



Military Despatches

Vol 45 March 2021

Thanks, but no thanks

10 dangerous roles in the military

It pays to be a winner

The US Navy SEALs

An offer you can't refuse

Did the US Military and the Mafia collaborate?



Colonel Arthur 'Bull' Simons

US Army Special Forces legend

For the military enthusiast



Click on any video below to view



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



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



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



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



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



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

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

Check out Hipe TV and remember to like, comment, share and subscribe.

CONTENTS

March 2021



Page 14



Special Forces - US Navy SEALs

Features

6

Ten dangerous military roles

These are ten military roles in history that you did not want.

22

Who's running the show?

The nine people that became Chief of the SADF.

24

An offer you can't refuse

Did the US Military and the Mafia collaborate in World War II?

26

Miracle of the skies

Almost torn in half, an American B-17 bomber attempts to make it back home.

28

When the cold war turns hot

An incident that nearly led to war.



32

It's not really a game

How simulators are changing the way the military trains.

36

Long distance air mail

The Excalibur extended-range guided artillery shell could become one of the deadliest weapons on the modern battlefield.

38

Military ranks

The Angolan Armed Forces.

44

International Seafarers Day

A day in the life of a seafarer.

46

Changes to the engine room

The Sea Cadets announce new appointments.

48

Remembrance Day

Seaman Piper Pauwels from TS Rook researches the meaning of Remembrance Day.

50

Memories of a Sea Cadet

Deene Collopy, Country Manager for Oil Spill Response Limited, remembers some of the annual courses he did as a young Sea Cadet.

Quiz

43

Military Small Arms

We show you 15 side arms, you tell us what they are.



Editor's Sitrep

Call the weather department and tell them to get the Ark out of mothballs. We're probably going to have a flood.

The reason I say this is that it is 10 February and basically the March issue of Military Despatches is ready to go.

There are a number of reasons for this. First of all I was getting tired of only completing the magazine a few minutes before midnight on the last day of the month.

The second reason is that I have two other magazine that I have to get ready for March.

Third, and probably most important, I need to do some other work of the paying variety.

One of the magazines I'm doing for March is the quarterly issue of 'Jimmy's Own', the official magazine of the South African Signals Association.

It's a very special edition and devoted entirely to Sydney 'Uncle Syd' Ireland who will be celebrating his 100th birthday on 9 March. As far as I know he is the last surviving South African signaller of World War II.

I've had the honour and pleasure of knowing Uncle Syd for a number of years. He is a true gen-

tleman and I wish him everything of the best for his special day.

Someone mentioned to me that I tend to do a number of articles on the Sea Cadets. They're probably right. Now I was never a Sea Cadet, nor was I in the navy. I was army for my entire military career.

It's just that the Sea Cadets are cunning. How, you may well ask. Well they take the time to actually send articles to Military Despatches.

So if you have an organisation, newsletter or even a story that you feel would be of interest to "the military enthusiast", feel free to send it to us and we will do our best to publish it.

As many of you know, I was born and raised in Ireland. And this month, on 17 March, is Saint Patrick's Day. So I will be having a few of my relatives - Uncle Bushmills, Uncle Tullamore Dew, Uncle Jameson, and Uncle Paddy - around to celebrate. I may even invite my American cousin Jack Daniels. Sláinte.

Until next time.

Matt

Hipe! media

PUBLISHER

Hipe Media

EDITOR

Matt Tennyson

PHOTO EDITOR

Regine Lord

CONTRIBUTORS

Captain WM Bartie, Robin G. Coles, Deene Collopy, Ryan Murphy, Matt O'Brien, Seaman Piper Pauwels, Matt Tennyson.

Military Despatches is published on-line every month. The articles used in **Military Despatches** are copyrighted and may not be used without prior permission from the editor.

The views stated in this magazine do not necessary reflect the views of **Military Despatches**, the editor, the staff, or Hipe Media.

Hipe!

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

email

editor@hipe.co.za

Back Issues

To view any back issues of Military Despatches, go to www.militarydespatches.co.za or click [here](#).

CONTENTS

Page 76

March in military history

Head-to-Head

52

World War I

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

Famous Figures

58

Arthur 'Bull' Simons

The US Army Special Forces Colonel best known leading the Son Tay, an attempt to rescue US prisoners of war from a North Vietnamese prison.



Forged in Battle

62

Avro Lancaster bomber

The RAF bomber that carried out the night-time bombing raids over Germany.

Battlefield

68

Ten bloodiest battles

These ten battles claimed more than 11 million casualties.

Gaming

72

SPMBT

An excellent military simulator that is free of charge.

Series Review

74

Blackadder goes forth

Set in the trenches of World War I, British Army Captain Edmund Blackadder will do anything to escape the front lines.

Book Review

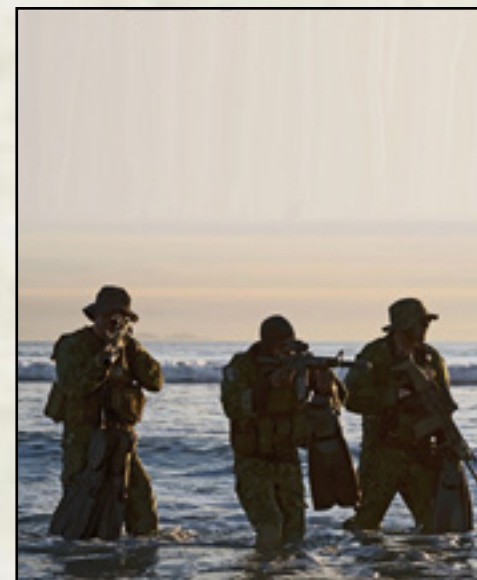
75

At the front

The remarkable story of General Jannie Geldenhuys. He was regarded by many as one of the leading military commanders that South Africa ever produced.

Front Cover

Members of the US Navy SEALs on a training exercise off the west coast of America.



10 most dangerous military roles

These are ten military roles in history that you did not want.

Often the mere fact that you're in the military is dangerous enough. This is especially true during times of war.

People serve in the military for a variety of reasons. Many will do so because of patriotism and a sense of duty towards their country. Others see it as an adventure and a test of manhood.

Many serve because they don't have a choice in the matter and are conscripted or drafted into service. And there are others that consider it a career.

Those that serve in a combat role often face greater dangers than those that do not. Yet there are some combat roles that are more dangerous than others.

The strange thing with some of these roles is that people actually volunteered for them.

Here are ten dangerous combat roles in history, in no particular order.

Galley Rower

Before the invention of the steam engine, ships had two means of propulsion.

