. It is awarded for gallantry "in the presence of the enemy" to members of the British armed forces. It may be awarded posthumously.

A total of 1,358 Victoria Crosses have been awarded since 1856 and only three people have been awarded a bar to the Victoria Cross. In other words, they were awarded the medal twice.

The greatest number of Victoria Crosses won in a single conflict was World War I, when 628 were awarded.

Without doubt, to be recommended for a VC the nominee would have had to have demonstrated exceptional gallantry. Harold Ackroyd was recommended for the VC not once, not twice, but a remarkable 34 times.

Medical Career

Born in Southport, Lancashire on 18 July 1877, Harold Ackroyd was the youngest son of Edward Ackroyd.

Harold's father had inher-

ited a sizable fortune from his mother's family in 1878 and became Chairman of the Southport and Cheshire Lines Extension Railway, a change in fortune which made a private education possible.

Schooled at Mintholme College and Shrewsbury School, Harold then gained entry to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

He completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1899 and continued his medical studies at

Guy's Hospital, London. It was here that he was appointed as a House Officer.

He then went on to hospital appointments at the Birmingham General Hospital and the David Lewis Northern Hospital, Liverpool.

In 1908 he secured a British Medical Association scholarship and became a Research Scholar at Downing College, in the Pharmacological Laboratory and then in the Institute for the study of Animal Nutrition, Department of Agriculture, Cambridge.

Harold worked with Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, Professor of Biochemistry and published three papers on Purine metabolism.

While at Cambridge, Harold met Mabel Robina Smythe, the matron of Strangeways Hospital. On 1 August 1908 they married and lived in Great Shelford where their children Ursula (1909) and Stephen (1912) were born.

They moved to Royston,



Hertfordshire where their third child, Anthony, was born in 1914.

Military Career

Britain entered World War I on 4 August 1914. Harold was very patriotic and, despite being deeply involved in scientific research at Cambridge, he decided to join the army in early 1915.

He was commissioned Temporary Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps on 15 February 1915 and was attached as Medical Officer to the 6th Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

They formed part of the 53rd Infantry Brigade in the 18th Division and sailed for France on 25 July 1915. They were posted to the Somme front taking over a portion of the front line held by the 5th Division on 22 August. By the end of 1915 the 18th Division had suffered 1,247 casualties, the quietest four months in its history!

The Somme

Harold was promoted to temporary captain on 15 February 1916. The 18th Division was now part of the Fourth Army

(United Kingdom) under Sir Henry Rawlinson.

On 1 July the British launched what was to become known as the Battle of the Somme. By the end of the first advance, the division had covered 2,743 metres on a 2,286 metre front and had seized Montauban Ridge on the west end of Montauban village. Six hundred and ninety five prisoners had been taken but the division suffered 3,307 casualties.

Delville Wood became the grave of the 53rd Brigade. It was here during fierce fighting for the possession of the wood on 19 July 1916 that Harold Ackroyd acted with such bravery that he was recommended eleven times for the award of the Victoria Cross. He was eventually awarded the Military Cross for this action.

Part of the citation for his medal read:

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during operations. He attended the wounded under heavy fire, and finally, when he had seen that all our wounded from behind the line had been got in, he went out beyond the front line and brought in both our own and enemy wounded, although continually sniped at."

Harold was described as a heroic figure during those two days of July. In his book "The 18th Division in the Great War" Captain G H F Nicholls writes, *"The fighting was so confused and the wood so hard to search that the difficulties in evacuating the wounded seemed insu-*

perable but Ackroyd, bespectacled and stooping, was so cool and purposeful and methodical that he cleared the whole wood of wounded British and Bosh as well."

Harold rescued many of the wounded from the 1st Infantry Brigade (South Africa) and there is a memorial to him in the room commemorating Delville Wood at Fort Beaufort Historical Museum, South Africa. He left the battalion on 11 August 1916 to return to England on sick leave.

Harold had been wounded at Delville Wood, although the nature and extent of his wound is not known. He was granted six weeks sick leave.

After only a week back home, Harold decided that he wanted to return to the front.

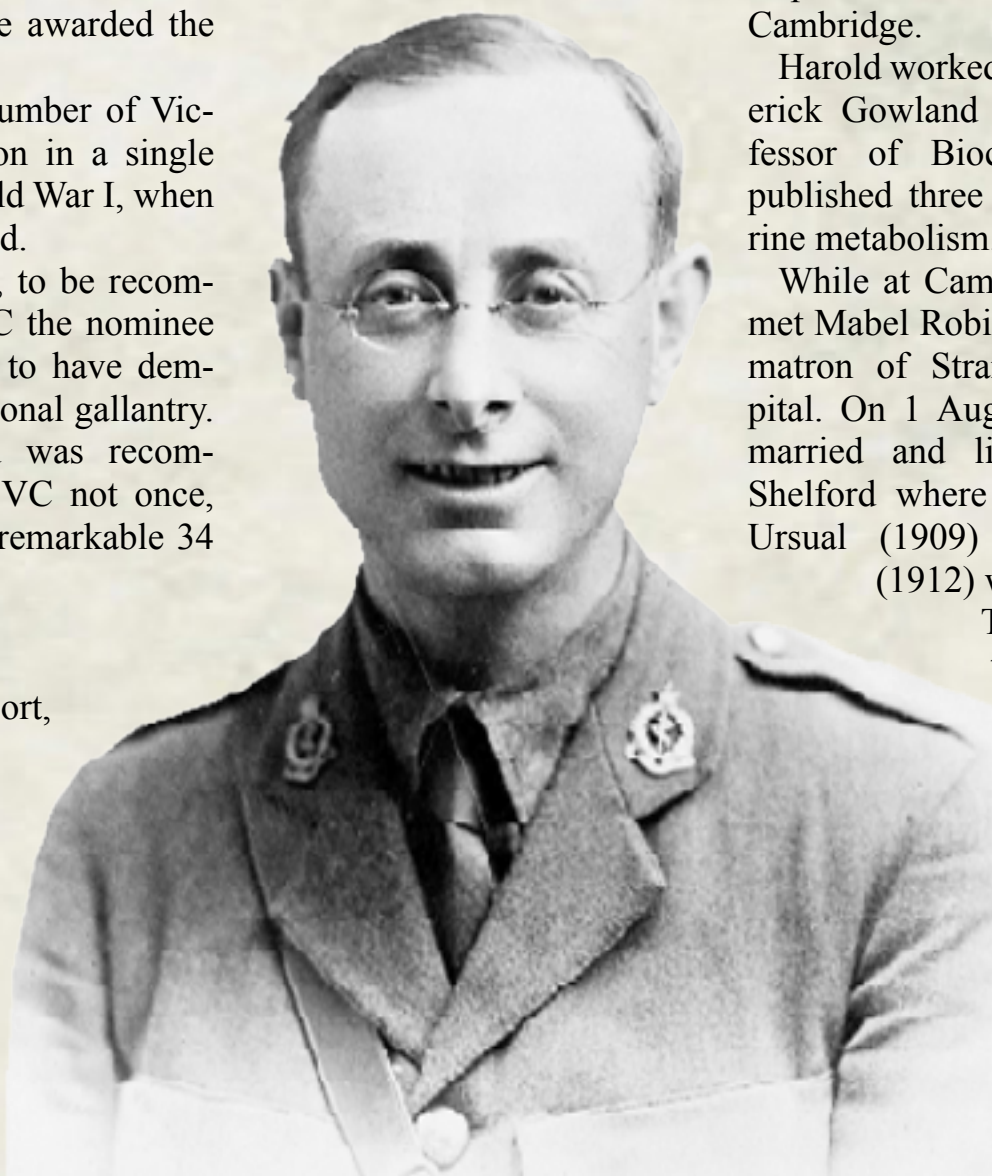
He stated in a letter to his brother Edward, dated 4 September, *"I am now quite well and fit to return to duty"*.

He could not understand why he had been given so much sick leave and called the Army Medical Board *"a bunch of old fossils."*

He also said *"I would hate the Battalion to go into action without me"*. He was passed fit for service on 3 October and on 20 October was awarded the Military Cross for his actions in Delville Wood. He rejoined the regiment in November 1916.

Ypres

During July 1917 preparation was being made for the Ypres Offensive, the third Battle of Ypres that became known as



the Battle of Passchendaele.

The battle commenced on 31 July 1917. The role of the 18th Division was to leapfrog the 30th Division (United Kingdom) after they had taken what became known as “the Black Line” through Glencorse Wood.

Disaster struck and by a tragic mistake the 30th Division infantry wheeled to their left and assaulted Chateau Wood instead of Glencorse Wood.

The misleading information that Glencorse Wood was in British hands caused the 53rd Brigade to plunge into a fatal gap.

During 31 July and 1 August the 53rd Brigade fought against a fully prepared enemy for ground which the 30th Division should have taken. This fateful error caused the offensive in Glencorse Wood to be held up for several days with fierce fighting throughout this period.

Captain Nicholls in his history of the 18th Division records “in all that hellish turmoil, there had been one quiet figure, most heroic, most wonderful of all. Dr Ackroyd, the 6th Berks Medical Officer; a stooping, grey haired, bespectacled man rose

to the supreme heights that day. He seemed to be everywhere; he tended and bandaged scores of men for to him fell the rush of cases around Clapham Junction and towards Hooze. But no wounded man was treated hurriedly or unskilfully. Ackroyd worked as stoically as if he were in the quiet of an operating theatre. Complete absorption in his work was probably his secret. When it was all over there were 23 separate recommendations of his name for the Victoria Cross.”

Harold came through 31 July unscathed but died eleven days later on 11 August in Jargon Trench on the western edge of Glencorse Wood, shot in the head by a sniper. He was 40 years old. Harold’s body was evacuated and buried in Birr Cross Roads Cemetery, Zillebecke near Ypres. His headstone reads “Believed to be buried in this cemetery.”

Harold’s Victoria Cross was gazetted on 6 September 1917. A medal investiture was held outside Buckingham Palace on 26 September 1917. His widow Mabel and their five-year-old

son Stephen received both the Victoria Cross and the Military Cross from King George V.

Part of the citation for his medal reads:

“For most conspicuous bravery. During recent operations Capt. Ackroyd displayed the greatest gallantry and devotion to duty. Utterly regardless of danger, he worked continuously for many hours up and down and in front of the line tending the wounded and saving the lives of officers and men. In so doing he had to move across the open under heavy machine-gun, rifle and shell fire. He carried a wounded officer to a place of safety under very heavy fire. On another occasion he went some way in front of our advanced line and brought in a wounded man under continuous sniping and machine-gun fire. His heroism was the means of saving many lives, and provided a magnificent example of courage, cheerfulness, and determination to the fighting men in whose midst he was carrying out his splendid work. This gallant officer has since been killed in action.”



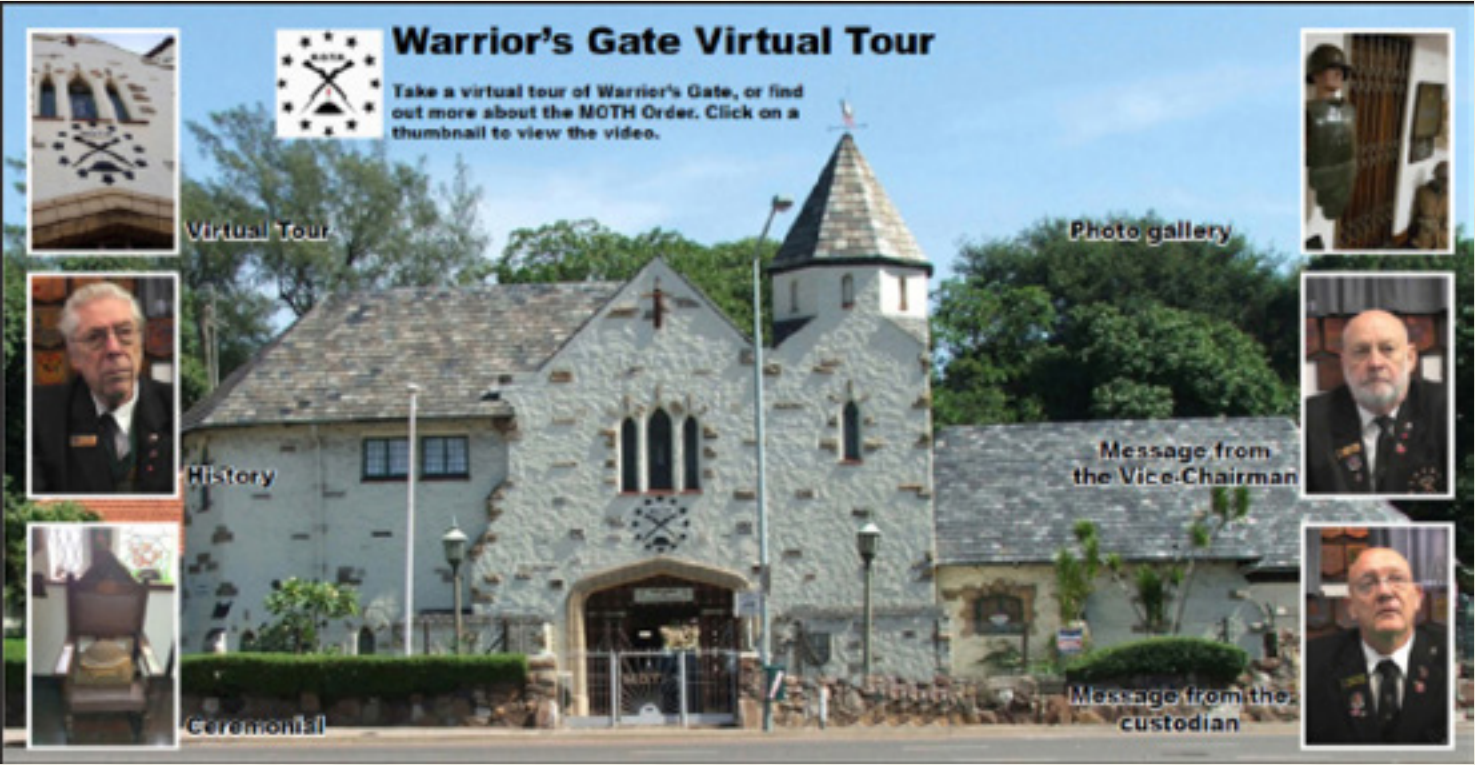
Springbok

Journal of the South African Legion
Tydskrif van die Suid-Afrikaanse Legioen

The SA Legion is a national organisation, part of a worldwide family that addresses the needs of ex-service personnel and their dependents by way of housing, pensions, employment and general welfare. It is apolitical, non-sectarian, non-racial, non-sexist and non-partisan.

The Springbok is the official journal of the South African Legion. Read the August issue of Springbok by clicking on the cover to the left.

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



WW I Tanks

They were slow and unreliable, yet the introduction of the tank in World War I changed the face of warfare forever.

By August 1915 the 'Great War' had been raging for more than a year. A stalemate existed along the entire Western Front.

The routine would usually be the same for both sides. An attack would be planned against a section of enemy trench.

The attack itself would be preceded by an artillery bombardment that would sometimes last for up to three days. Tons of high explosive shells were dropped onto the enemy's position.

Once the artillery ceased, troops would climb out of their trenches

and advance, bayonets fixed, at a slow pace towards the enemy lines. The procedure was known as "going over the top."