They would either rely on the free, but unreliable, wind, or on human sheer brute force.

Although sails could harness the power of the wind, a calm day could leave you drifting at the mercy of the sea. Human power, in the form of galley

rowers, could always be relied on.

Contrary to popular belief, ancient galley rowers tended not to be slaves, but were instead free men who were well respected for their profession.

The work of the galley rower was skilled and required high levels of training and coordination between each rower.

In battle the lives of all on board were reliant on the talents of the men rowing the galley. So it made sense that ancient navies would be reluctant to place their lives in the hands of unskilled and unreliable slaves.

This would, however, change dramatically between the ancient world and the middle ages.

By the 1600s the size of galleys and galley fleets was becoming much larger. This meant that a greater number of rowers were needed. The supplies of skilled oarsmen could not keep up with the demand.

The era of the galley slave was born as navies manned their fleets with whichever unfortunate that they could seize.

This practice became especially common in France when the king ordered judges to sentence men to the galleys for their crimes instead of issuing the death penalty.

Criminals were usually given a ten year sentence to the

galleys. Many regarded this as a death sentence because few would survive the battles to come, or the harsh conditions.

Chained to the benches where they worked, most spent their entire short existence confined to the rowing deck.

They were unable to wash or even go to the toilet. It was often said that with the right wind direction you could smell a galley long before you would see it.

Unable to move, the rowers would often develop sores on their body, caused by the friction of the chains as they rowed. These wounds would often become infected in the unsanitary conditions, resulting in even more deaths.

Even if the men survived these terrible conditions, they still had to contend with the greatest danger - battle on the open seas.

If a ship was sunk, the rowers, chained to their benches, would be dragged down to a watery grave.

Capture by the enemy may have seemed a good option, but it was not. It was a case of heads you lose, tails you also lose. They would either be put to death, or used as galley slaves by the enemy.



CLAUSTROPHOBIA: A tunnel rat prepares to enter a Viet Cong tunnel complex.

Tunnel Rats

From the 1940s during the Indochina War against the French colonial forces, the Viet Minh created an extensive network of underground tunnels and complexes.

These were later expanded by the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. By the 1960s there were underground hospitals, training grounds, storage facilities, headquarters and even stages for political theatre. The Viet Cong, who were skilled at guerrilla warfare, might stay underground for several months at a time.

The Viet Cong would often emerge from the tunnels, launch a quick raid or ambush, then escape back into the tunnels before the might of the American war machine could be turned against them.

The tunnel complexes could stretch for hundred of kilometres, often linking villages

and even provinces. This meant that the Viet Cong could move forces and equipment unseen and protected.

To combat this problem the US military tried flooding the tunnels, or using gas to kill or flush out those within. Yet the sheer size of the tunnels and the use of simple, but highly effective water traps, meant that these attempts met with little success.

The tunnels were spread over several levels, with each level sealed by a watertight trap door. There were U-bends in tunnels on the same level and these would often be filled with water, preventing gas from spreading.

The Americans even tried sending dogs down into the tunnels, but they were quickly killed by the numerous traps lining the tight passageways.

It was decided that the only way to clear the tunnels was by sending in specialised soldiers

to clear the tunnels of enemy, gather intelligence, and blow the tunnels up one by one.

Infantrymen, primarily from Australia, New Zealand and America, volunteered for the job and became known as 'tunnel rats'. Their motto was the Latin phrase "*Non Gratus Rodentum*" - "not worth a rat".

The men had to be small and thin to stand any chance of making their way through the tight passageways.

Whenever troops discovered a tunnel entrance the area would first be checked for booby traps before a tunnel rat was sent in.

Armed with only a pistol, a bayonet and a flashlight, the tunnel rat would be lowered into the tunnel.

Many of them chose not to arm themselves with the standard issue .45 calibre pistol. Due to the confined space, they disliked the intense muzzle blast of the .45, which would often leave them temporarily deaf. The preferred pistols were 9x19 mm calibre, often with an improvised suppressor.

The tunnels were filled with dangers. Defending soldiers often manned holes on the sides of the tunnels through which spears could be thrust, impaling a crawling intruder.

There were dangerous creatures such as snakes, rats, spiders, scorpions and ants. Venomous snakes were placed inside a hollow bamboo tube that was attached to a tripwire. When tripped, the snake would fall onto the intruder.

Often the tunnel rats would

operate in the dark so that they light of their torch did not give them away.

It was a job filled with stress as every centimetre of a tunnel could prove deadly. They would strain their senses, listening for the slightest sound such as a man breathing or try to smell the sweat of a person close by.

Clearing a section of tunnel and setting up the explosives could take anywhere from a few minutes to several hours.

Many of the tunnel rats in Vietnam did not survive the war.

Later, similar teams were used by the Soviet Army during the Soviet war in Afghanistan, and the Israel Defence Forces.

Afghanistan has an extensive series of historic tunnels used for transporting water, the *kariz*, and during the 1979–1989 Soviet war in Afghanistan, such tunnels were used by Mujahideen fighters. The Soviet 40th Army had their own tunnel rats, who were tasked with flushing people out of the tunnels, then going through the tunnels to disarm booby traps and kill those who remained.

A similar Israeli team called SAMOOR (“Weasel”) is part of the *Yahalom* elite combat engineering unit.

World War I pilot

World War I was the first war where aircraft were used in combat. While many pilots would go on to survive the war, casualties among pilots were still very high.

There were numerous factors that contributed to the high at-

trition rate of pilots.

First of all, early aircraft were beset with technical problems. Engines would stall in a steep climb or tight turn. In a steep dive the wings could tear off. Machine guns would often jam during combat. There was no radio communication between planes or to the ground.

Pilots would often have as little as ten hours flying time before being sent into combat. Some of them found it difficult enough to manage straight and level flight, let alone the twists and turns of a dogfight.

Many pilots, on both sides, were killed in aircraft accidents. In fact the life expectancy of a pilot during World War I was a mere 11 days.

One of the greatest dangers they faced was that of their aircraft catching fire. Most of the planes were made from wood and canvas and would often catch fire when hit.

While parachutes were available (they were issued to balloon observers) they were not issued to pilots.

If a pilot’s aircraft caught on fire they had three options. First of all they could ‘bail out’ of the burning aircraft and fall to their death. Secondly, they could remain with the aircraft and burn to death.

Or thirdly, as most pilots would carry a pistol with them, he would shoot himself in the head. Most opted for the last choice.

Ball turret gunner

From early 1943 until the end

of World War II, the skies over Germany were not the safest place to be.

The US Army Air Forces and the Royal Air Force Bomber Command began the strategic bombing campaign of German cities. This was also known as area bombardment.

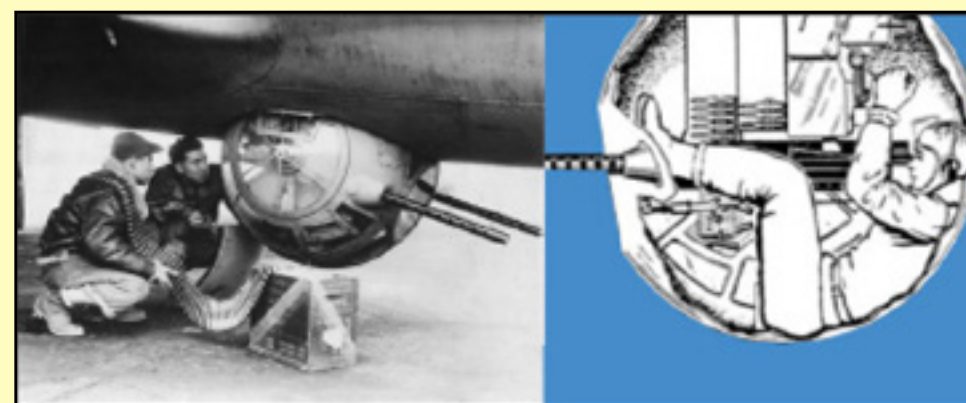
According to a British Air Staff paper, “The ultimate aim of an attack on a town area is to break the morale of the population which occupies it. To ensure this, we must achieve two things: first, we must make the town physically uninhabitable and, secondly, we must make the people conscious of constant personal danger. The immediate aim, is therefore, twofold, namely, to produce destruction and fear of death.”

The US Army Air Force carried out daylight raids over Germany, while the RAF bombed at night.

Besides facing heavy anti-aircraft fire, bomber crews also faced the danger of German Luftwaffe fighters. And many of these bombing missions were carried out without fighter escort.

It was only in 1944 that the introduction of the Lockheed P-38 Lightning, Republic P-47 Thunderbolt and the North American P-51 Mustang allowed Allied fighters to escort bombers all the way to their target.

Even bomber crews that managed to bail out after being shot down over Germany were not safe. There was the very real danger that, upon parachuting to the ground, they could be seized



CRAMPED CONDITIONS: Space inside the Sperry ball Turret was limited.

by angry German civilians and lynched from the nearest lamp-post.

German civilians referred to the bombers crews as *terror-flieger* (terror flyers).

The bombers used by the US Army Air Force were the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress and the Consolidated B-24 Liberator.

The B-17 was armed with 13 12.7 mm M2 Browning machine guns, while the B-24 had 10. One thing they both had in common was a Sperry ball turret in the belly of the aircraft.

The Sperry ball turret was very small in order to reduce drag, and was typically operated by the smallest man of the crew. To enter the turret, the turret was moved until the guns were pointed straight down. The gunner placed his feet in the heel rests and occupied his cramped station.

He would put on a safety strap and close and lock the turret door. There was no room inside for a parachute, which was left in the cabin above the turret.

A common tactic of the German fighters was to come up under the bomber and take out

the belly gunner first.

It was not uncommon for the turret door to jam shut in a damaged bomber, leaving the belly gunner unable to bail out.

Tail gunner

During the strategic bombing campaign against Germany, being a tail gunner in a Vickers Wellington bomber or a Avro Lancaster bomber was not the most desirable job.

The RAF carried out their bombing missions at night. The tail gunner would spend many hours a night flying backwards in cramped, freezing and solitary conditions.

The life expectancy of a rear gunner, also known as ‘tail-end Charlie’, was desperately short; estimates vary but suggest that they could expect to be shot down, or killed, within two weeks, or up to five operations. According to Yorkshire Air Museum, 20,000 rear gunners lost their lives during World War II.

The primary role of the tail gunner was to defend his aircraft from enemy fighter attack from the rear, and to warn the pilot when to take evasive ma-

noeuvres.

This meant flying in this confined, see-through turret, enveloped by the pitch-black sky and constantly revolving the turret to scan the eerie darkness for a shadow that could be an attacking night fighter.

German night fighter favoured the tactic of attack a British bomber from behind, and the tail gunner was usually their first target.

Flamethrower operator

The idea of setting your enemy on fire is nothing new and man has done his best to turn flame into a weapon for thousands of years.

From as early as the first century ‘Greek Fire’ was deployed in a flamethrower-type weapon on board naval ships in order to give the Byzantines a combat advantage.

In 900 AD the Chinese developed a piston-type flamethrower that used a substance similar to gasoline.

The modern flamethrower as we known it was first put to deadly use during the First and Second World Wars.

Able to produce a long stream of accurate flame, the weapon seemed an ideal solution to break the stalemate of trench warfare.

It could incinerate enemy soldiers sheltering in bunkers or trenches, or cause them to flee for their lives. The problem was that they could be gunned down before they were close enough to use the flamethrower.

During World War II the

flamethrower was used to assault heavily defended enemy positions such as bunkers and pillboxes were the enemy sheltering inside could be burnt to death or flushed out by the intense flames.

Yet the flamethrower operators didn't have things all their own way. There were a variety of deadly risks of using flamethrowers in combat.

The equipment was heavy and made moving around a combat zone slower and therefore more dangerous.

The flamethrower also had a very short burn time and would use up fuel very quickly. If you missed your target you would now be faced by an enemy who would probably not be amused that you just tried to set him on fire.

The weapon was also very visible, making its operator a prime target for enemy fire, especially from snipers. Even if the bullet missed you, it could puncture the flamethrower tank, causing you and nearby soldiers to be engulfed in flames.

Another major problem was that the range of the flamethrower was far less than that of a rifle. In order to be used effectively, the operator would have to get close to their target. This gave the enemy time to pick them off.

It could also have a heavy psychological effect on the operator. The sight of men on fire, screaming in pain. The constant stream of charred bodies and the smell of burnt flesh, and knowing that you were the cause,



SAFE THIS TIME: A U-boat crew poses for the camera after returning from a patrol. Yet 75% of U-boat crew would not survive the war.

could have a strong psychological effect on the operator.

That, combined with the constant danger, would often be enough to tip even a balanced individual over the edge.

At Iwo Jima flamethrower operators suffered a massive 92% casualty rate with the average life expectancy to be just four minutes.

U-boat crewman

During World War I and World War II the Germans made excellent use of their U-boats (submarines).

In fact during World War II they came close to turning the entire tide of the war by denying Britain vital supplies during the Battle of the Atlantic.