There was, however, a few problems with this tactic. First of all the artillery bombardments would cause relatively few casualties to the other side.

Those on the receiving end of the bombardment would sit in their bunkers dug into the side of the trenches and merely wait for the bombardment to end.

This was particularly true of the Germans who had well constructed bun-

kers, often made of concrete.

Once the bombardment stopped, those on the receiving end knew that the attack was about to be launched.

They would climb from their bunkers, take up their positions in the trench, and set up the machine guns.

Normally all the artillery bombardment would achieve would be to churn up 'No-man's Land', the

The advancing troops would be cut down. Usually before they had advanced more than a few dozen paces.

Even if the attackers did manage to capture a section of trench, they would

normally have taken heavy casualties doing so.

Front line trenches were usually backed up with a second, third, or more lines of trenches. A counter-attack would be launched and the status-quo would be restored.

The alarmingly heavy casualties were becoming unacceptable. Some weapon or tactic had to be developed to address the situation.

Although vehicles that incorporated the basic principles of the tank (armour, firepower, and all-terrain mobility) had been projected in the decade or so before the War, it was the alarmingly heavy casualties of the start of its trench warfare that stimulated development.

The conceptual roots of the tank go back to ancient

times, with siege engines which were able to provide protection for troops moving up against stone walls or other fortifications.

Research took place in both Great Britain and France, with Germany only belatedly following the Allies' lead.

In Great Britain, an initial vehicle, nicknamed Little Willie, was constructed at William Foster & Co., during August and September 1915. The prototype of a new design that became the Mark I tank was demonstrated to the British Army on February 2 1916. Although initially termed "Landships" by the Landship Committee, production vehicles were named "tanks", to preserve secrecy.

The term was chosen when it became known that the factory workers at William Foster referred to the first prototype as "the tank" because of its resemblance to a steel water tank.

The French fielded their first tanks in April 1917 and ultimately produced far more tanks than all other com-



batants combined.

The Germans, on the other hand, began development only in response to the appearance of Allied tanks on the battlefield. Whilst the Allies manufactured several thousand tanks during the War, Germany deployed only 20 of her own.

The Landships Committee was created by Winston Churchill in February 1915. A requirement was formulated for an armoured vehicle capable of 6 km/h, climbing a 1.5 m high parapet, crossing a 2.4 metre wide gap, and armed with machine guns and a light artillery piece.

William Foster & Co. Ltd were awarded a contract in July 1915. Their brief was to produce a proof-of-concept vehicle with two tracks, based on a lengthened Bullock tractor chassis. Construction work began three weeks later.

They built the 14 ton "Little Willie", which first ran on 8 September. Powered by a 105 hp (78 kW) Daimler engine, the three metre armoured box was initially fitted with a low Bullock caterpillar.

The Landships Committee looked for an appropriate code term for the vehicles. Factory workers assembling the vehicles had been told they were producing "mobile water tanks" for desert warfare in Mesopotamia. Water Container was therefore considered but rejected because the committee would inevitably be known as the WC Committee (WC meaning water closet was a common British term for a toilet).

The term tank, as in water tank, was in December 1915



PROTOTYPE: 'Little Willie' was the first tank to be designed by the British.

finally accepted as its official designation. From then on, the term "tank" was established among British and also German soldiers.

While in German Tank specifically refers to the World War I type (as opposed to modern Panzer), in English, Russian and other languages the name even for contemporary armoured vehicles is still based on the word tank.

The first 50 tanks were delivered to France by 30 August. Tanks were classified as either 'male' or 'female'.

The male tank was armed with two 6-pounder cannon and three Hotchkiss machine guns, while the female tank had four Vickers machine guns and one Hotchkiss.

They carried a crew of eight, four of whom were needed to handle the steering and drive gears. The tanks were capable of, at best, 6 km/h, matching the speed of marching infantry with whom they were to be integrated to aid in the destruction of enemy machine guns. In

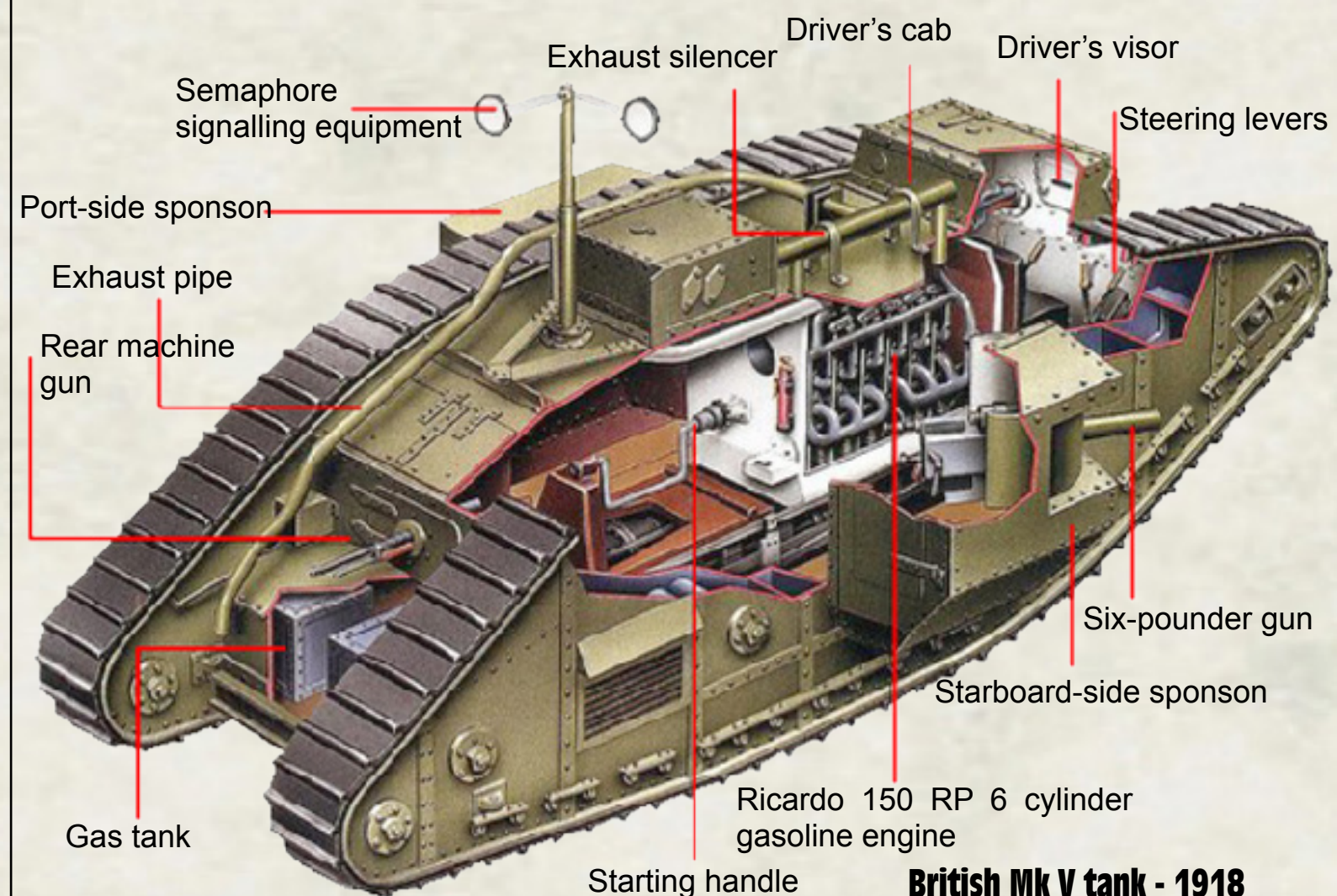
practice, their speed on broken ground could be as little as 1,6 km/h.

The first use of tanks on the battlefield was the use of British Mark I tanks at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette (part of the Battle of the Somme) on 15 September 1916, with mixed results; many broke down, but nearly a third succeeded in breaking through.

Of the forty-nine tanks shipped to the Somme, only thirty-two were able to begin the first attack in which they were used and only nine made it across "no man's land" to the German lines.

The tanks had been rushed into combat before the design was mature enough (against Churchill's and Ernest Swinton's wishes) and the number was small but their use gave important feedback on how to design newer tanks, the soundness of the concept, and their potential to affect the course of the war.

On the other hand, the French Army was critical of the British



British Mk V tank - 1918

employment of small numbers of tanks at this battle. They felt the British had sacrificed the secrecy of the weapon while employing it in numbers too small to be decisive.

Considering that the British attack was part of an Anglo-French offensive while the Russians were also attacking at the same time, Haig felt justified in making a maximum effort, regardless of the limitations of the tank force.

The Mark I tanks were capable of performing on the real battlefield of World War I, one of the most difficult battlefield terrains ever. They did have reliability problems, but when they were working they could cross trenches or craters of 2.7 metres and drive right through

barbed wire.

It was still common for them to get stuck, especially in larger bomb craters, but overall the rhomboid shape allowed for extreme terrain mobility.

Most World War I tanks could travel only at about a walking pace at best. Their steel armour could stop small arms fire and fragments from high-explosive artillery shells. However they were vulnerable to a direct hit from artillery and mortar shells.

The environment inside was extremely unpleasant; as ventilation was inadequate the atmosphere was heavy with poisonous carbon monoxide from the engine and firing the weapons, fuel and oil vapours from the engine and cordite fumes from the weapons. Tempera-

tures inside could reach 50°C. Entire crews lost consciousness inside the tanks, or collapsed when again exposed to fresh air.

Crews learned how to create and leave behind supply dumps of fuel, motor oil, and tread grease, and converted obsolete models into supply vehicles for newer ones.

To counter the danger of bullet splash or fragments knocked off the inside of the hull, the crew wore helmets with goggles and chainmail masks. Fragments were not as dangerous as fire, because of explosive fumes and the large amount of fuel aboard; smoking was prohibited inside and within 18 metres outside tanks.

Gas masks were also standard issue, as they were to all

soldiers at this point in the war due to the use of chemical warfare. The side armour of 8 mm initially made them largely immune to small arms fire, but could be penetrated by the recently developed armour-piercing K bullets.

There was also the danger of being overrun by infantry and attacked with grenades. The next generation had thicker armour, making them nearly immune to the K bullets.

In response, the Germans developed a larger purpose-made anti-tank rifle, the 3.7 cm TAK 1918 anti-tank gun, and also a *Geballte Ladung* ("Bunched Charge") - several regular stick grenades bundled together for a much bigger explosion.

France at the same time developed its own tracked AFVs, but the situation there was very different. In Britain a single committee had coordinated design, and had to overcome the initial resistance of the Army, while the major industries remained passive.

Almost all production effort was thus concentrated into the Mark I and its direct successors, all very similar in shape. In France, on the other hand, there were multiple and conflicting lines of development which were badly integrated, resulting in three major and quite disparate production types.

The first French tanks were poorly designed with respect to the need to cross trenches and did not take the sponson-mounting route of the British tanks.

The first, the Char Schneider CA equipped with a short 75 mm howitzer, had poor mobility due to a short track length

PROTECTION: Splash mask used by tank crews in World War I as protection against shell splinters.

combined with a hull that overhung front and rear. It was unreliable as well; a maximum of only about 130 of the 400 built were ever operational at the same time.

Then industrial rivalry began to play a detrimental role: it created the heavy Char St Chamond, a parallel development not ordered by the Army but approved by government through industrial lobby, which mounted much more impressive weaponry - its 75 mm was the most powerful gun fielded by any operational tank up till 1941 - but also combined many of the Schneider CA's faults with an even larger overhanging body. Its innovative petro-electrical transmission, while allowing for easy steering, was insufficiently developed and led to a large number of breakdowns.

It was Renault's excellent small tank design, the FT, incorporating a proper climbing face for the tracks, that was

the first tank to incorporate a top-mounted turret with a full 360° traverse capability. In fact the FT was in many respects the first truly 'modern' tank having a layout that has been followed by almost all designs ever since: driver at the front; main armament in a fully rotating turret on top; engine at the rear.

French production at first lagged behind the British. After August 1916 however, British tank manufacture was temporarily halted to wait for better designs, allowing the French to overtake their allies in numbers.

When the French used tanks for the first time on 16 April 1917, during the Nivelle Offensive, they had four times more tanks available. But that did not last long as the offensive was a major failure; the Schneiders were badly deployed and suffered 50% losses from German long-range artillery.

The Saint-Chamond tanks, first deployed on 5 May, proved to be so badly designed that

they were unable to cross the first line of German trenches.

Germany concentrated more on the development of anti-tank weapons than on development of tanks themselves. They only developed one type of tank which saw combat in the war.

The A7V *Sturmpanzerwagen* was designed in 1917 and was used in battle from March 1918. It was manned by a crew of 18, and had eight machine guns and a 57mm cannon. Only 20 A7Vs were produced during the war.

The first battle in which tanks made a great impact was the Battle of Cambrai in 1917. British Colonel J.F.C. Fuller, chief of staff of the Tank Corps, was responsible for the tanks' role in the battle. They made an unprecedented breakthrough but, as ever on the Western front, the opportunity was not exploited. Ironically, it was the soon-to-be-supplanted horse cavalry that had been assigned the task of following up the motorised tank attack.

Tanks became more effective as the lesson of the early tanks was absorbed. The British produced the Mark IV in 1917. Similar to the early Marks in appearance, its construction was considered to produce a more reliable machine, the long-barrelled naval guns were shortened (the barrels of the earlier, longer guns were prone to digging in the mud when negotiating obstacles) and armour was increased just

enough to defeat the standard German armour-piercing bullet.

The continued need for four men to drive the tank was solved with the Mark V which used Wilson's epicyclic gearing in 1918. Also in 1918 the French produced the Renault FT, the result of a co-operation between Estienne and Louis Renault. As mentioned before, it had the innovative turret position, and was operated by two men. At just 8 tons it was half the weight of the Medium A Whippet but the version with the cannon had more firepower. It was conceived for mass production, and the FT became the most produced tank of World War I by a wide margin, with over 3,000 delivered to the French Army. Large numbers were used by the Americans and several were also lent to the British.

In July 1918, the French used 480 tanks (mostly FTs) at the Battle of Soissons, and there were even larger assaults planned for the next year.

In Plan 1919, the Entente hoped to commit over 30,000

tanks to battle in that year.

Finally, in a preview of later developments, the British developed the Whippet. This tank was specifically designed to exploit breaches in the enemy front with its relatively higher speed (around 12.8 km/h vs 4-6 km/h for the British heavy tanks).

The Whippet was faster than most other tanks, although it carried only machine gun armament, meaning it was not suited to combat with armoured vehicles but instead with infantry. Postwar tank designs reflected this trend towards greater tactical mobility.

It must have been terrifying for the first German troops that encountered tanks on the battlefield. Watching these steel monsters lumbering towards them and impervious to their bullets.

While early tanks were slow and unreliable, there is little doubt that the introduction of the tank changed the face of warfare.

While Germany may not have paid much heed to the tank in World War I, the lessons had not gone unnoticed. This was something that the world would realise when 21 years later, on 1 September 1939, the first panzer columns rolled into Poland.



Renault FT

For as long as warfare existed, it was fought on land and sea. In 1914, however, the skies over Europe would become a new battlefield.