To counter the threat of the U-boats, merchant ships began travelling in armed convoys.

An Escort Group consisted of several small warships organized and trained to operate together providing protection for trade convoys.

Escort groups were a World War II tactical innovation in anti-submarine warfare by the Royal Navy to combat the threat of the *Kriegsmarine's* "wolf-pack" tactics.

Early escort groups often contained destroyers, sloops, naval trawlers and, later, corvettes of differing specifications lacking the ability to manoeuvre together as a flotilla of similar warships, but rigorously trained in anti-submarine tactics to use teamwork emphasizing the unique sensors, weapons, speed and turning radius of each ship.

The development of these 'escort groups' proved an effective means of defending shipping



BANZAI: A Japanese Kamikaze dives towards a US Navy ship, aiming to crash his aircraft into it.

convoys through the Battle of the Atlantic.

The advancement of ASDIC, known as SONAR by the Americans, meant that escorts could detect submarines under water.

The men that commanded and crewed U-boats were volunteers and the selection process was rigorous. They were a breed apart and wore their uniform with pride.

Yet the conditions they had to work and live under were harsh. They would often be at sea for months at a time, living and working in cramped conditions.

Fresh rations were consumed very quickly and for the remainder of the trip they would eat canned food. They could not shower and often were unable to wash clothes due to the limited amount of fresh water on board.

While they travelled on the surface as much as possible, when they were forced to dive the air would become stale very quickly.

The day was divided up into

three eight-hour shifts. One shift was for sleeping, one for normal duties, and one for miscellaneous tasks. It was a routine that could quickly become monotonous.

Yet these conditions were nothing compared to coming under attack.

If they were detected by an escort ship they could expect to come under depth charge attack.

A depth charge attack could go on for hours until either the U-boat managed to escape, or they were sunk or forced to the surface.

If a depth charge exploded close enough to the U-boat it could damage the hull. The water pressure would then cause the hull to implode. Death would be quick as those inside were crushed.

The ballast tanks could also be damaged, forcing the U-boat to surface, where they would be at the mercy of the guns of the escort ships.

If the dive controls were dam-

aged it could also cause the U-boat to sink to the bottom. If the water was deep enough the U-boat's hull would be crushed. If, however, the water was not deep enough to crush the hull, the U-boat could lie on the seabed, unable to surface. Eventually they would run out of breathable air and the crew would die a slow death.

Statistics show that U-boat crew suffered a 75% casualty rate during World War II. In other words, three out of four of them did not survive the war.

SOE/OSS Operative

Early during World War II the British had been forced out of Europe. It was vital that they establish some sort of a presence, especially in France.

To this end the British established the Special Operations Executive (SOE). These men and women would be given training and then sent into occupied Europe, and sometimes even Germany.

Their tasks could include anything from spying on the enemy and gathering intelligence, to recruiting and training local resistance groups. They would also carry out acts of sabotage.

The work was both demanding and dangerous. The slightest slip-up could result in capture and execution.

If, for example, you were operating in France, it would not be enough to be merely able to speak French. You would have to be fluent and it would have to sound as if French was your first language.

Most of your identity documents, travel permits, and so on would be forgeries. If they were not up to date and spot on, you could easily be caught out.

Your cover story as to who you were and what you were doing there had to be perfect and stand up to any scrutiny. You would also have to know if there were any curfews enforced in the area and any local regulations.

You needed to know the lay of the land and who the local contacts were.

Unfortunately most operatives dropped into occupied Europe were quickly captured by the ruthless but highly efficient German Gestapo.

Operatives captured were often tortured in the most horrific ways, interrogated, and usually executed. Because they were not wearing a uniform they were not entitled to be treated as prisoners of war, but as spies.

When the Americans entered the war they formed the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and they worked closely with the SOE.

The SOE would later go on to become Britain's MI6 and the OSS would become the CIA.

Kamikaze pilot

This was one of those jobs where your survival rate was rated at around about zero percent. Not exactly a great recruitment slogan. Yet most Kamikaze pilots were volunteers.

Towards the end of World War II, things were not going well

for the Japanese. The Americans were closing in and were about to launch an invasion of Okinawa, one of the homeland islands.

In desperation, the Japanese Imperial Army came up with a solution - Kamikaze (Divine Wind) attacks.

What this meant was that a pilot would climb into his plane, fly out over the American fleet, put his plane into a steep dive, and deliberately crash it into a ship.

The planes were often loaded with explosives to make them more effective.

While these attacks were not always that successful (pilots would often miss the ships due to a lack of flight training) they did shock the Americans. In fact the Americans gave them the nickname of "Baka Bombs". Baka is the Japanese term for idiot.

Penal Battalion

For as long as there have been wars, criminals and undesirable elements have been viewed as useful but disposable cannon fodder.

They were viewed as ideal for dangerous or suicidal missions or tasks that were beneath regular soldiers.

Arranged into penal battalions, they faced a short life of misery and suffering, followed by an almost certain death on the front lines.

The Romans used penal legions and Napoleon used penal battalions. But it was during the Second World War that penal

battalions were used extensively by both the German and Soviet armies.

Prior to the war the Germans had used soldiers that were considered disruptive to general morale but were otherwise worthy of service in specialised penal units.

However with the war turning against them all sorts of prisoners, convicted soldiers and even hardened criminals were conscripted into the ranks in a desperate bid to stave off defeat.

Used to carry out the most dangerous and back breaking tasks, the doomed men were kept in line by officers and military police units along with the promise that should they serve with bravery they might be allowed to return to regular army units.

In reality they had little choice in the matter, for refusal to carry out the often suicidal missions would result in summary execution for the original sentence. For those men on death row this would mean a bullet to the back of the head or an appointment with the hangman's noose.

Once the condemned men arrived at their designated units they would be given the most dangerous tasks which could involve clearing minefields, attacking heavily defended positions to soften up the enemy for the real soldiers waiting behind them, or used as cannon fodder to defend a specific location where they would sacrifice their lives, allowing regular army units time needed to retreat.

Among the penal battalions these missions were often known as "*Reise in den Himmel*" (Journey to Heaven) missions.

In the German Wehrmacht it was possible to be a high ranking officer one day and then reduced to the rank of private in a penal battalion the next day.

The 500th SS Parachute Battalion (*SS-Fallschirmjägerbattalion 500*) was the parachute unit of the Waffen-SS employed in dangerous actions behind enemy lines. It was decided to extend enlistment to those in the SS disciplinary units which were formed from officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers who had problems with military law.