About 10 years after the Wright brothers made the first powered flight, there was still much to be improved upon. Because of limitations of the engine power of the time, the effective payload of aircraft was extremely limited.

They were made mostly of hardwood (braced with steel wires) and linen fabric doped with flammable liquid to give them the stiffness required to form a wing surface.

Aside from these primitive materials, the rudimentary aviation engi-



neering of the time meant most aircraft were structurally fragile by later standards, and not infrequently broke up in flight especially when performing violent combat manoeuvres such as pulling up from steep dives.

As early as 1909, these evolving flying machines were recognised to be not just toys, but weapons:

"The sky is about to become another battlefield no less important than the battlefields on land and sea....In order to conquer the air, it is necessary to deprive the enemy of all means of flying, by striking at him in the air, at his bases of operation, or at his production cen-

tres. We had better get accustomed to this idea, and prepare ourselves."

— Giulio Douhet
(Italian staff officer), 1909.

The word "fighter" did not become the official English term for such aircraft until after World War I. In Great Britain's Royal Flying Corps – later the Royal Air Force – these aircraft continued to be referred to as "scouts" into the early 1920s.

The U.S. Army called their fighters "pursuit" aircraft (reflected by their designation in the "P" series) from 1916 until the late 1940s. In the French, Portuguese and German languages the term used (and still in use) for fighters literally means "hunter".

This lead has been followed in most other languages, an

exception being Russian, in which the fighter is called "*istrebitel*", meaning "exterminator".

Dogfights

The term dogfight has been used for centuries to describe a melee; a fierce battle between two or more opponents. The term gained popularity during World War II, although its origin in air combat can be traced to the latter years of World War I.

The first written reference to the mod-



RED BARON: A DR-1 Fokker Triplane similar to the one flown by Baron Manfred von Richthofen - the famed 'Red Baron'. His Jasta (squadron) all flew brightly coloured aircraft and were known as 'Von Richthofen's Flying Circus'. Von Richthofen was the top ace of World War I, downing a total of 80 allied aircraft. Von Richthofen was shot down and killed near Amiens on 21 April 1918. He was 25 years old.

ern day usage of the word comes from *Fly Papers*, by A. E. Illingworth, in 1919, "The battle develops into a 'dog-fight', small groups of machines engaging each other in a fight to the death."

Dogfighting first emerged in World War I. Ever since "heavier than air" flight became a reality in 1903, people had been trying to figure out how to use this new technology for warfare.

Aircraft were initially used as mobile observation vehicles, and early pilots gave little thought to aerial combat. Balloons had been used for this purpose since the Siege of Paris by the Prussians in 1871.

The new airplanes proved their worth by spotting the hidden German advance on Paris in the second month of the war.

Knights of the air

Enemy pilots at first simply exchanged waves, or shook their fists at each other. Due to weight restrictions, only small weapons could be carried on board.

Intrepid pilots decided to interfere with enemy reconnaissance by improvised means, including throwing bricks, grenades and sometimes rope, which they hoped would entangle the enemy plane's propeller.

This progressed to pilots firing hand-held guns at enemy planes, such as pistols and carbines. In August 1914, Staff-Captain Pyotr Nesterov, from Russia, became the first pilot to ram his plane into an enemy spotter aircraft.

In October 1914, the first airplane to be shot down by a hand gun from another plane

happened over Rheims, France.

Machine guns

Once machine guns were mounted to the plane, either on a flexible mounting or higher on the wings of early biplanes, the era of air combat began.

The biggest problem was mounting a machine gun onto an aircraft so that it could be fired forward, through the propeller, and aimed by pointing the nose of the aircraft directly at the enemy.

Roland Garros solved this problem by mounting steel deflector wedges to the propeller of a *Morane Saulnier* monoplane. He achieved three kills, but was shot down behind enemy lines, and captured before he could destroy his plane by burning it.

The wreckage was brought to Anthony Fokker, a Dutch designer who built aircraft for the Germans. Fokker decided that the wedges were much too risky, and improved the design by connecting the trigger of an MG 08 Maxim machine gun to the timing of the engine.

Air superiority

The Germans acquired an early air superiority due to the invention of the synchronization gear in 1915, transforming air combat with the Fokker E.I, the first synchronized, forward firing fighter plane.

On the evening of 1 July 1915, the very first aerial engagement by a fighter plane armed with a synchronized, forward-firing machine gun occurred just to the east of Luneville, France. The German Fokker E.I was flown by Lieutenant Kurt Win-

tgens, earning the victory over a French two-seat observation monoplane.

Later that same month, on 25 July 1915, British Royal Flying Corps (RFC) Major Lanoe Hawker, flying a very early production Bristol Scout C., attacked three separate aircraft during a single sortie, shooting down two with a non-synchronizable Lewis gun which was mounted next to his cockpit at an outwards angle to avoid hitting the propeller. He forced the third one down, and was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Technological advantage

Battles in the air increased as the technological advantage swung from the British to the Germans, then back again.

The *Feldflieger Abteilung* observation units of the German air service, in 1914-15, consisted of six two-seat observation aircraft each, with each unit assigned to a particular German Army headquarters location.

They had but a single Fokker Eindecker aircraft assigned to each "FFA" unit for general defensive duties, so pilots such as Max Immelman and Oswald Boelcke began as lone hunters with each "FFA" unit, shooting unarmed spotter planes and enemy aircraft out of the sky.

During the first part of the war, there was no established tactical doctrine for air-to-air combat. Oswald Boelcke was the first to analyze the tactics of aerial warfare, resulting in a set of rules known as the *Dicta Boelcke*.

Many of Boelcke's concepts, conceived in 1916, are still applicable today, including use of sun and altitude, surprise attack,



A PUP WITH BITE: A replica of a British Sopwith Pup, one of the better Allied airplanes of World War I. Others included the Sopwith Camel and Sopwith Snipe. Some of the best French planes were the Nieuport and Spad series. Some of the best German planes were the Fokker series and the Pfalz D.XII. While only 36 Fokker D.VIII monoplanes entered service they were regarded as excellent fighters. It had the distinction of scoring the last aerial victory of the war.

and turning to meet a threat.

British Brigadier General Hugh Trenchard ordered that all reconnaissance aircraft had to be supported by at least three fighters, creating the first use of tactical formations in the air.

The Germans responded by forming Jastas, large squadrons of fighters solely dedicated to destroying enemy aircraft, under the supervision of Boelcke.

Aces high

Pilots who shot down five or more fighters became known as aces. One of the most famous dogfights, resulting in the death of Major Hawker, is described by the Red Baron, Manfred von Richthofen:

I was extremely proud when, one fine day, I was informed that the airman whom I had brought down on the twenty-third of

November, 1916, was the English [version of] Immelman.... First we circled twenty times to the left, and then thirty times to the right.

Each tried to get behind and above the other. Soon I discovered that I was not meeting a beginner. He had not the slightest intention of breaking off the fight. He was traveling in a machine which turned beautifully.

However, my own was better at rising than his, and I succeeded at last in getting above and beyond my English waltzing partner.... The impertinent fellow was full of cheek and when we had got down to about 3,000 feet he merrily waved to me as if he would say, "Well, how do you do?"

The circles which we made around one another were so narrow that their diameter was

probably no more than 250 or 300 feet. I had time to take a good look at my opponent.... When he had come down to about three hundred feet he tried to escape by flying in a zig-zag course during which, as is well known, it is difficult for an observer to shoot.

That was my most favourable moment. I followed him at an altitude of from two hundred and fifty feet to one hundred and fifty feet, firing all the time. The Englishman could not help falling. But the jamming of my gun nearly robbed me of my success. My opponent fell, shot through the head, one hundred and fifty feet behind our line.

Another famous German ace was Ernst Udet. He achieved 62 kills. Not only did he survive the war, he went on to become a general in the German *Luftwaffe* in World War II. He committed suicide on 17 November 1941.

Hermann Göring was ap-

pointed commander-in-chief of the *Luftwaffe* in World War II. He was also one of the most powerful figures in the Nazi Party. During World War I he became an ace with 22 victories and he also commanded the famed "Flying Circus", *Jagdgeschwader 1*.

The top Allied ace of the war was René Fonck of the French *Aéronautique Militaire* with 75 kills. After the war he became the Inspector of French fighter forces from 1937 to 1939.

Canadian Billy Bishop ended the war with 72 kills. He was awarded the Victoria Cross. After the war, in 1929, he became Chairman of British Air Lines.

Edward Mannock of the Royal Flying Corps scored 61 kills. Born in Ireland, he was given the nickname "Mick". He was awarded the VC, DSO & Two Bars, MC & Bar. He was killed in action on 16 July 1918.

America officially entered World War I on 6 April 1917.

Prior to that many American pilots flew for the *Lafayette Escadrille* (Lafayette Squadron) which was established in 1916 under French command. The volunteers had come to France to help during World War I.

Eddie Rickenbacker was the top American ace with 26 kills. He was awarded the Medal of Honor during World War I.

South African pilots in World War I flew for the Royal Flying Corps and later the Royal Air Force. They had six pilots that achieved 20 or more kills and one of them was killed in action.

Andrew Beauchamp-Proctor was the top South African pilot with 54 kills. He first served as a signalman with the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles in the German South-West Africa campaign. He was given an honourable discharge, but joined up again in August 1915 with the Royal Flying Corps. He was awarded the VC, DSO, MC & Bar, and DFC.

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

Warrior's Gate Virtual Tour

Take a virtual tour of Warrior's Gate, or find out more about the MOTH Order. Click on a thumbnail to view the video.

Virtual Tour

History

Ceremonial

Photo gallery

Message from the Vice-Chairman

Message from the custodian



This month we're going old school with Sudden Strike 4.

Sudden Strike 4 is a real-time tactics video game set in World War II. It is the fifth game in the Sudden Strike series and the fourth standalone release.

It is the first game developed by Kite Games, a collaboration of industry veteran game developers.

Originally, it was scheduled to be released for PC and PlayStation 4 on 27 June 2017, but was delayed until 11 August 2017 and 15 August 2017 for PC and PlayStation 4, respectively.

The single-player mode features three campaigns (German, Allied or Soviet) with over 20 missions and modding support is available.

Each of the missions in the different campaigns are based on real life World War II battles/invasions.

For example, in the German campaign the player commands the Wehrmacht in the Battle of France, Operation Barbarossa, the Battle of Stalingrad, the Battle of Kursk and the Battle of the Bulge.

The Invasion of Poland is used as a tutorial for the game

and also acts as a prelude to the German campaign. Post-release DLCs feature additional campaigns set in other theatres such as North African campaign, Winter War, Battle of Dunkirk and Pacific War.

Strategy is heavily based on those of its predecessors with a focus on the unique characteristics and skills of limited units instead of resource gathering and base building. Reinforcements still play a role in the game, but they are scripted and predictable.

The game also introduces skill trees and commander roles with famous World War II generals such as George Patton, Heinz Guderian, Bernard Montgomery, Omar Bradley or Georgy Zhukov.

You start each mission with a certain number of troops and vehicles and you will need to ensure that you complete your objectives with them. Sometimes you may receive reinforcements, but this is not guaranteed.

You will normally have infantry and they will be armed with a variety of weapons. Medics can be used to treat wounded troops.

Armoured vehicles will in-

General Matt O'Brien is suffering from an identity crisis this month. He can't decide if he's American, German or Russian. He still manages to lose a World War though.

clude tanks, self-propelled guns and armoured cars. Soft-skinned vehicles will include supply trucks that will either carry fuel or ammunition.

Both of these resources are vital because your armoured vehicles only have a limited supply of fuel and ammunition and will have to be resupplied.

Engineers are also available and are vital. They can be used to repair vehicles and can also lay or defuse mines, build defences, and build bridges.

Often you will have towed artillery and can include anti-tank guns, field artillery and anti-aircraft guns.

Anti-aircraft guns can be important because both sides will often have access to air support. This can be in the form of recon aircraft, fighters and bombers.

You can make good use of terrain to ambush the enemy or to advance out of sight. This is where recon aircraft are useful for scouting out an area before you advance.

The campaigns can either be played on easy or normal settings and I suggest that you start off with easy settings until you get the hang of the game.

Skirmish mode is great for setting up scenarios of your



own choosing where you get to choose the sides, the assets available to both sides, and the map and objectives.

What I like about the game is that you do not have to spend hours gathering resources and building bases to produce troops and vehicles. You start off with your assets and off you go.

While not the greatest that I've seen, the graphics in the game are not bad at all. I was also impressed with the details that go into the various vehicles.

For example the German Panzer V (Panther) and VI (Tiger) tanks have very strong armour and often you will have to try and manoeuvre behind them for the best possibility of taking them out.

I played the three campaigns, first as the Germans, then as the Russians, and finally as the Americans.

Each mission will give you a number of objectives to com-

plete and some of them are challenging. You will soon learn which tactics work best for your style of play.

Developing your skill tree is also important and can influence your style of play.

While I haven't tried any on-line play I've found that skirmish mode is a lot of fun. It also means that there is plenty of opportunity to replay the game.

I did find a number of bugs in the game however. Often when you are moving vehicles they tend to bunch up and even bump into each other.

I also found that the AI can be a bit dumb at times. For instance poorly armoured vehicles rushing head on at German 88mm anti-tank guns.

While Sudden Strike 4 is not a bad game, there are better World War II RTS games available.

On the plus side of things the game does not come with a high price tag and it will run on most

computers.

At the price this is not a bad buy and it's a decent game for anyone new to the RTS genre.



Publisher - Kalypso Media

Genre - RTS

Score - 7/10

Price - R32.50 (on Steam)



Movie Review

1917

Released: 2019
Running time: 110 minutes
Director: Sam Mendes

Initially screened in London on 4 December 2019, this incredible movie is now showing in South Africa.

The film is dedicated to director Sam Mendes' grandfather, who was Lance Corporal in The Kings Royal Rifle Corps during The Great War. 1917 has been nominated for no fewer than 10 Academy Awards. And it's not difficult to see why.

There are not that many movies dedicated to World War I, and 1917 must surely rank as one of the best war movies in a long time.

It's April 1917 and the war has been going on for three years. The German army has pulled back from a sector of the Western Front in the north of France.

Aerial reconnaissance has spotted that the Germans are not in retreat but have made a tactical withdrawal to their new Hindenburg Line, where they are waiting to overwhelm the British with artillery. The Germans want to be attacked.

With field telephone lines cut General Erinmore (Colin Firth) needs to get a message to the Second Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment, calling off their planned attack, which might cost the lives of 1,600 men.

Two young lance corporals, Tom Blake (Dean-Charles Chapman) and Will Schofield (George MacKay) are ordered by General Erinmore

to hand-deliver a message to Colonel Mackenzie, the Officer Commanding the Devonshire Regiment, to call off the attack.

It is a sly move by General Erinmore to task Tom Blake with delivering the message. Blake's brother, Lieutenant Joseph Blake, is with the Second Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment.

If the attack goes ahead there is a strong possibility that Blake's brother will be killed. This gives him an added incentive to make sure that the message is delivered in time. It's a potential suicide mission, but Blake has no option but to do it. He asks his best friend, Will Schofield, to accompany him.

To get to the regiment they will need to cross through 14 kilometres of enemy territory. Time is of the essence and the journey will be fraught with danger.

The movie then follows their journey and the dangers they have to face almost every step of the way.