The 999th Light Afrika Division was formed from civilian criminals and prison inmates who had been deemed "unfit for military service"

One of the most infamous penal units was the 36th Grenadier Division of the Waffen SS. The unit was originally made up of convicted poachers and their skill was used to hunt and kill partisans on the Eastern Front.

Yet the unit grew and its ranks were swelled by some of Germany's worst criminals and most insane men. The unit soon gained a reputation for extreme brutality towards civilians.

The unit fell under the command of SS-Oberführer Oskar Dirlewanger, a man with whom few could compete in cruelty. He was a convicted child molester and described as a psychopathic killer and an expert in extermination and a devotee of sadism and necrophilia.

The Soviets used about 430,000 men in penal battalions.

They were considered expendable and in an effort to in-

stall discipline and stop them from retreating in battle, Stalin issued the infamous Order 227 in July 1942. It was also known as the "Not one step back" order. No unit was allowed to retreat and anyone that did could face immediate execution or transfer to a penal battalion.

The NKVD Secret Police that commanded the battalions considered them cannon fodder. The units would be sent to where the fighting was the thickest. They were kept under armed guard. When they went into action they were followed by troops known as 'Barrier guards'. They would set up machine guns and mow down anyone trying to retreat.

Those that served in Russian penal battalions had two choices - advance and be killed by the Germans, or retreat and be shot by your own troops.

Not much of a choice when you consider it.



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 December issue of Springbok by clicking on the cover to the left.

Special Forces - US Navy SEALs

Part twenty-four of a series that looks at Special Forces around the world. This month we feature the United States Navy Seals.

Along with the British Special Air Service (SAS), the United States Navy Seals are probably the most recognised special forces unit in the world.

The United States Navy Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) Teams, commonly known as Navy SEALs, are the U.S. Navy's primary special operations force and a component of the Naval Special Warfare Command.

Among the SEALs' main functions are conducting small-unit special operation missions in maritime, jungle, urban, arctic, mountainous, and desert environments. SEALs are typically ordered to capture or to eliminate high level targets, or to gather intelligence behind enemy lines.

All active SEALs are male and members of the U.S. Navy.

The CIA's highly secretive and elite Special Operations Group (SOG) recruits operators from SEAL Teams, with joint operations going back to the MACV-SOG during the Vietnam War.

This cooperation still exists today, as evidenced by military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Origins

Although not formally founded until 1962, the modern-day U.S. Navy SEALs trace their roots to World War II.

The United States Military recognized the need for the covert reconnaissance of landing beaches and coastal defences.

As a result, the joint Army, Marine Corps, and Navy Amphibious Scout and Raider School was established in 1942 at Fort Pierce, Florida.

Scouts and Raiders

The Scouts and Raiders were formed in September of that year, just nine months after the attack on Pearl Harbour, from the Observer Group, a joint U.S. Army-Marine-Navy unit.

Recognizing the need for a beach reconnaissance force, a select group of Army and Navy personnel assembled at Amphibious Training Base (ATB) Little Creek, Virginia on 15 August 1942 to begin Amphib-

ious Scouts and Raiders (Joint) training.

The Scouts and Raiders' mission was to identify and reconnoitre the objective beach, maintain a position on the designated beach prior to a landing, and guide the assault waves to the landing beach.

Navy chief petty officers and sailors came from the boat pool at ATB, Solomons, Maryland, and Army Raider personnel came from the 3rd and 9th Infantry Divisions. They trained at Little Creek until embarking for the North Africa campaign the following November.

The first group included Phil H. Bucklew, the "Father of Naval Special Warfare," after whom the Naval Special Air Force Warfare Center [Naval Special Warfare Center building is named.

Commissioned in October 1942, this group saw combat

in November 1942 during Operation Torch on the North African Coast. Scouts and Raiders also supported landings in Sicily, Salerno, Anzio, Normandy, and southern France.

The second group of Scouts and Raiders, code-named Special Service Unit No. 1, was established on 7 July 1943, as a joint and combined operations force.

The third and final Scouts and Raiders organization operated in China. Scouts and Raiders were deployed to fight with the Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO).

Naval Combat Demolition Units (NCDUs)

In September 1942, 17 Navy salvage personnel arrived at ATB Little Creek, Virginia for a week-long course in demolitions, explosive cable cutting, and commando raiding techniques.

On 10 November 1942, the first combat demolition unit successfully cut cable and net barriers across the Wadi Sebou River during Operation Torch in North Africa.

This enabled USS Dallas (DD-199) to traverse the water and insert U.S. Rangers who captured the Port Lyautey aerodrome.

By April 1944, a total of 34 NCDUs were deployed to England in preparation for Operation Overlord, the amphibious landing at Normandy.

On 6 June 1944, under heavy fire, the NCDUs at Omaha Beach managed to blow eight complete gaps and two partial



gaps in the German defences.

The NCDUs suffered 31 killed and 60 wounded, a casualty rate of 52%. Meanwhile, the NCDUs at Utah Beach met less intense enemy fire. They cleared 640 metres of beach in two hours, another 820 metres by the afternoon.

Casualties at Utah Beach were significantly lighter with six killed and eleven wounded. During Operation Overlord, not a single demolitioner was lost to improper handling of explosives.

OSS Maritime Unit

Much like their brethren in the US Army Special Forces (the Green Berets), the Navy SEALs claim a lineage to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

The OSS was a paramilitary organization and also a progenitor of the CIA. Army Special Forces, founded in 1952 by former members of the OSS, established the first military special operations combat diver units nearly a decade before the SEALs were created in 1962.

Some of the earliest World War II predecessors of the Green Berets and SEALs were the Operational Swimmers of OSS.

Korean War

During the Korean War the UDTs fought intensively, beginning to employ demolition expertise gained from WWII and use it for an offensive role.

Continuing to use water as cover and concealment as well as an insertion method, the Korean Era UDTs targeted bridges, tunnels, fishing nets, and other

maritime and coastal targets.

They also developed a close working relationship with the Republic of Korea Underwater Demolitions Unit (predecessor to the Navy Special Warfare Flotilla), which continues today.

On 15 September 1950, UDTs supported Operation Chromite, the amphibious landing at Incheon. UDT 1 and 3 provided personnel who went in ahead of the landing craft, scouting mud flats, marking low points in the channel, clearing fouled propellers, and searching for mines. Four UDT personnel acted as wave-guides for the Marine landing.

In October 1950, UDTs supported mine-clearing operations in Wonsan Harbor where frogmen would locate and mark mines for minesweepers.

On 12 October 1950, two U.S. minesweepers hit mines and sank. UDTs rescued 25 sailors.

The next day, William Giannotti conducted the first U.S. combat operation using an "aqualang" when he dove on USS Pledge.

For the remainder of the war, UDTs conducted beach and river reconnaissance, infiltrated guerrillas behind the lines from sea, continued mine sweeping operations and participated in Operation Fishnet, which devastated the North Koreans' fishing capability.

Vietnam - birth of the SEALs

The Navy needed to determine its role within the special operations arena. In March 1961, Admiral Arleigh Burke, the Chief of Naval Operations,



TRIDENT: Special Warfare insignia known as the "SEAL Trident"

recommended the establishment of guerrilla and counter-guerrilla units.

These units would be able to operate from sea, air or land. This was the beginning of the Navy SEALs. All SEALs came from the Navy's Underwater Demolition Teams, who had already gained extensive experience in commando warfare in Korea; however, the Underwater Demolition Teams were still necessary to the Navy's amphibious force.

The first two teams were formed in January 1962 and stationed on both US coasts: Team One at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, in San Diego, California and Team Two at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Formed entirely with personnel from UDTs, the SEALs mission was to conduct counter guerrilla warfare and clandestine operations in maritime and riverine environments.

Men of the newly formed SEAL Teams were trained in such unconventional areas as hand-to-hand combat, high-altitude parachuting, demolitions, and foreign languages.

The SEALs attended Underwater Demolition Team replacement training and they spent some time training in



THE NAM: A Navy SEAL on an operation in Vietnam. The Viet Cong referred to them as "the men with green faces," due to the camouflage paint they wore during combat missions.

UDTs. Upon making it to a SEAL team, they would undergo a SEAL Basic Indoctrination (SBI) training class at Camp Kerry in the Cuyamaca Mountains. After SBI training class, they would enter a platoon and conduct platoon training.

In March 1962, SEALs were deployed to South Vietnam as advisors for the purpose of training Army of the Republic of Vietnam commandos in the same methods they were trained themselves.

The Central Intelligence Agency began using SEALs in covert operations in early 1963. The SEALs were later involved in the CIA sponsored Phoenix Program where it targeted Vietcong (VC) infrastructure and personnel for capture and assassination.

The SEALs were initially deployed in and around Da Nang, training the South Vietnamese in combat diving, demolitions and guerrilla/anti-guerrilla tactics.

As the war continued, the SEALs found themselves positioned in the Rung Sat Spe-

cial Zone where they were to disrupt the enemy supply and troop movements and in the Mekong Delta to fulfil riverine operations, fighting on the inland waterways.

Combat with the VC was direct. Unlike the conventional warfare methods of firing artillery into a coordinate location, the SEALs operated close to their targets.

Into the late 1960s, the SEALs were successful in a new style of warfare, effective in anti-guerrilla and guerrilla actions. SEALs brought a personal war to the enemy in a previously safe area.

The VC referred to them as "the men with green faces," due to the camouflage face paint the SEALs wore during combat missions.

The last SEAL platoon left South Vietnam on 7 December 1971, and the last SEAL advisor left South Vietnam in March 1973.

The SEALs were among the highest decorated units for their size in the war, receiving by 1974 one Medal of Honour, two

Navy Crosses, 42 Silver stars, 402 Bronze Stars, two Legions of Merit, 352 Commendation Medals, and 51 Navy Achievement Medals

Later awards would bring the total to three Medals of Honour and five Navy Crosses. SEAL Team One was awarded three Presidential Unit Citations and one Navy Unit Commendation; SEAL Team Two received two Presidential Unit Citations.

By the end of the war, 48 SEALs had been killed in Vietnam, but estimates of their kill count are as high as 2,000.

Reorganization

On 1 May 1983, UDT-11 was re-designated as SEAL Team Five, UDT-21 was re-designated as SEAL Team Four, UDT-12 became SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team One (SDVT-1), and UDT-22 was re-designated as SDVT-2.

SEAL Team Three, was established 1 October 1983 in Coronado, California. SEAL Team Eight was established on 1 October 1988 at Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia.

United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM) was established in April 1987 and its Naval component, United States Naval Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM), also known as NSWC, was established at the same time.

Since 1983 the SEALs have taken part in numerous operations and campaigns. These include:

- Operation Urgent Fury - United States invasion of Grenada.

- Operation Prime Chance - Iran-Iraq War.
- Operation Just Cause - United States invasion of Panama.
- Operation Desert Shield - Gulf War.
- Operation Restore Hope - Somalia Intervention.
- Operation Enduring Freedom - United States invasion of Afghanistan.
- Iraq War.
- Operation Enduring Freedom - Philippines.
- Operation Enduring Freedom - Horn of Africa.

Some SEAL operations received wide media coverage. These include:

Maersk Alabama hijacking

On 12 April 2009, in response to a hostage taking incident off the coast of Somalia by Somali pirates, three Navy SEALs from DEVGRU simultaneously engaged and killed the three pirates who were closely holding the hostage, Captain Richard Phillips, of the freighter ship Maersk Alabama.

The pirates and their hostage were being towed in a lifeboat approximately 90 metres behind USS Bainbridge when each of the pirates were killed by a different DEVGRU sniper with a single shot to the head.

Death of Osama bin Laden

In the early morning of 2 May 2011 local time, a team of Navy SEALs of the Naval Special Warfare Development Group (DEVGRU), previously called "SEAL Team 6", along with a Belgian Malinois Military Working Dog (named "Cairo"), supported by Special Activities



NEPTUNE SPEAR: SEAL Team 6 carried out the raid that finally took down Osama bin Laden.

Division officers on the ground, killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan about 56 km from Islamabad in a CIA operation.

President Barack Obama later confirmed the death of bin Laden, but did not directly mention the involvement of DEVGRU, saying only that a "small team" of Americans undertook the operation to bring down bin Laden.

The unprecedented media coverage raised the public profile of the SEAL community, particularly the counter-terrorism specialists commonly known as SEAL Team 6.

The official name of the military operation was Operation Neptune Spear.

Morning Glory oil tanker

On 16 March 2014, thirty U.S. Navy SEALs from SEAL Team 2 took control of MV Morning Glory, a tanker full of oil loaded from a rebel-held port in Libya. The raid by Navy SEALs took place in international waters off the coast of Cyprus; the raid was a success, preventing a Libyan splinter militia group

selling nationalized Libyan oil on the black market.

Selection and training

Before getting accepted into Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training, a prospective candidate must pass a certain number of both mental and physical requirements.

These tests include: Pre-enlistment medical screening, ASVAB, AFQT, C-SORT, and PST. Then, the candidate must get a SEAL contract by passing the SEAL Physical Screening Test: 450 metre swim in 12:30, 50 push-ups in two minutes, 50 sit-ups in two minutes, 10 consecutive pull-ups in two minutes, and a 2.4 km run in 10:30.