With Thomas Newman's score providing a creeping dread, here we find flies buzzing around horse carcasses and rats scuttling over human corpses, the faces of the soldiers all but eaten away. It's a waking nightmare, no less so because of the unforgiving daylight.

The camera work used by Mendes is outstanding. Nearly

everything was shot with one continuous shot with few noticeable cuts. It gives the movie a surreal quality.

I will not give away any of the movie because it's one that you really need to see.

Will Blake and Schofield manage to reach the Devonshire Regiment in time to stop the attack? Will Colonel Mackenzie follow orders? Will Blake and Schofield survive? Sorry, but you're going to have to see the movie for yourself to find out.

This is a movie I can highly recommend. It's been a long while since I saw a movie that was this good.



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

Paratus Magazine

Anyone that served in the SADF will surely remember Paratus, the monthly magazine of the Defence Force.

The very first issue came out in November 1970 with Cmdt I.D. van der Walt as the editor. That first issue would have cost you 10 cents.

The last issue of Paratus was published in April 1994, just before the SADF became the SANDF. The editor for that last issue was Mrs AD van der Westhuizen. That final issue cost R4.50. The magazine ran for 24 years and published an incredible 282 issues.

Now you can own all 282 issues of Paratus magazine in digital format, thanks to the sterling



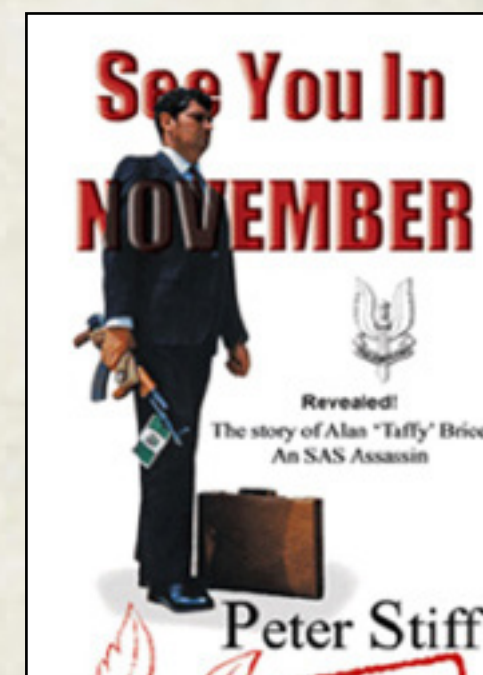
work of Bush War Books.

You receive all 282 issues on a memory stick for the cost of R650. Considering the amount of work that went into finding all of these issues and then having

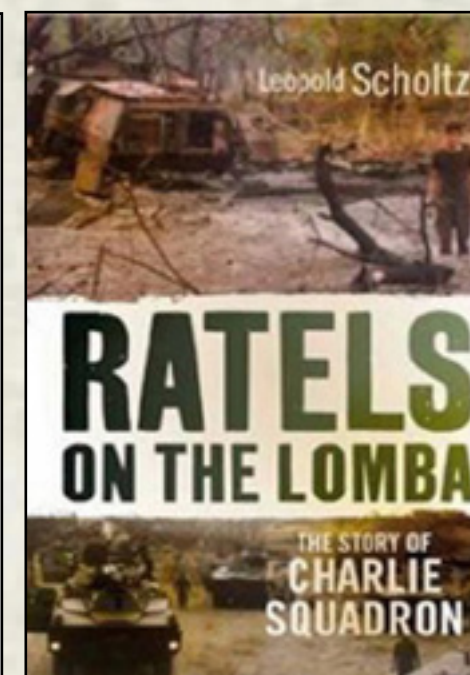


to scan them in, it's a bargain.

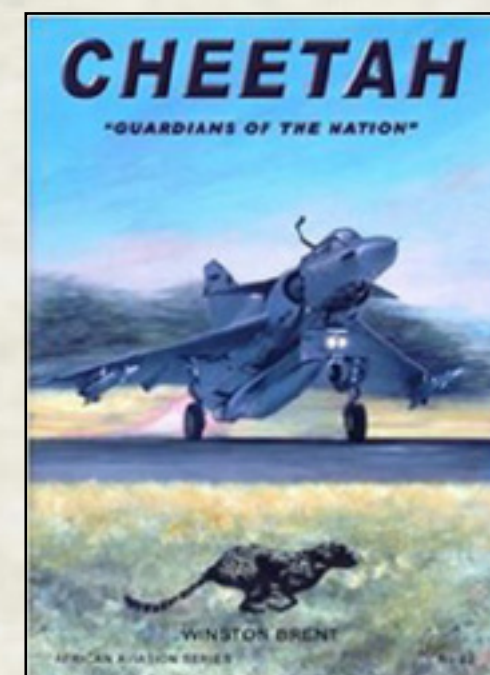
The articles will bring back memories and the odd tear to the eye. And it will provide you with reading material for quite some time.



See You In November
R300



Ratels on the Lomba
R240



Cheetah - Guardian of the Nation - R330

All books are available from [Bush War Books](#)

Some of the significant military events that happened in November. Highlighted in blue are the names of those members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that lost their lives during the month of November.

1 November

- **1893** - The decisive Battle of Bembesi (Bembasi) is fought in the Ndebele War, Rhodesia. The Ngubi, Mbezu and Nsukamini regiments fought bravely, but were defeated by machine-gun fire. The plaque on the war memorial records the result of the battle and also the bravery of the Ndebele.
- **1899** - Second Anglo Boer War. The Boer forces invade the Cape Colony.
- **1904** - The US Army War College opens.
- **1911** - Italy performs its first aerial bombing on Tanguira oasis in Libya.
- **1914** - Battle of Coronel: Admiral Von Spee's German cruisers annihilate a weaker British squadron off Chile.
- **1914** - Paul von Hindenburg is named commander-in-chief of German forces on the Eastern Front.
- 1918 - Italian naval special operations forces sink the Austrian battleship 'Viribus Unitis', which is in Yugoslav hands.
- **1932** - Wernher von Braun named head of German liquid-fuel rocket program.
- **1933** - German Army creates its first panzer unit.
- **1936** - The Rome-Berlin Axis was proclaimed by Italian Dictator Benito Mussolini following a visit to Berlin by Italian Foreign Secretary Ciano.
- **1936** - Mussolini coins the phrase "The Axis".
- 1939 - Maiden flight of the Heinkel He 178, the first jet
- **1950** - Korean War. South African No 2 Squadron, known as Cheetah Squadron, comprising of fifty officers and 157 other ranks, including thirty-eight pilots, all volunteers and highly experienced, arrives in Japan. Two weeks later, and after acquainting themselves with the F 51 Mustang, they leave for the operational area. At the end of the war SAAF casualties were thirty-four pilots and ground staff killed, eight pilots taken POW and a number wounded.
- **1951** - The Algerian National Liberation Front began guerrilla warfare against the French.
- **1951** - President Syngman Rhee presents the South African Air Force (SAAF) squadron, placed at the disposal of the United Nations organisation during the Korean War, with the Korean presidential unit citation.
- **1952** - First hydrogen device exploded, Eniwetok Atoll.
- **1954** - Algeria starts rebellion against French rule. Nationalist rioters led by Ahmed Ben Bella (based

- in Cairo) have wreaked destruction across the Algerian district of Aures. This day later became known as Revolution Day.
- **1956** - The Imre Nagy government of Hungary withdraws from the Warsaw Pact.
- **1963** - South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu were killed in a military coup.
- **1980** - Rifleman Musandiwa Bernard Ralkwatha from 112 Battalion was a member of the SADF soccer team who died from injuries when the military vehicle in which he was a passenger, overturned 10km north of Makuya in Venda. He was 26.
- **1981** - Private Louis Brian Schoeman from the Cape Corps Maintenance Unit was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Rundu. He was 17.
- **1983** - Rifleman Thomas Lochner from 8 SAI was accidentally electrocuted at the Riemvasmaak training facility. He was 19.
- **1986** - Corporal Pieter Johann van Oordt Barnard from the Kirkwood Commando accidentally killed in a private motor vehicle accident at Kirkwood. He was 31.
- **1987** - Rifleman Jean Marc Schuurman from 1 Par-

achute Battalion Died of Wounds received in combat on 31 October 1987 during Ops Firewood. He was 20.

- **1987** - Sergeant Michiel George Pienaar from the Pretoria Regiment was accidentally killed during Ops Modular. He was 21.
- **1988** - Sergeant Johann Jacobs from the South African Army was accidentally killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Kimberley. He was 25.
- **1994** - Angolan government forces take the oil-producing town of Soyo from the rebel group Unita, which captured it the year before.
- **1996** - Rwandan and Zairian forces bombard each another with artillery along the border, while rebels in Zaire, supported by Rwanda, close in on the town of Goma.
- **2007** - Brig Gen Paul W. Tibbets Jr., who commanded the 'Enola Gay' and dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, dies at the age of 92.

2 November

- **1899** - Second Anglo Boer War. The siege of Ladysmith in Natal starts.
- 1899 - The Canadian government offered a second contingent of troops consisting of infantry, cavalry and field artillery to bolster British troops in the South African War.
- **1914** - Russia declares war on the Ottoman Empire.
- **1916** - Verdun: The French

recapture Ft Vaux.

- **1917** - The first US troops are killed in action in France.
- **1930** - Ras (Duke) Tafari is crowned as Emperor Haile Selassie in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, after the death of Empress Zaudito (Zewditu).
- **1942** - Lieutenant General Dwight D. Eisenhower arrives in Gibraltar to set up an American command post for the invasion of North Africa.
- **1942** - British breakthrough the Axis lines during the Battle of El Alamein.
- **1951** - More British troops are sent to the Suez Canal Zone (the biggest troop airlift since the Second World War).
- **1962** - During the Cuban Missile Crisis, President John F. Kennedy announced on TV, "the Soviet bases in Cuba are being dismantled, their missiles and related equipment being crated, and the fixed installations at these sites are being destroyed."
- **1976** - White mercenaries and Black troops invade Congo from Portuguese Angola.
- **1979** - Two members from 1 SAI were killed when their private motor vehicle drove into the rear of a truck on Van Reenen's Pass while they were on a weekend pass. The casualties were: Lance

Corporal Kevin Donald Fison (18). Rifleman Gregory Ormond Barker (18).

- **1980** - Rifleman Naledzani Asher Netshidzivhani from 112 Battalion died from injuries accidentally sustained in a military motor vehicle accident. He was 20.
- **1982** - Rifleman Gideon Breytenbach from 11 Commando Regiment was killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the Witbank Highway. He was 19.
- **1984** - Corporal M. Mbinge from 102 Battalion SWATF accidentally drowned while crossing a river during operations against SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 24.
- **1986** - Lance Corporal Albertus Marthinus le Roux from 7 SAI was Killed in Action when his horse detonated a landmine planted by MK Operatives at Diepgezet near Barberton as part of Ops Ceshwayo. He was 20.
- **1989** - Trooper Rodger Eric

Paul W. Tibbets Jr.



Patterson from 1 Special Service Battalion suffered multiple skull fractures when he was accidentally crushed between a SAMIL 20 truck and a trailer at the Army Battle School Lohatla. He was 21.

- **1990** - Rifleman Mentoer Jacobs from the Cape Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Inanda Highway. He was 24.
- **1990** - Trooper Leon Ferreira from 2 Special Service Battalion was killed at Zeerust in a military vehicle accident. He was 18.
- **1990** - Odile Harrington, a South African convicted and imprisoned for espionage in Zimbabwe in 1987, was released and returned to South Africa.
- **1995** - The former South African defence minister, General Magnus Malan, and several former high-ranking officials are arrested and charged with murder. All were acquitted after a trial in 1996.

3 November

- **1839** - The first Opium War between China and Britain began after British frigates blew up several Chinese junks.
- **1893** - Forces of the British South Africa Company force Matabele King Lobengula, son of Mzilikazi, to flee his Great Place in Bulawayo. Lobengula later dies while retreating towards the

Zambezi.

- **1918** - Part of the German fleet mutinied at Kiel in the closing days of World War I.
- **1942** - In Egypt, the German Afrika Korps and Italian forces under Rommel begin a retreat westwards after a renewed campaign by the allies under Montgomery. About 9,000 German troops are captured.
- **1942** - Guadalcanal: Marines clear Japanese from Point Cruz.
- **1944** - Japanese begin releasing 9,000 incendiary balloons to drift to America.
- **1956** - Britain and France agree to accept a Middle East cease-fire in the Suez War if UN forces can keep the peace.
- **1967** - Two members from 17 Squadron were accidentally killed when their Alouette III Helicopter struck High Tension cables and crashed while transporting three civilian members from the Department of Water Affairs. The SAAF casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Anthony Siege Foxon (23). Air Corporal Johannes Christoffel Steyn (27).
- **1973** - Trooper Jan Adriaan Smit van Heerden from the School of Armour died from injuries accidentally sustained during training. He was 19.
- **1973** - UN Emergency Force reports success in easing tension between Egyptian and Israeli troops at posi-

tions west of Suez Canal.

- **1979** - Teheran: Iranians storm the US embassy to take 63 hostages, initiating decades of acrimony and hostility.
- **1980** - Rifleman Leon Bester from 6 SAI was killed when his private vehicle overturned on the road between Queenstown and Sterkstroom. He was returning to Camp from a weekend pass. He was 19.
- **1983** - Corporal Gregory Frederick Beelders from 18 Corps was killed when the military vehicle in which he was traveling, struck a storm water bridge at Kamanjab. He was 21.
- **1989** - Rifleman Manuel S. Antonio from 32 Battalion was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Pomfret. He was 44.

4 November

- **1862** - Richard Gatling patented his first rapid-fire machine-gun which used revolving barrels rotating around a central mechanism to load, fire, and extract the cartridges.
- **1899** - Second Anglo Boer War. The siege of Ladysmith in Natal starts.
- **1918** - Austria-Hungary concludes an armistice with Italy.
- **1942** - Lieutenant General Dwight D. Eisenhower arrives in Gibraltar to set up an American command post

for the invasion of North Africa.

- **1942** - During World War II, British troops led by Bernard Montgomery defeated the Germans under Erwin Rommel at El Alamein after a twelve-day battle.
- **1950** - US troops retreat from Pyongyang, North Korea.
- **1951** - More British troops are sent to the Suez Canal Zone (the biggest troop airlift since the Second World War).
- **1956** - Soviet Russian troops moved in to crush an uprising in Hungary.
- **1956** - Israeli troops capture the Straits of Tiran and reach the Suez Canal.
- **1956** - British forces enter Gaza, on the western Mediterranean seashore 32 km north of the Egyptian border.
- **1975** - Private Kevin Edward Laidlaw from 15 Squadron SAAF was asleep on his bed in his tent at Rundu when a fellow Private came into the tent on returning from guard duty and threw his UZI sub-machine gun onto the adjacent bed. As the weapon hit the bed, a shot went off and the bullet struck Kevin in the head, killing him instantly. He was 18.
- **1976** - White mercenaries and Black troops invade Congo from Portuguese Angola.
- **1979** - About 500 young Iranian militants stormed the U.S. Embassy in Teheran,

Iran, and took 90 hostages, including 52 Americans that they held captive for 444 days.

- **1980** - Lieutenant (Doctor) Peter William Geddes from the Medical Training Centre was Killed in Action while attached to 53 Battalion at Okotopi. He was 28.
- **1981** - Corporal Johan Louis Potgieter from 1 SAI, attached to 61 Mech was Killed in Action during Ops Daisy. He was 23.
- **1981** - Rifleman A. Dala from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Ops Daisy. He was 22.
- **1981** - Lieutenant Gerrit van Zyl from 61 Mech was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces during Ops Daisy. He was 23.
- **1982** - Rifleman Lionel Gerald Brown from 3 SAI was killed in a private motorcycle accident in Port Elizabeth. He was 20.
- **1991** - Gunner Grant Mann from 14 Artillery Regiment was accidentally killed while at 10 Artillery Brigade. He was 21.
- **1995** - The former South African defence minister, General Magnus Malan, and several former high-rank-

ing officials are arrested and charged with murder. All were acquitted after a trial in 1996.

5 November

- **1799** - The 64-gun HMS Sceptre is wrecked in Table Bay and 300 lives are lost.
- **1902** - The "Mad Mullah" and 17,000 troops are advancing on the British at Bo-hodle, Somaliland.
- **1911** - Italy declares war on Turkey.
- **1914** - Indian 6th Div lands at Basra, securing the oil fields.
- **1915** - First US shipboard catapult launch: LT CDR Henry Mustin, off 'North Carolina' (ACR-12) in a Curtiss AB-ZF.
- **1916** - Germany and Austria-Hungary proclaim an "independent" Kingdom of Poland.
- **1917** - Maj. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr, leads the first American patrol into "No Man's Land".



Magnus Malan

- **1940** - Gallant fight of the armed merchant cruiser HMS 'Jervis Bay' in defense of a convoy from the German pocket battleship 'Admiral Scheer'.
- **1942** - Madagascar: Vichy French surrender to the British at Fort Dauphin.
- **1943** - American aircraft accidentally drop two bombs on the Vatican, which cause minor damage and no casualties.
- **1956** - Britain and France land troops in Egypt during fighting between Egyptian and Israeli forces around the Suez Canal. A cease-fire is declared two days later.
- **1971** - Corporal Nicolaas Frederick van Rensburg from 22 Flight (later 22 Squadron) was killed in a private vehicle accident in Cape Town. He was 20.
- **1975** - Numbers of Cuban soldiers and shipments of Russian military equipment arrive in Luanda, Angola, while SA was clandestinely supporting Unita. When SA realised that the USA did not support the operation, the SA troops were withdrawn. The withdrawal was completed by 27 March 1976.
- **1978** - Private Michael Kidd from Air Force Base Hoodspruit was accidentally killed in a shooting incident at Pilgrims Rest involving his Guard Duty partner at the Base. He was 19.
- **1981** - Candidate Officer Stephanus Francois Stephan Coetzee from 25 Field Squadron was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion in Southern Angola during Ops Daisy while attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group. He was 22.
- **1981** - Private Louis Brian Schoeman from the S.A. Cape Corps Maintenance Unit was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Rundu. He was 17.
- **1985** - Sergeant Leonardus Johannes Coetzee from Air Force Headquarters was killed in a military vehicle accident at Kamieskroon. He was 30.
- **1985** - Rifleman Nicolaas William Smuts from 1 Parachute Battalion was Killed in Action when his patrol was ambushed near Alpha Tower by SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 20.
- **1988** - Rifleman John Norman Botha from the 2nd Battalion Cape Corps was shot and killed by another soldier during an argument at 97 Ammunition Depot at De Aar. He was 19.
- **1988** - Sergeant B. Calipe from 32 Battalion collapsed and died after suffering kidney failure while stationed at Buffalo. He was 34.
- **2005** - Pirates fire a rocket-propelled grenade and machine guns in an attack on the luxury cruise liner Seabourn Spirit off the coast of the east African state of Somalia. The attack is repulsed and the more than 300 passengers, including six South Africans, escape

without injury.

6 November

- **1900** - Second Anglo Boer War. The Battle of Bothaville or Doornkraal is fought with General De Wet surrendering, after heavy losses on both sides.
- **1914** - France declares war on the Ottoman Empire.
- **1917** - During World War I, the Third Battle of Ypres concluded after five months as Canadian and Australian troops took Passchendaele. Their advance, measuring eight kilometres, cost at least 240,000 soldiers.
- **1941** - USS 'Omaha' (CL 4) & USS 'Somers' (DD 381) intercept the German blockade runner 'Oldenwald' in the mid-Atlantic near the Equator.
- **1960** - *Großadmiral* Erich Johann Albert Raeder, Commander-in-Chief of the *Reichsmarine* (1935-1943), dies on this day at the age of 84.
- **1965** - Air Mechanic Barend Jacobus Phillipus Schutte from 68 Air School died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while he was in Pretoria. He was 20.
- **1978** - Private Paul Burger from 61 Base Workshop Technical Service Corps was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 20.
- **1979** - Rifleman M.L. Lifasi for Sector 70 Headquarters SWATF was killed in a military vehicle accident in the Caprivi. He was 19.

- **1979** - Two members from 101 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. They were: Corporal M. Djolomien (27). Rifleman J. Akaando (24).
- **1979** - Private Anthony Raul Da Costa Miranda from Services School was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier who was busy cleaning his private firearm. He was 19.
- **1983** - Rifleman Daniel Pieter Oosthuizen from 4 SAI attached to 62 Mechanised Battalion Group was accidentally killed when his Unimog 127mm MRL vehicle overturned near Otjiwarongo. He was 19.
- **1990** - Lance Corporal Dirk Johannes Jacobus Kotze from the School of Armour was accidentally killed during military exercises at the General De Wet Training Terrain. He was 21.
- **2004** - Nine French soldiers and an American aid consultant are killed in bombing attacks in Ivory Coast's rebel-held north, after the government broke the cease-fire agreement on 4 November. French troops destroy the Ivory Coast air force fleet in retaliation.
- **2004** - New York's "Fighting 69th" arrives at Bagdad to assume its duties in "Operation Iraqi Freedom".

7 November

- **1899** - Second Anglo Boer War. From his conning tower

in the besieged Kimberley Colonel Kekewich sees a "living mass" of men approaching and his artillery opens up at almost point-blank range until they realise that the men are 3,000 unarmed Black mine-workers released by De Beer's from the compounds, without informing the military.

- **1901** - Second Anglo Boer War. The National Scouts Corps of doubtful repute, consisting of surrendered Boers who were willing to fight on the side of their erstwhile enemies, is formed under direct British command. They were allocated to various British units as scouts and after the war were ostracised by the whole community.
- **1936** - Spanish Civil War: Battle for Madrid begins.
- **1954** - US spy plane shot down by Russians over Sea of Japan.
- **1956** - The United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopts a resolution calling upon Britain, France and Israel to withdraw their troops from Egypt immediately. British and French declare a cease-fire in Egypt, but Britain says it will evacuate troops only on arrival of UN Emergency Force.

- **1978** - Two members of 101 Battalion SWATF were

Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. They were: Rifleman J. Frans (22). Rifleman N. Mandingi (23).

- **1978** - Two members from 41 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents while on patrol in Northern Owamboland. The casualties were: Rifleman Abraham Roman (36). Corporal Willem Petrus Swartbooi (28).
- **1982** - Corporal Andries Johannes Strauss from 201 Battalion SWATF was Reported Missing after being dropped off 50km from Omega Base at 13h00 and told to walk back to the Base as a punishment exercise. Despite an intensive search of the area over a number of days, no trace of him or his equipment was ever found. He remains unaccounted for and has no known grave. He was 20.



Erich Raeder

- **1987** - Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, in office since independence in 1956, is overthrown in a bloodless coup.
- **1994** - Over 2,000 Umkhonto we Sizwe soldiers of the ANC's armed wing are dismissed from the SANDF for failing to report for duty.
- **2010** - The German Army holds a formal military ceremony at a restored monument honouring Jewish soldiers who fought in the Kaiser's War.
- **2013** - Manfred Rommel, Luftwaffe veteran and son of Field Marshal Eriwn Rommel, dies at the age of 84.

8 November

- **1745** - Bonnie Prince Charlie invades England from Scotland.
- **1923** - Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch took place in the Buergerbraukeller in Munich. Hitler, Goering and armed Nazis attempted, but ultimately failed, to forcibly seize power and overthrow democracy in Germany.
- **1939** - An assassination attempt on Hitler failed at the Buergerbraukeller in Munich. A bomb exploded soon after Hitler had exited following a speech commemorating the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch. Seven others were killed.
- **1940** - The Royal Air Force bombs Munich.
- **1942** - Allied forces under Lieutenant-General Dwight D. Eisenhower begin landings in North Africa, starting the Algeria-Morocco Campaign of World War II. More than 400,000 Allied soldiers take part in the invasion.
- **1942** - Hitler proclaims the fall of Stalingrad, somewhat prematurely.
- **1950** - The first jet fighter air duel: Lt. Russell J. Brown's F-86 scores a North Korean MiG-15.
- **1957** - Britain tests its first hydrogen bomb, Kirimati Atoll, in the Pacific.
- **1977** - The French Ministry of Defence will no longer permit delivery of two escort vessels (corvettes) and two submarines, under construction in French naval yards, to South Africa.
- **1979** - Captain John Alexander Anderson Howitson from Services School was accidentally killed in a shooting incident at the Impala Base near Phalaborwa while supervising a Junior Leadership Training Camp (OSC) at the Letaba training camp.
- **1980** - Rifleman Gideon Karupa from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 25.
- **1982** - Lieutenant Colin Brits from 41 Squadron was killed while giving flying instruction to a newly qualified pilot when his Atlas C4M Kudu crashed near Potchefstroom. He was 25.

- **1983** - Rifleman I. Haikera from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 26.
- **1984** - Sergeant Norman Keith Abrahams from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.
- **1990** - Gunner Pieter Benjamin Koekemoer from 4 Artillery Regiment was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Imbali. He was 18.
- **1990** - President GHW Bush orders 100,000 additional US troops to the Persian Gulf.
- **1995** - Lieutenant Colonel Francois Stephanus Botha from the South African Medical Corps attached to Air Force Base Hoedspruit, died of injuries received in a military vehicle accident at Dendron. He was 40.
- **1996** - UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali calls for an international military force to aid and protect a million refugees caught in a civil war in Zaire, but is blocked by the United States in the Security Council.

9 November

- **1914** - HMAS 'Sydney' destroys the German raiding

cruiser SMS 'Emden' in the Cocos Islands.

- **1916** - Munitions disaster at Bakaritsa, near Arkhangel, Russia -- 30,000 tons explode, thousands die.
- **1918** - German Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated his throne in the closing days of World War I and fled to Holland. In Germany, Philip Scheidemann, a Socialist leader, then proclaimed a democratic Republic and became its first Chancellor.
- **1921** - The Unknown Soldier arrives at Washington aboard USS 'Olympia'.
- **1925** - Hitler forms the SS within the Brown Shirts.
- **1937** - The Japanese capture Shanghai.
- **1938** - *Kristallnacht* (the night of broken glass) occurred in Germany as Nazi mobs burned synagogues and vandalized Jewish shops and homes.
- **1938** - Marshal of the Soviet Union Vasily Konstantinovich Blyukher, 48, executed by Stalin for 'espionage'.
- **1977** - The Prime Minister of Swaziland says that his government will not allow the country to be used as a base for guerrilla attacks against South Africa. He denies that there are training camps within Swaziland.
- **1979** - Trooper Paul Stephanus Buys from 1 SSB was Killed in Action when his Eland 90 Armoured Car detonated a landmine while

carrying out a patrol in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.

- **1979** - Rifleman Frederick Christoffel van den Berg from 4 SAI was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a landmine in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1980** - Corporal Josias Johannes Botha from Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in George while on weekend pass. He was 19.
- **1980** - Lance Corporal Roy Taylor from the Infantry School was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident near Somerset West on 8 November 1980. He succumbed to his injuries in the Tygerberg Hospital on 9 November 1980. He was 18.
- **1982** - Sapper Adriaan Francois van Wyngaardt from 2 Field Engineer Regiment was Killed in Action when he detonated a boosted Anti-Personnel Mine during minesweeping and clearing Operations in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1983** - Airman Jan Joachim Janse van Rensburg attached to Air Force Base Ondangwa was killed when the Buffel Troop Carrier in which he was travelling as a passenger, was involved in

a collision with a South African Police Casspir in Ondangwa town. He was 18.

- **1987** - Six members from 4 SAI were Killed in Action during Ops Modular. They were: Sergeant Pierre James Digue (28). Corporal Theunis Antonie Duvenhage (18). Rifleman Frederick Augustus Muhlenbeck HC (P) (19). Rifleman Adrian Murray Thom HC (P) (19). Rifleman Anthony Stewart (20). Rifleman Pieter Gerrit Claasen (19).
- **2004** - In Abuja, Nigeria, Sudan and Darfur rebels sign accords on Tuesday to end hostilities and guarantee aid groups' access to 1.6 million civilians uprooted by conflict in the troubled western Sudan region of Darfur.
- **1979** - NORAD goes on full alert, when a computer glitch indicates a massive wave of incoming Soviet missiles.
- **1989** - The Berlin Wall comes down.

10 November

- **1775** - The U.S. Marine Corps was established as

Adolf Hitler



part of the U.S. Navy. It became a separate unit on July 11, 1789.

- **1915** - Fourth Battle of the Isonzo begins and continues to 2 December.
- **1939** - The SA Corps of Military Police (S.A.C.M.P.) is formed as an independent unit under Lt.-Col. R.D. Pilkington-Jordan.
- **1940** - Former British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain dies at the age of 71.
- **1942** - North Africa Vichy military chief in Algeria, Admiral Darlan, orders an end to the resistance against the Allies.
- **1942** - Following the British victory at El Alamein in North Africa during World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stated, "This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."
- **1951** - Allister Mackintosh, pilot and 'father' of SA aviation dies in Port Elizabeth. He earned a D.S.O. in the Battle of the Somme in April 1916.
- **1954** - USMC ("Two Jima") Memorial dedicated in Arlington.
- **1970** - Charles de Gaulle, leader of the 'Free French', President of France (1959-1969), dies at the age of 79.
- **1975** - Two members from 5 Squadron were accidentally killed when their Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I struck trees on top of a

hill near Nottingham Road and crashed. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant John Harold Cox (23). Sergeant Cornelius Andries Petrus van Tonder (27).

- **1976** - Sapper Barend Kruger Engelbrecht from 2 Engineer Regiment accidentally drowned during a training exercise at Bethlehem. He was 19.
- **1982** - Private Andre Ignatius Steffens from the Technical Service Corps died in the Universitas Hospital in Bloemfontein after being critically injured in a military vehicle accident. He was 20.
- **1983** - Rifleman George Murray Boshoff from the Witbank Commando was Killed in Action. He was 22.
- **1983** - Rifleman Harold Hebblethwaite from the Jozini Military Base suffered critical head injuries in a private motor vehicle. He was admitted to hospital but unfortunately succumbed to his injuries shortly after admission. He was 23.
- **1984** - Rifleman Anthony Joseph Brandt from Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident while on weekend pass. He was 18.
- **1985** - Sergeant William Stephan Butler from Air Force Headquarters was killed in a military vehicle accident at Kamieskroon. He was 37.
- **1988** - Following a press conference of General Staff

Lieutenant-Colonel Antonio dos Santos Franca Ndalú, Chief of *Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola* (FAPLA), during which he declared that his forces had killed over 230 South African troops in the course of an offensive and had destroyed large numbers of vehicles, the South African Defence Force (SADF) responded by claiming that not all the soldiers that were killed were theirs. SADF admitted to the loss of only twelve soldiers, meaning the rest that were claimed by Dos Santos belonged to South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO).