Candidates receiving a passing score may then be admitted into training to become Navy SEALs. SEAL training is extremely rigorous. The attrition rate fluctuates, but averages at about 80 percent.

The average candidate spends over a year in a series of formal training courses before being awarded the Special Warfare Operator Naval Rating and the Navy Enlisted Classification



FREEZING COLD: The selection process to become a SEAL is tough. Normally about 80 percent of them won't make the grade.

(NEC) 5326 Combatant Swimmer (SEAL) or, in the case of commissioned naval officers, the designation Naval Special Warfare (SEAL) Officer.

Navy SEAL training pipeline:

- 8-week Naval Recruit Training
- 8-week Naval Special Warfare Prep School (Pre-BUD/S)
- 3-Week BUD/S Orientation
- 24-week Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Training (BUD/S)
- 5-week Parachute Jump School
- 26-week SEAL Qualification Training (SQT)

Upon graduation from SQT, trainees receive the U.S. Navy SEAL Trident, designating them as Navy SEALs.

They are subsequently assigned to a SEAL Team or SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV) Team and begin 18-months of pre-deployment training before they are considered deployable. This training consists of:

- 6-month Professional Development - Individual Special-

ty Training (ProDev)

- 6-month Unit Level Training (ULT). ULT is unit training conducted by each Groups Training Detachment. Core unit training blocks are Air Operations, Land Warfare, Maritime, Urban and Special Reconnaissance.
- 6-month Squadron Integration Training (SIT)

Those enlisted SEALs with a medical rating will first attend the Special Operations Combat Medic Course for 6 months in Fort Bragg, North Carolina before joining a team in order to become a SEAL/Special Operator Corpsman.

Those pursuing Officer positions first attend the Junior Officer Training Course (JOTC) to learn about operations planning and how to perform team briefings. In total it can take over 2.5 years to completely train a Navy SEAL for his first deployment.

Women

No woman has ever become a Navy SEAL.

Until December 2015, female

sailors were barred from becoming Navy SEALs by naval regulation; however, this prohibition no longer exists.

As early as August 2015, it was reported that the "Navy is planning to open its elite SEAL teams to women who can pass the gruelling training regimen."

In that same month, Admiral Jon Greenert, the Chief of Naval Operations at the time, said that "he and the head of Naval Special Warfare Command, Rear Admiral Brian Losey, believe that if women can pass the legendary six-month Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training, they should be allowed to serve."

On 3 December 2015, it was announced that there are now "no exceptions" to all military roles in the U.S., and women can become U.S. Navy SEALs.

The Washington Examiner reported on 10 August 2017: "A woman aiming to become the first female Navy SEAL officer quit about a week into the initial training".

In 2019 the first woman completed Navy SEAL officer assessment and selection; however, she was not selected for a SEAL contract as she had not listed the SEALs as her top-choice war-fighting community.

SEAL teams and structures

Naval Special Warfare Command is organized into the following configuration:

- Naval Special Warfare Group 1: SEAL Teams 1, 3, 5, 7
- Naval Special Warfare Group 2: SEAL Teams 2, 4, 8, 10
- Naval Special Warfare Group 3: SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team 1, SEAL De-

Weapons used by the SEALs



M4A1 Carbine



MK 16 SCAR



M249 SAW Machine Gun



Sig Sauer P226



SOCOM MK 13 Mod 5

- livery Vehicle Team 2
- Naval Special Warfare Group 4: Special Boat Teams 12, 20, 22
- Naval Special Warfare Group 10: NSW Support Activity One, NSW Support Activity Two, Mission Support Centre (“organize, train, educate, equip, deploy and sustain specialized intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and preparation-of-the-environment capabilities”)
- Naval Special Warfare Group 11: SEAL Teams 17, 18 (formerly Operational Support Teams 1, 2)
- Naval Special Warfare Development Group: Assigned operationally to JSOC (formerly SEAL Team 6)

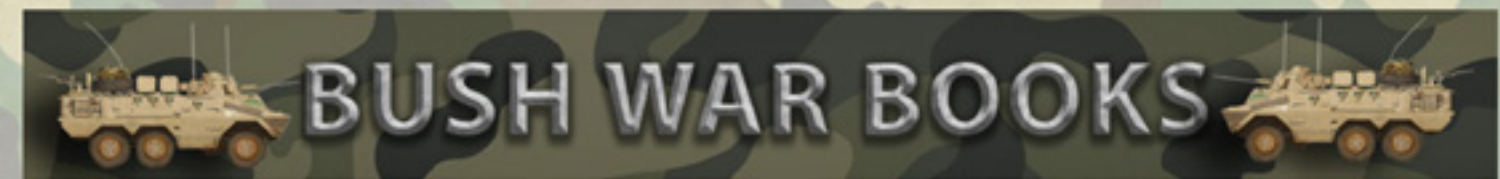
The total number of personnel, including SEALs and SWCCs assigned to Naval Special Warfare Command is approximately 8,195 out of a total 8,985 military staff, and 10,166 including civilian support staff.



Motto's

The SEALs have two motto's:

- The Only Easy Day Was Yesterday.
- It pays to be a winner.



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”

Who was running the show?

Prompted by an e-mail from a reader, **MATT TENNYSON** decided to take a closer look at the various people that were the Chiefs of the SADF.

John Verster, who has been a reader of Military Despatches since the very first issue, sent me an e-mail after reading the February issue of the magazine. In the ‘This month in Military History’ I had mentioned that General Rudolph Hiemstra had been the only member of the South African Air Force to become Chief of the SADF. John asked if General Bob Rogers had not been the Chief of the SADF at some stage. I did some research and discovered that both of us were wrong. General Rogers was never the Chief of the SADF, but General Hiemstra was not the only member of the South African Air Force to hold the title.