- **2012** - Birger Stromsheim, Norwegian commando who led the "Heroes of Telemark", dies aged 101.

11 November

- **1865** - Surgeon Mary Edward Walker is awarded the US Medal of Honor.
- **1885** - World War II General George S. Patton was born in San Gabriel, California.
- **1889** - Second Anglo Boer War. Commandant J.H. Visser with 200 men attacks Kuruman, defended by only 35 members of the Cape Police, 33 local volunteers and a few armed Blacks. They refuse to surrender and the attack develops into a siege.
- **1909** - The US Navy begins construction of a base at Pearl Harbour.
- **1914** - First Battle of Ypres:

The British I Corps hold off a desperate attack by German two corps, as the battle ends.

- **1918** - World War 1 ends with Germany and the Allies signing an armistice in a railroad car at Compiegne, France. "At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the guns fell silent and World War 1 came to an end."
- **1920** - The "Unknown Warrior" is interred in Westminster Abbey & the "Soldat Inconnu" beneath the Arc de Triomphe.
- **1923** - An Eternal Flame" is lit at the Tomb of the "Soldat Inconnu" at the Arc de Triomphe.
- **1961** - Congolese rebels murder 13 Italian airmen in UN service.
- **1965** - Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith, issues a Unilateral Declaration of Independence. Britain says the regime is illegal.
- **1972** - The U.S. turned over its military base at Long Binh to the South Vietnamese, symbolizing the end of direct American military participation in the Vietnam War.
- **1973** - Egypt and Israel sign a cease-fire agreement sponsored by the United States, and begin discussions to carry out the pact.
- **1975** - Angola gains independence from the colonial ruler Portugal with Dr Agostinho Neto as president and is known as the People's

Republic of Angola.

- **1980** - Rifleman Richard Paul Baillie from 6 SAI died in 1 Military Hospital after being critically injured in a private vehicle accident. He was 19.
- **1983** - US cruise missiles arrive in Great Britain.
- **1986** - Two members from 8 SAI were killed when their military vehicle was involved in an accident at Prieska. They were: Corporal Nicolaas Ernst Pattenden (21). Rifleman David John Fowler (21).
- **1986** - Private Johannes Hendrik Snyman from North West Command was accidentally killed at Vryburg after being crushed between a military vehicle and a trailer. He was 18.
- **1987** - Two members from 4 SAI attached to 62 Mechanised Battalion Group were Killed in Action during Ops Modular. They were: Rifleman John Mark Howes (19). Rifleman Daniel Willem Hendrik van Zyl (20).
- **1987** - Three members from 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola during Ops Modular. They were: Rifleman Ernest Ndala Kapepura (25). Rifleman Gabriel Dala (26). Rifleman Fernando Mauricio (33).

- **1987** - Rifleman Pieter Marthinus Schutte from 4 SAI was Killed in Action during Ops Modular. He was 20.
- **1992** - The Goldstone Commission raids offices of the SADF's Directorate.

12 November

- **1901** - The most southern battle is fought at Kraalbospan, near Darling, Western Cape, with General Manie Maritz leading the Boers.
- **1911** - Combined Turkish and Arab forces in Libya are badly mauled by the Italian Army.
- **1914** - Rebellion leader General C.R. de Wet suffers a crushing defeat by government forces at Winburg, OFS.
- **1942** - SA armoured cars are in pursuit of the German forces and re-enter Tobruk, continuing as far as Benghazi, east Libya.



Ian Smith

- **1942** - During World War II in North Africa, the city of Tobruk was captured by the British Eighth Army under General Bernard Montgomery.
- **1944** - RAF sinks the German battleship 'Tirpitz' in a Norwegian fjord.
- **1948** - Japanese General Hideki Tojo and six others were sentenced to death by an Allied war crimes tribunal.
- **1963** - Bombardier Gideon Jacobus Visser from 10 Anti-Aircraft Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 33.
- **1974** - Rifleman Barend Johannes Andries Vorster from 2 SAI was Reported Missing after he went to collect water from the river at Bagani. He was seen to suddenly disappear under the water and it is thought that he may have been taken by a crocodile. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 18.
- **1975** - Rifleman Gideon Joubert Kloppe from 3 SAI was killed instantly after being struck by lightning during a thunderstorm. He was 19.
- **1975** - Rifleman Bartholomeus Venter from 11 Commando Regiment was Killed in Action by enemy mortar fire during a contact with enemy forces while participating in Operation Savannah. He was 20.
- **1980** - Rifleman Nicolaas Jacobus van der Walt from 3 SAI attached to 53 Battalion was accidentally killed in Northern Owamboland when a hand grenade exploded while he was still handling it. He was 19.
- **1980** - Rifleman Jowert Hessel Dijkstra from the Infantry School suffered severe brain injuries in a private motor vehicle accident during August 1980 while travelling home on a weekend pass. He succumbed to his injuries in the H.F. Verwoerd Hospital in Pretoria on 12 November 1980. He was 18.
- **1982** - Corporal Carlo Marcel Bosch from the Finance Service Corps was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 20.
- **1983** - Rifleman Pierre Hanekom from 8 SAI was Killed in Action near Chiede in Southern Angola. He was 18.
- **1985** - 2nd Lieutenant Robert Allan Broekmeyer from 2 SAI died in the Windhoek Hospital from wounds accidentally sustained in a shooting training incident at the Swartkoppe Shooting Range. He was 20.
- **1985** - Rifleman Andrew Steward Dougall from Natal Command collapsed and died of suspected heart failure while running a 2.4 at the Greyville race course. He was 21.
- **1985** - Over 600 people killed in Liberia in an unsuccessful military coup against President Samuel Doe, led

by former Brigadier-General Thomas Quiwonlpa.

- **1991** - Lance Corporal Petrus Hendrik Theodorus Tait from 6 SAI was killed when the South African Police Boerbok vehicle in which he was travelling as a passenger, overturned near Richmond. He was 19.
- **1995** - Britain ends arm sales to Nigeria.
- **2001** - The Taliban abandons Kabul, as Northern Alliance forces approach.

13 November

- **1899** - Second Anglo Boer War. Generals Piet Joubert and Louis Botha cross the Tugela River and head down the railway line to Pietermaritzburg.
- **1942** - The five Sullivan Brothers from Waterloo, Iowa, were lost in the sinking of the cruiser USS Juneau by a Japanese torpedo off Guadalcanal during World War II in the Pacific. Following their deaths, the U.S. Navy changed regulations to prohibit close relatives from serving on the same ship.
- **1942** - Minimum US draft age reduced from 21 to 18.
- **1954** - Generalfeldmarschall Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, 73, war criminal, died in Soviet captivity.
- **1975** - 2nd Lieutenant Christopher James Robin from 4 Field Artillery was killed in action. He was 20.
- **1979** - Rifleman P.S. Lafitila from Sector 70 Headquar-

ters SWATF was critically injured in a military vehicle accident on 06 November 1979. He unfortunately succumbed to his injuries in hospital on 13 November 1979. He was 20.

- **1986** - Two members from 2 and 5 Reconnaissance Regiment were Killed in Action during Ops Colosseum. The casualties were: Corporal Andries Dawid Renken (27). Corporal Marsh Lazarus Mashavave (30).
- **1988** - Rifleman Jacobus Gert Bock from 53 Battalion received a severe skull fracture after being assaulted by members of the local population outside the base. He was flown back to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he succumbed to his injuries later in the day. He was 23.
- **1990** - Corporal Gert Gerhardus Boorman from the South African Cape Corps was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned during a training exercise between Tarraririma and Vorstershoop. He was 20.
- **1995** - Israel began pulling its troops out of the West Bank city of Jenin, ending 28 years of occupation.
- **1982** - Vietnam War Memorial dedicated.

14 November

- **1914** - Lord Frederick Sleigh Roberts, (Field Marshall Earl Roberts of Khartoum) commander-in-chief of the British forces during the Second Anglo Boer War,

dies in St Omer, France.

- **1919** - Red Army captures Omsk, Siberia, from the Whites.
- **1926** - Major Friedrich W.R. Albrecht (78), founder of the OFS State Artillery, dies in Bloemfontein.
- **1941** - Aircraft carrier HMS 'Ark Royal' sinks in the Mediterranean after being torpedoed by the 'U-81' the day before.
- **1975** - Gunner Christo Retief from 4 Field Regiment was Killed in Action. He was 18.
- **1975** - Rifleman Adam Johannes Hendrikus Schonveldt from the Tactical Platoon of the SADF Horse and Dog Centre was killed in action. He was 20.
- **1976** - Warrant Officer Class II Michael Grahame Craul from Regiment Algoa Bay was shot dead at Ondangwa by a guard on duty. He was 24.
- **1978** - 2nd Lieutenant Roelof Nicolas Britz from 32 Battalion was Reported Missing after being attacked by a crocodile while swimming in the Kavango River near Buffalo. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 23.
- **1978** - Rifleman P.P. De Amorim from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces

near Omutwewondjaba in Southern Angola. He was 27.

- **1979** - Rifleman Patrick Charles Wolmarans from 4 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1984** - Corporal Paulus Gouws from the South African Cape Corps was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a TMA-3 "Cheese" Anti-Tank Mine. He was 21.
- **1985** - 2nd Lieutenant Willem Stephanus van der Merwe from 1 Parachute Battalion died of multiple shrapnel wounds in 1 Military Hospital after an accidental mortar bomb explosion during a weapons demonstration on 22 October 1985. He was 20.
- **1987** - Captain Andre Anthony Stapa was based at Air Force Base Ondangwa as a Station Pilot. He was subsequently Reported Missing when his Atlas MB326KM



Samuel Doe

Impala Mk II failed to return from attacking enemy positions near Cuvelai in Southern Angola. The aircraft impacted the ground while pulling out after firing on the enemy positions and it is thought that the Pilot may have misjudged his altitude and flown into the ground. The possibility that his aircraft may have been hit or damaged by hostile ground fire was also not ruled out. He has no known grave. He was 30.

- **1987** - Rifleman Andre Taylor Veltman from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Fouriesburg while on a weekend pass. He was 20.
- **1994** - Having been dismissed from the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) for their illegal strike about poor living standards in Wallmannstal military camp previously in November, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) guerrillas, through their spokesperson Salvador Mkhari, threaten to resume the armed struggle unless their demands were met.
- **1996** - American troops arrive in Kigali, Rwanda's capital, in advance of a multinational operation to feed and help send home more than one million refugees in Zaire, now called Congo.
- **2001** - Operation Enduring Freedom: Northern Alliance forces liberate Kabul from

the Taliban.

- **2005** - Former defence minister Magnus Malan joins former SA Defence Force chief Constand Viljoen in denying any knowledge of mass graves found near a former South African military base in northern Namibia. People's Liberation Army of Namibia (Plan) fighters killed by the SA army and South-West African Territory Force by law had to be handed to the South-West African police for identification and burial. Malan says that questions about the graves should be directed at the United Nations as they were in command in Namibia at the time.

15 November

- **1891** - German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was born at Heidenheim, in Wurttemberg, Germany.
- **1899** - Winston Churchill, war correspondent of The Morning Post, is captured near Chieveley, Natal, when the Boers ambush an armoured train.
- **1942** - Church bells ring across Britain for the first time since the German invasion threat of 1940, to celebrate victory in the Battle of El Alamein.
- **1943** - During the Holocaust, Heinrich Himmler ordered Gypsies and part-Gypsies to be sent to concentration camps. The number of Gypsies killed by Nazis is estimated up to 500,000.

- **1969** - The largest antiwar rally in U.S. History occurred as 250,000 persons gathered in Washington, D.C., to protest the Vietnam War.
- **1980** - Corporal Quintino Abel from 32 Battalion was Reported Missing when he disappeared after being attacked by a crocodile while swimming in the Okavango River near Buffalo Base. He was no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 24.
- **1982** - Rifleman Jacobus Albertus van Zyl from the Kimberley Commando was killed instantly after being struck by lightning while participating in a training exercise at Schmidtsdrift. He was 26.
- **1986** - Two members of 1 Parachute Battalion were killed when the Casspir in which they were travelling, overturned near Tsande while travelling from Om-balantu to Ondangwa. The casualties were: Corporal Thomas Wilhelm Janse van Rensburg (23). Rifleman Christo Badenhorst (20).
- **1988** - Grintek of SA, Saab of Sweden and British aerospace sign a historic contract for supplying military equipment worth about R60 million.
- **1990** - Trooper Warren John Pieters from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident approximately 25km from

Koopmansfontein. He was 19.

16 November

- **1900** - Second Anglo Boer War. The Battle of Sprin-kaansnek is fought, with General Philip Botha forcing a passage through the neck.
- **1939** - German U-boat torpedoes tanker 'Sliedrecht' near Ireland.
- **1941** - US intelligence loses track of Japanese aircraft carriers.
- **1950** - King Farouk, Egypt, demands the "total and immediate evacuation" of all British troops from the Suez Canal Zone.
- **1961** - After the bodies of thirteen Italian UN soldiers are "sold" in a Congo market, UN Secretary-General U Thant orders UN forces to punish those responsible.
- **1975** - British newspapers report that South African mercenaries are helping UNITA against the MPLA in Angola.
- **1976** - Sapper Matthys Philipus Fourie from 2 Field Engineer Regiment was Killed in Action. He was 18.
- **1976** - Two members from 1 SAI were accidentally killed while carrying out driver training near the Knysna-Uniondale Crossroads. They were: Corporal Joseph Edward Flood Ashpole (19). Corporal Andries Johannes Blom (21).
- **1978** - Lance Corporal Johannes Petrus Nel from Reg-

iment Louw Wepener was Killed in Action. He was 26.

- **1983** - Lieutenant Timothy David Short from 6 Squadron was killed when his Atlas MB326KM Impala Mk II crashed into the sea 5km off Brighton Beach near Durban while on a training flight. He was 21.
- **1985** - Ordinary Marine Victor Ernest Bastion de Klerk from 123 Harbour Protection Unit, South African Marines was killed during the Cape Riots when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Mitchell's Plain. He was 18.
- **1987** - Two members from 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. The casualties were: Staff Sergeant Arsenio Nicolau Domignos Batisda (33). Rifleman Joaquim Pedro (29).
- **1987** - Corporal Jacob Caryl van Heerden from 4 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola during Ops Modular. He was 20.
- **1995** - The United Nations charged Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, and his military commander, Ratko Mladic, with genocide.

17 November

- **1887** - British General Bernard L. Montgomery was

born in St. Mark's Vicarage, Kennington Oval, London.

- **1922** - Samuel Alfred (Taffy) Long, Herbert Hull and David Lewis, strikers during the revolt, are hung in the Central Prison in Pretoria for committing murder.
- **1958** - The civilian government of Sudan is overthrown by the military; Ibrahim Abboud becomes prime minister.
- **1964** - Harold Wilson, the British Prime Minister, announces in the House of Commons that the British government has decided to impose an embargo on the export of arms to South Africa. Outstanding commitments by the Ministry of Defence will be fulfilled, but no new contracts will be accepted. The contract to supply sixteen Buccaneer aircraft is under review.
- **1975** - A ban on the publication of military involvements in Angola is imposed on South African newspapers.



Erwin Rommel

- **1980** - Sapper Hendrik Johannes Jacobus Jacobs from 1 Construction Regiment was shot dead by a Sentry on guard duty at Chetto Base in Sector 20 after he entered a restricted area during the night and failed to identify himself after being challenged by the Sentry. He was 18.
- **1981** - Rifleman Gert Johannes de Lange from 4 Vehicle Reserve Park was accidentally killed after suffering shrapnel wounds in an accidental hand grenade explosion at the Maryland Training Base. He was 20.
- **1986** - Corporal James Eric Cooper from Group 46 was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop carrier overturned at Kwanobuhle. He was 26.
- **1986** - Rifleman W. Mbandjeu from 102 Battalion SWATF was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.
- **1987** - Lance Corporal Johann Redelinghuys from the South African Medical Corps was attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was killed in action during Operation Modular. He was 20.
- **1988** - Private Alwyn Lubbe from 1 Maintenance Unit was accidentally killed when he fell off a moving vehicle while in a convoy that was travelling from Kimberley to Eenhana. He was 19.
- **1988** - A SA woman, Olivia Forsyth, allegedly a spy for the SA government against the ANC, who has been holed up in the British Embassy in Luanda since May, leaves for London after being granted an exit visa by the Angolan authorities.
- **1993** - Military rule is re-imposed in Nigeria when General Sani Abacha ousts civilian leader Ernest Shonekan.
- **1993** - The United Nations opened its first war crimes tribunal since the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials following World War II. Judges from 11 nations were sworn in to examine recent mass murders in Yugoslavia characterized as ethnic cleansing.
- **1997** - Six militants open fire at the Temple of Hatshepsut in Luxor, Egypt, killing seventy-four people, sixty-one of them foreign tourists. The attackers are killed by police.

18 November

- **1914** - Naval Battle of Cape Sarych: the Russian Black Sea Fleet defeats a Turk-German squadron.
- **1916** - During World War I, Allied General Douglas Haig called off the First Battle of the Somme after five months. The Allies had advanced 201 square kilometres at a cost of 420,000 British and 195,000 French soldiers. German losses were over 650,000 men.
- **1936** - Germany & Italy recognized Franco government

in Spain.

- **1941** - Operation Barbarossa: A Soviet counterattack near Tula causes the German 112th Infantry Division to break.
- **1941** - Last Italian forces in Ethiopia surrender to the British, ending 15 months of resistance.
- **1961** - President John F. Kennedy sends 18,000 military advisors to South Vietnam.
- **1962** - Corporal Johannes George Wolmarans from 1 Parachute Battalion was admitted to 1 Military Hospital after being diagnosed with myocarditis. He died later in hospital after suffering heart failure. He was 19.
- **1971** - 2nd Lieutenant Douglas Angus Morrison from the School of Engineers was accidentally electrocuted while serving at Kroonstad. He was 20.
- **1984** - Leading Seaman Sydney Harry de Jongh from 111 Harbour Protection Unit, South African Marines accidentally drowned in a river mishap while based at Wene-la in the Eastern Caprivi. He was 28.
- **1987** - Cuba denies its troops are engaged in fighting against SA forces in Angola.
- **1988** - The three Zimbabwean intelligence officers standing trial for a bomb attack on an ANC house in Bulawayo are sentenced to death.
- **1989** - Rifleman Robert Antonio Gache from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was killed when his Buffel Troop

Carrier overturned 50km north of Okahandja. He was 20.

- **1992** - After a marathon ten-hour Cabinet meeting, President F.W. de Klerk appointed Lt.-Gen. Pierre Steyn as head of all intelligence functions of the South African Defence Force (SADF), including the Military Intelligence (MI).
- **1993** - Nigeria's new military ruler, General Sani Abacha, dissolves all democratic institutions.

19 November

- **1812** - Napoleon begins his retreat from Moscow.
- **1863** - President Abraham Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address during ceremonies dedicating 17 acres of the Gettysburg Battlefield as a National Cemetery.
- **1915** - Russia and Italy declare war on Bulgaria
- **1941** - HMAS 'Sydney' and the German merchant cruiser 'Kormoran' clash off the western coast of Australia, both sinking, 'Sydney' with no survivors. The wrecks were located in 2008.
- **1942** - The Russian Army began a massive counter-offensive against the Germans at Stalingrad during World War II.
- **1943** - Following an attempted uprising, the Nazis liquidate the Janowska concentration camp near Lemberg, at least 6,000 Jews are murdered.
- **1950** - General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower be-

comes the supreme commander of NATO.

- **1969** - The first news reports emerged that American troops in Vietnam had massacred civilians in My Lai Village back in March of 1968.
- **1978** - Signaler Arnold Charles Lewin from the South African Corps of Signals stationed at Grootfontein, collapsed from heat exhaustion. He was rushed to the Grootfontein Hospital but died soon after admission. He was 18.
- **1987** - Major Petrus Abraham van der Merwe from 1 Parachute Battalion was wounded in a grenade explosion on 18 November. He succumbed to his wounds on 19 November 1987. He was 27.
- **1987** - US warships destroy Iranian oil platforms in Persian Gulf.
- **1989** - Signaler Jan Gabriel Kriel from 2 Signals Regiment was killed after he was accidentally run over by a Ratel 20 at Keetmanshoop. He was 20.
- **1990** - The Cold War came to an end during a summit in Paris as leaders of NATO and the Warsaw Pact signed a Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, vastly reducing their military arsenals.

20 November

- **1917** - The first use of tanks in battle occurred at Cambrai, France, during World War I. Over 300 tanks commanded by British General Sir Douglas Haig went into battle against the Germans.
- **1918** - The 369th "Colored" Infantry, New York National Guard, becomes the first American unit to reach the Rhine and take up occupation duties in Germany.
- **1942** - British Eighth Army recaptures Benghazi, Libya.
- **1943** - The Battle of Tarawa began in the Pacific War as American troops attacked the Japanese on the heavily fortified Gilbert Islands.
- **1944** - US First Army secures Aachen.
- **1945** - The Nuremberg War Crime Trials began in which 24 former leaders of Nazi Germany were charged with conspiracy to wage wars of aggression, crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.



Olivia Forsyth

- **1962** - The Cuban Missile Crisis concluded as President John F. Kennedy announced he had lifted the U.S. Naval blockade of Cuba stating, "the evidence to date indicates that all known offensive missile sites in Cuba have been dismantled."
 - **1983** - Corporal Raymond Kenneth Eaton from Technical Service Corps attached to the Army Battle School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident at Boshoff. He was 17.
 - **1983** - Chaplain Gerhardus Jacobus Rossouw from SWATF Headquarters was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Windhoek. He was 29.
 - **1985** - Marine Ferdinand Ben Els from the 111 Harbour Protection Unit, South African Marines was killed in a military vehicle accident at Katima Mulilo. He was 18.
 - **1987** - Bombardier Lukas Marthinus Charl Havenga from 4 Artillery Regiment was attached to the 120mm Mortar section at the Lomba River during Ops Modular where he suffered a heart attack during operations and died before he could be evacuated to Rundu. He was 22.
 - **1988** - Three members from 6 Maintenance Unit were accidentally killed when their military vehicle overturned on the Bagani-Rundu road. They were: Private John Marloh (20). Private Rodney Izaak Nelson (20). Private Neville Swartz (18).
 - **1990** - Anti-Gulf War protest marches begin in 20 US cities.
 - **1994** - Angolan government signs peace treaty with UNITA.
- 21 November**
- **1894** - Port Arthur is captured by the Japanese from the Chinese, amidst great slaughter.
 - **1900** - Second Anglo Boer War. The Battle of De Wetsdorp, which was to end on the 23rd with the surrender of the British to Chief Commandant C.R. de Wet, starts.
 - **1918** - German ammunition trains explode in Hamont, Belgium, 1,750 die.
 - **1968** - Trooper Brian Wesley Dyer from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Katima Mulilo. He was 17.
 - **1970** - Operation Ivory Coast: A joint Army-Air Force commando raid on the Son Tây prisoner-of-war camp finds all Americans have been moved elsewhere.
 - **1980** - Rifleman Armando Eduardo from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 32.
 - **1981** - Trooper Marthinus Christoffel Botha from 1 Special Service Battalion was accidentally killed by

lightning while on manoeuvres at the Army Battle School. He was 18.

- **1981** - Rifleman Coenraad Christoffel van Wyk from 1 Parachute Battalion accidentally drowned in the swimming pool in the Paratrooper Fire-Force Camp at AFB Ondangwa. He was 20.
- **1984** - Three members from 202 Battalion SWATF were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in the Operational Area. The casualties were: Trooper W.A. Basson (19). Trooper H. Diergaardt (20). Trooper C. McNab (20).
- **1984** - 2nd Lieutenant Gustav Brink from 1 Special Service Battalion was accidentally killed during the night in Owamboland when his armoured car drove into a water-well at dusk and overturned. He was 20.
- **1986** - Rifleman Nicolaas Carel Martinus Bronkhorst from the Ermelo Commando died after suffering a fatal heart attack while participating in a shooting exercise at the Amsterdam shooting range. He was 39.
- **1989** - Colonel Cornelius Alwyn Johannes Meerholz HCS from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was accidentally killed in a private motor vehicle accident at Gravelot. He was 37.
- **1989** - The Citizen reports that the remaining 1,500 South African troops in Namibia have been withdrawn in November.

- **2005** - Alfred Anderson, veteran of the Black Watch, the last survivor of the Christmas Truce of 1914, the last Scottish veteran of the war, and the oldest man in Scotland, dies at the age of 109.

22 November

- **1847** - General Jacobus Herculaas de la Rey, known as Koos de la Rey, is born.
- **1890** - Charles De Gaulle was born in Lille, France. He led the Free French against the Nazis during World War II and later became President of France, serving from 1958-69.
- **1914** - Ypres burns under German bombardment.
- **1917** - German L59 Zeppelin starts flight from Bulgaria to Khartoum carrying much needed supplies to General von Lettow in East Africa.
- **1943** - The Cairo Conference occurred as President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek, met to discuss the war in the Pacific against Japan.
- **1963** - US President John F. Kennedy is assassinated.
- **1980** - Two members from Infantry School were killed in a private motor vehicle accident between George and the Wilderness while they were on a weekend pass. The casualties were: Corporal Ferdinand Johannes Louw (20). Corporal Andre Seaman (21).
- **1988** - Rifleman Felokwakhe Andreas Magagula from 121 Battalion died in the King Edward VIII Hospital from injuries received when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned while on an operational patrol at Kwa Ngwanase. He was 28.
- **1988** - South African government announces it has joined Cuba and Angola in endorsing a plan to remove Cuban troops from Angola.
- **1990** - Lance Corporal Sibusiso Dlomo from Natal Command was killed in a military vehicle accident in Durban. He was 30.
- **1991** - Airman Martin Jacobsz from the Air Force Gymnasium was killed in a private motor vehicle accident after his vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with another vehicle on the Delmas to Pretoria Road. He was 19.

23 November

- **1900** - Second Anglo Boer War. Major-General Smith-Dorrien, leaving only the church standing, razes the town of Dullstroom to the ground.
- **1939** - The German battleships 'Scharnhorst' & 'Gneisenau' sink the greatly

outclassed armed merchant cruiser HMS 'Rawalpindi' in the North Atlantic off the Faroes.

- **1942** - Japanese bomb Port Darwin, Australia.
- **1946** - Bombardment of Haiphong: The French fleet shells the port, held by the Viet Minh, inflicting heavy casualties and initiating the "First Indochina War".
- **1966** - Gen. R.C. Hiemstra opens the Castle of Good Hope military museum in Cape Town, reflecting various aspects of military history since 1652.
- **1975** - Captain George Frederick Schoeman from 2 SSB was critically wounded on 9 November 1975 during Operation Savannah in Southern Angola. He succumbed to his wounds on 23 November 1975. He was 31.
- **1975** - Warrant Officer Class II Alwyn Johannes Benson from 4 SAI was Killed in Action during Operation Savannah. He was 30.
- **1975** - Captain Johan Wolf-

Charles De Gaulle



gang Holm HC (P) from the Danie Theron Combat School was Killed in Action during Operation Savannah. He was 36.

- **1975** - Trooper Neil Lombard from B Squadron 1SSB was Reported Missing during Ops Savannah. His body could not be recovered. He was 20.
- **1975** - Corporal Jochemus Jacobus Taljaard from 2 Special Service Battalion was Killed in Action during Operation Savannah. He was 20.
- **1975** - Lance Corporal Gerhard Vollgraaff from 2 Special Service Battalion Died of Wounds received in Action during Operation Savannah during the Battle of Ebo. He was 19.
- **1976** - Rifleman Stephanus Johannes Swartz from 6 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident at Bedford in the Eastern Cape. He was 21.
- **1977** - Rhodesian forces attack nationalist guerrilla bases at Tembue and Chimoio in Mozambique, killing allegedly over a thousand people.
- **1978** - Corporal Nicolaas Marthinus Dekker from Quartermaster General was killed by shrapnel at Potchefstroom when a G2 140mm Medium Gun High Explosive projectile exploded in the cannon breach during a training exercise. He was 18.
- **1981** - Rifleman R. Mukoya

from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces. He was 25.

- **1983** - The Beirut Barracks Bombing: 241 US & 58 French military peacekeepers, and six civilians are killed when two members of Islamic Jihad detonate a truck bomb.
- **1985** - Fifty-eight die as Egyptian commandos storm a hijacked Egyptian jet in Malta.
- **1986** - Sergeant Gert Benjamin Labuschagne from the Virginia Commando was found dead during a military training exercise. It appeared that he suffered a fatal heart attack while he was asleep. He was 36.
- **1993** - Captain Louis Joubert from 1 Squadron was Reported Missing when his Dassault Mirage F1AZ was seen to suddenly bank steeply and dive into the sea approximately 80km South, South West of Cape Point while carrying out a low level maritime strike. He was 24.

24 November

- **1874** - Joseph Glidden patented his invention of barbed wire.
- **1887** - German Field Marshal Erich von Manstein was born in Berlin.
- **1941** - The great tank battle of Sidi Rezegh in North Africa rages unabated in World War 2. The South Africans,

outnumbered by their German opponents, are stranded in the open desert but manage to destroy fifty of the German tanks. At about 16:30 all the SA guns are out of action after running short of ammunition and the South Africans are forced to surrender.

- **1944** - First B-29 raid from Saipan; 111 bombers hit Tokyo.
- **1956** - Soviet troops invade Hungary as Imre Nagy becomes prime minister.
- **1964** - Belgian paratroopers, the Congolese army and mercenaries recapture Stanleyville in the Congo from rebels.
- **1969** - The U.S. Army announced that Lt. William L. Calley had been charged with premeditated murder in the massacre of civilians in the Vietnamese village of My Lai in March of 1968. Calley was ordered to stand trial by court martial and was later convicted and sentenced to life in prison. However, his sentence was later commuted to three years of house arrest by President Richard Nixon.
- **1973** - Four aircrew members from 24 Squadron were Reported Missing after two Hawker Siddeley S-50 Buccaneer aircraft, Serial Numbers 419 and 420 that had departed from Cape Town to conduct a maritime strike exercise against HMS Fearless during a Joint SA Navy and Royal Navy exercise referred to as CAPEX 73 failed to return. At 13h30 the aircraft

were involved in a mid-air collision in thick fog over Walker Bay near Hermanus while en-route to the ship. The crews were: Major Johannes Jacob Stein Steinberg (32). Major Clement Roy Vice (29). Captain Hercules Du Preez (25). Captain Brian Maughan Antonis (26).

- **1975** - Trooper Gideon Marthinus Frederick Obbes from 2 SAI was Killed in Action. He was 20.
- **1978** - Rifleman Nicolaas Mostert Hofmeyer van der Spuy van Rooyen from 31 Battalion was killed instantly in an accidental hand grenade explosion at the Omega shooting range during a training exercise. He was 18.
- **1981** - Private Johannes Petrus Coetzee from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed when the military vehicle in which he was traveling overturned. He was 19.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Saxson Kaputo from 102 Battalion SWATF was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Opuwa. He was 22.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal Andre Dan Mostert from 1 SWA SPES was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Opuwa. He was 19.
- **1986** - Rifleman William Haalsward Opperman from 8 SAI died in the Johannesburg General Hospital from injuries received after he was knocked down by a civilian vehicle that failed to stop at

a road block he was manning in Soweto. He was 19.

- **1986** - Special Constable Johannes Sem from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 33.
- **1992** - The U.S. military departed the Philippines after nearly a century of military presence. In 1991, the Philippine Senate had voted to reject a renewal of the lease for the American military base.

25 November

- **1854** - During the Battle of Balaclava, the famous "Charge of the Light Brigade" takes place. Nearly 600 British light cavalry undertook a frontal attack down a narrow, mile long valley, an action that had no impact whatsoever on the outcome of the battle, while leaving literally hundreds of the troopers dead or wounded.
- **1915** - Chilean military leader Augusto Pinochet was born in Valparaiso, Chile.
- **1936** - Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, an agreement to collaborate in opposing the spread of Communism.

• **1940** - Maiden flights of the de Havilland Mosquito & the Martin B-26 Marauder, one on each side of the pond.

- **1961** - USS 'Enterprise' (CVN 65), the first nuclear-powered carrier, is commissioned, to commence 51 years of service; decommissioned 2012.
- **1971** - Four members from 22 Flight (later 22 Squadron) were killed while stationed on board the SAS President Steyn that was escorting a new Daphne Class submarine SAS Emily Hobhouse from France back to South Africa when their Westland Wasp helicopter burst into flames just after take-off. They were: Captain Christiaan Jacobus Tiedt (24). Sergeant Johannes Gerhardus Blom (34). Corporal Johann Stork (26). Corporal Nicolaas Francois Janse van Rensburg (33).
- **1975** - Two members from 11 Squadron and one from 8 SAI were Reported Missing during Operation Savannah



William L. Calley

when their Cessna 185D was presumed to have been shot down over or near the town of Ebo in Central Angola. The casualties were: Captain Daniel Jakob Taljaard (32). 2nd Lieutenant Keith Arthur Williamson (21). 2nd Lieutenant Eric Brian Thompson (20).

- **1979** - Rifleman Thomas Ignatius Louw from 2 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 18.
- **1981** - Forty-five mercenaries from South Africa under Colonel Mike Hoare land in Seychelles, attack the airport and cause heavy damage. Those who are not captured and detained by Seychelles security forces flee by hijacking an Air India plane, which they divert to South Africa. The TRC in 1998 rules the SA government responsible for the attack.
- **1982** - Special Constable Tuhfeni Nekundi from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 34.
- **1983** - Syria & Saudi Arabia announce cease-fire in PLO civil war in Lebanon.
- **1987** - Trooper Johann Raubenheimer Meyer from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in South East-

ern Angola. He was 20.

- **1987** - Rifleman Marius Johannes Mitton HC (P) was critically wounded during Ops Modular on 11 November 1987 and succumbed to his wounds on 25 November 1987. He was 20.

26 November

- **1832** - Doctor Mary Edwards Walker, the only woman to win the Medal of Honor, is born.
- **1943** - British troop transport 'Rohna' is sunk in the Mediterranean by a Luftwaffe Henschel Hs 293 guided glide bomb. 1,138 men are killed, including 1,015 American troops.
- **1940** - During the Holocaust, Nazis began walling off the Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw, sealing in 400,000 inhabitants while denying them adequate food, sanitation and housing.
- **1944** - Himmler orders destruction of Auschwitz & Birkenau crematoria.
- **1969** - Major Johannes Petrus Britz LWD from 1 Squadron SAAF was killed instantly near Pietersburg, when his Canadair CL13B Sabre Mk VI, Serial Number 368 suffered catastrophic engine failure and caught fire while he was carrying out bombing practice exercises. He was 29.
- **1970** - Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., the first black American general, dies at 93.
- **1973** - Rifleman Leon Holscher from 2 SAI was

Reported Missing after being attacked by a crocodile while he swimming in the Cunene River. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 19.

- **1975** - Two members from 2 Parachute Regiment were accidentally killed as a result of being dragged under canopy in high winds after landing during a parachute training exercise at the General de Wet Training Area. The casualties were: Sergeant Dirk Johannes Human (28). Rifleman Alan Taylor Bate (23).
- **1978** - Signaler Hendrik Lambertus Johann Brown from the Army Gymnasium was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 22.
- **1979** - Trooper Louis Petrus Badenhorst from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 19.
- **1982** - Private Jannie Louw from 61 Base Workshops was accidentally killed when he was crushed between a military vehicle and a guard tower at Centurion, Pretoria. He was 22.

27 November

- **1941** - HMAS 'Parramatta' is sunk off Tobruk by 'U-559'.
- **1941** - Operation Crusader: British troops break the seven month Axis siege of Tobruk.
- **1941** - Joint Army-Navy signal to senior commanders in the Pacific ends with,

"This dispatch is to be considered a war warning," and CNO adds to CINCUS Kimmel "an aggressive move by Japan is expected within the next few days".

- **1942** - The French Navy scuttles its ships at Toulon to prevent Nazis from capturing them.
- **1951** - First successful surface-to-air missile test is carried out at White Sands.
- **1976** - Sapper Petrus Johannes Du Toit from 2 Field Engineer Regiment was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Rundu. He was 19.
- **1976** - Rifleman Donald Robert Pretorius from 1 SAI was killed in a military Bedford accident at Colesburg. He was 19.
- **1981** - Lance Corporal Johan Martins from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 19.

28 November

- **1887** - Nazi leader Ernst Rohm is born.
- **1899** - Second Anglo Boer War. The Battle of Modder River or Tweerivieren takes place, in which both Gen. Methuen and Gen. De la Rey are wounded. Gen. De la Rey's son, Adriaan, is fatally wounded.
- **1916** - First German air raid on London.
- **1939** - USSR revokes the Soviet-Finnish non-aggression pact.

- **1943** - The Teheran Conference began, attended by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Josef Stalin. Among the major topics discussed, a second front in Western Europe, resulting in D-Day, the seaborne invasion of Normandy in northern France on June 6, 1944.
- **1951** - Military coup under Col Adib el-Shishakli in Syria.
- **1976** - Corporal Terence Paul Leonard from 2 SAI was killed when the vehicle he was traveling in overturned, crushing him underneath. The accident happened while traveling in convoy from Grootfontein to Walvis Bay. He was 19.
- **1976** - Rifleman Friedrich Erwin Abraham from Infantry School died in a private motorcycle accident at Rawsonville in the Cape while on weekend pass. He was 20.
- **1977** - Rifleman Lawrence Dennis Kretzmann from 11 Commando Regiment attached to 53 Battalion, was critically injured on 11 November 1977 when his Unimog Troop Carrier overturned after striking an animal. He was 19.

- **1978** - Lance Corporal Waldemar Heinrich Grobler from 5 SAI was Killed in Action. He was 22.
- **1978** - Rifleman Robert Sentefol from 2 SAI was killed instantly after being struck by lightning. He was 18.
- **1980** - Four SAAF members from the Air Defence School in Pretoria were killed in a private aircraft crash while on a weekend pass. The casualties were: Private Pieter Barand De Villiers (18). Private Gabriel De Wet van Eeden (20). Private Leonard Wilhelm Kruger (24). Private Abraham Daniel Roux (18).
- **1983** - Corporal Gary Richard Milne from Western Province Command was killed in a military vehicle accident at Garries. He was 23.
- **1984** - Sergeant Marius Melville Bekker from Natal Command Headquarters Unit died in the Addington Hospital from injuries sus-



Heinrich Himmler

tained when his military motorcycle was struck by a civilian motor vehicle in Argyle Road, Durban. He was 26.

- **1986** - Rifleman Gregory Bruce Gerald Marshall from Infantry School was killed in a private motorcycle accident. He was 19.
- **1988** - Lance Corporal Izak Johannes van Rooyen from the Medical Base Depot was killed in a private vehicle accident in Springs. He was 28.
- **1992** - Four APLA Gunmen burst into the King William's Town Golf Club as 55 members of the King Wine Circle, a wine-tasting club that includes much of the town gentry, were having their annual Christmas dinner. Five guests were killed instantly when the men sprayed the room with Automatic weapon gunfire and lobbed in hand grenades. Three hand grenades exploded in the dining room, the bar and in a shed outside the clubhouse. Fifteen diners and two waitresses were injured, some seriously, by gunfire, shrapnel and flying glass. The four APLA operatives subsequently escaped by vehicle. All four APLA operatives were later granted amnesty for this attack.
- **1997** - Fighting breaks out among President Laurent Kabila's soldiers in Kinshasa, Congo, when he orders the arrest of one of his

aides. Eighteen people are killed.

29 November

- **1900** - Second Anglo Boer War. Lord Kitchener succeeds Lord Roberts as commander-in-chief of the British forces in SA and Lord Roberts succeeds Wolseley as commander-in-chief of the British army.
- **1917** - The Women's Royal Naval Service (WRENS) is established.
- **1932** - France and the USSR sign a non-aggression pact.
- **1951** - The first underground atomic explosion, Frenchman's Flat, Nevada.
- **1974** - Corporal Allan Geoffrey Becker from Regiment Noord Transvaal was accidentally killed while servicing a military vehicle in Leydsdorp. The vehicle slipped off the jacks and crushed him. He was 24.
- **1977** - Trooper Ruben van Niekerk from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident while serving in the Operational Area. He was 18.
- **1986** - Gunner Gerrit Meintjies from 4 Artillery Regiment was killed in a private vehicle accident on the Potgietersrus road while on leave. He was 20.
- **1987** - Private Alexander Talbat Nelson Sadler from 101 Base Workshops was critically injured, suffering massive internal injuries

in Southern Angola during Operation Modular when he was accidentally run over by a Kwé supply vehicle. He unfortunately succumbed to his injuries before he could be medically evacuated. He was 20.

- **1991** - Red Cross says clan battles in Somalia's capital of Mogadishu have killed more than 1,000 people.
- **1996** - U.N. war crimes tribunal sentences Bosnian Serb Drazen Erdemovic to 10 years for the massacre of 1,200 Muslims.

30 November

- **1874** - Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, war correspondent during Second Anglo Boer War and later premier of Britain, is born in Oxfordshire, England.
- **1885** - Albrecht Kesselring, German field marshal, was born.
- **1934** - Dedication of the Anzac Memorial at Gallipoli, presided over by Kemal Ataturk.
- **1939** - Finland was invaded by more than 20 Russian divisions in the Winter War.
- **1943** - Teheran Conference: FDR, Churchill, & Stalin agree that Operation Overlord will take place in May of 1944.
- **1945** - British Admiral Louis Mountbatten accepts the surrender of Japanese Field Marshal Hisaichi Terauchi, who hands over

his sword, Saigon.

- **1978** - Gunner Carel Hendrik Smit from 14 Artillery Regiment was killed when the military vehicle he was traveling in, overturned between Kuruman and Katu. He was 21.
- **1981** - Captain Abraham Jacobus Petrus de Kock from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action in a premature explosion while laying demolition charges at the Oil Refinery in Luanda during Ops Kerslig. He was 26.
- **1982** - Major Michael Al-

bert Bondesio from 35 Squadron suffered a fatal heart attack while sitting behind the controls flying Shackleton 1717. He was 44.

- **1983** - Lieutenant Andre Viljoen from 30 Maintenance Unit was killed in a Military Vehicle accident 10km east of Otjovazendu. The vehicle went into a corner too fast and the trailer caused the vehicle to overturn. He was pinned under the vehicle and succumbed to his injuries before help arrived. He was 23.

• **1983** - Rifleman Oscar Munango from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 24.

- **1984** - Rifleman Kachinga Chiemba from 201 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.
- **1988** - South African, Angolan and Cuban representatives meet in Brazzaville for peace talks.





The Kursk remembered

On the 12 August 2020, the 20th anniversary of the tragic sinking of the Russian APL (Nuclear powered submarine) K-141 was commemorated by small function hosted by the Russian Club in collaboration with the Russian Consulate General in Cape Town.

The event took place in the historic old Royal Naval bakery opposite SAS SIMONSBURG gate. The evening took the form of lighting a memorial candle, Kursk memorial poem and viewing three documentaries, including a roll of honour, on the Kursk submarine.

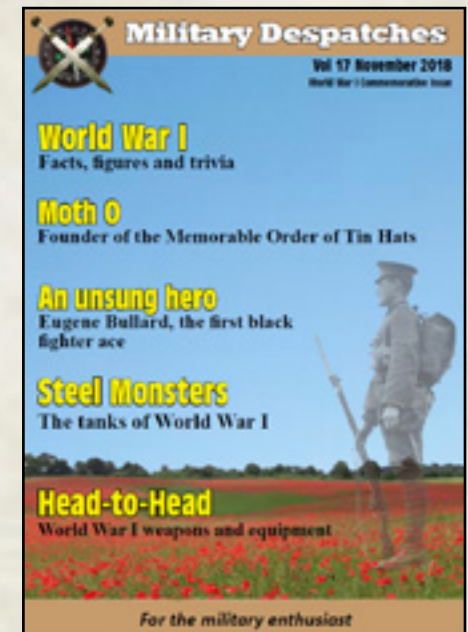


Military Despatches Website



"Things don't have to change the world to be important."

Steve Jobs



Useful links

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

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



Our aim is to make the Military Despatches website easy to use. Even more important to us, we want to make the website informative and interesting. The latest edition of the magazine will be available, as will all the previous editions. More over, there will be links to videos, websites, and articles that our readers may find interesting. So check out the website, bookmark it, and pass the URL on to everyone that you think may be interested.



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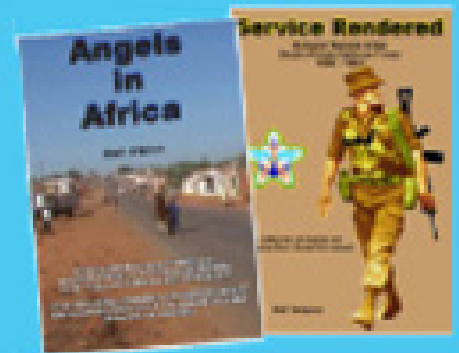
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