Chief of the South African Defence Force (SADF)

The Union Defence Force (UDF) was renamed ‘South African Defence Force’ in November 1958. The Commandant General’s title was then changed to ‘Commandant General SADF’. It was changed to ‘Chief of the SADF’ in July 1973, after Admiral Hugo Biermann assumed the post the year before. After South Africa’s first democratic election, the South African Defence Force (SADF) became the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

	Chief of the SADF	Took Office	Took Office	Time in Office	Defence Branch
	General Stephen Melville (1904–1977)	1 November 1958	31 December 1960	2 years, 60 days	South African Air Force
	General Pieter Grobbelaar (1908–1988)	1 January 1961	31 December 1965	4 years, 364 days	South African Army
	General Rudolph Hiemstra (1912–2007)	1 January 1966	31 March 1972	6 years, 90 days	South African Air Force

	Admiral Hugo Biermann (1916–2012)	1 April 1972	31 August 1976	4 years, 152 days	South African Navy
	General Magnus Malan (1930–2011)	1 September 1976	6 October 1980	4 years, 35 days	South African Army
	General Constand Viljoen (1933–2020)	7 October 1980	30 October 1985	5 years, 23 days	South African Army
	General Johannes Geldenhuys (1935–2018)	1 November 1985	31 October 1990	4 years, 364 days	South African Army
	General Andreas ‘Kat’ Liebenberg (1938–1998)	1 November 1990	31 October 1993	2 years, 364 days	South African Army
	General Georg Meiring (born 1939)	1 November 1993	30 April 1994	180 days	South African Army

General Georg Meiring would also go on to become the first Chief of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), a position he would hold from 1 May 1994 to 31 May 1998.

An offer you can't refuse, capeesh

Did the Mafia and the US Military really collaborate during World War II, or was it merely the imaginations of a fiction writer? Sometimes the truth is far stranger than fiction.

War can often lead to some interesting bedfellows and, as is often stated, truth can be a lot stranger than fiction. But the Mafia and the United States Military working hand-in-hand, surely not.

In 1981 Jack Higgins released a fiction novel titled 'Luciano's Luck'. The book was set in the summer of 1943 with the Allies poised to invade Sicily.

The Allies knew that the price of the invasion would be high in blood and time unless the island people rose in revolt against their Nazi oppressors.

Yet only the Mafia could command an uprising, and Mafia supremo Antonia Luca hated everything American. Someone very persuasive was needed to change his mind.

And the American's knew just the person with that persuasive power - imprisoned Mafia boss Salvatore 'Lucky' Luciano.

While Higgins' novel was a work of fiction, it was a lot closer to the truth than many people realised. It was something that Higgins was renowned for.

His 1975 best-seller 'The Eagle has landed' was about a plot by the Nazis to capture Winston Churchill. While Higgins claimed that the book was pure fiction, many people believed that it was based on fact and that there was an actual plan to capture Churchill. A plan that almost worked.

With 'Luciano's Luck', Hig-

gins also claimed that it was nothing more than a work of fiction. Or was it?

Operation Underworld

During the early days of World War II, the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence suspected that Italian and German agents were entering the United States through New York, and that these facilities were susceptible to sabotage.

The loss of SS Normandie in February 1942, especially, raised fears and suspicions in the Navy about possible sabotage in the Eastern ports.

A Navy Intelligence Unit, B3, assigned more than a hundred agents to investigate possible Benito Mussolini supporters within the predominantly Italian-American fisherman and dockworker population on the waterfront.

Their efforts would be fruitless. The Italian Mafia controlled the docks and the waterfront and no-one would say a word without their permission.

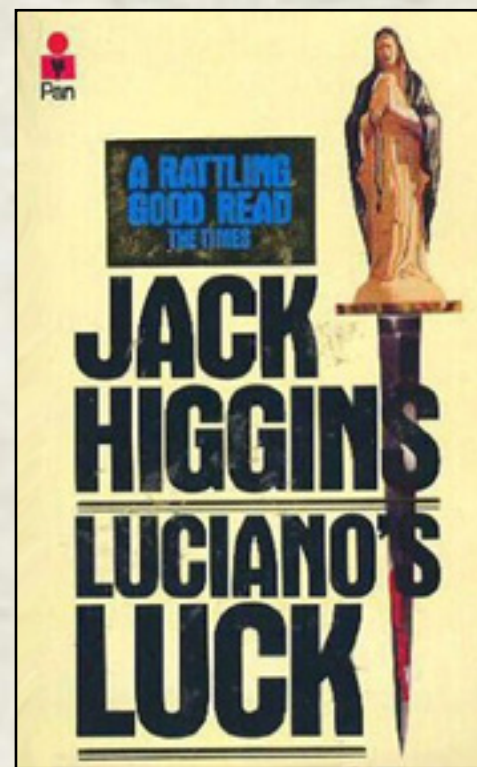
The Navy knew that they would have to start thinking outside of the box. They contacted Meyer Lansky. He was associated with the Jewish Mafia and was known as the 'Mob's accountant'. He was also a close associate of Luciano.

Salvatore Luciano was serving a 30 to 50 year sentence in the Clinton Prison. The Navy asked Lansky to broker a deal with Luciano. To facilitate the

negotiations, the State of New York moved Luciano from the Clinton prison to Great Meadow Correctional Facility, which is much closer to New York City.

The State of New York, Luciano and the Navy struck a deal in which Luciano guaranteed full assistance of his organization in providing intelligence to the Navy.

In addition, Luciano associate Albert Anastasia - who controlled the docks and ran Murder, Inc., an organized crime group, active from 1929 to 1941, that acted as the enforcement arm of the Italian-American Mafia, Jewish Mob, and other closely connected organ-



FACT OR FICTION: Jack Higgins' fictional novel was a lot closer to the truth than people realised.



Salvatore 'Lucky' Luciano

ized crime groups in New York City and elsewhere.

Luciano allegedly guaranteed no dockworker strikes throughout the war. In return, the State of New York agreed to commute Luciano's sentence.

Luciano's actual influence is uncertain, but the authorities did note that the dockworker strikes stopped after the deal was reached with Luciano.

Operation Husky

Italian Americans were very helpful in the planning and execution of the invasion of Sicily and the Mafia was involved in assisting the U.S. war efforts.

Luciano's associates found numerous Sicilians to help the Naval Intelligence draw maps of the harbours of Sicily and dig up old snapshots of the coastline.

Vito Genovese, another Mafia boss, offered his services to the U.S. Army and became an interpreter and advisor to the U.S. Army military government in Naples. He quickly became one of AMGOT's most trusted

employees.

Through the Navy Intelligence's Mafia contacts from Operation Underworld, the names of Sicilian underworld personalities and friendly Sicilian natives who could be trusted were obtained and actually used in the Sicilian campaign.

The Joint Staff Planners for the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JSP) drafted a report titled Special Military Plan for Psychological Warfare in Sicily that recommended the "Establishment of contact and communications with the leaders of separatist nuclei, disaffected workers, and clandestine radical groups, e.g., the Mafia, and giving them every possible aid." The report was approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington on April 15, 1943.

Luciano is released

In the summer of 1945, Luciano petitioned the State of New York for executive clemency, citing his assistance to the Navy. Naval authorities, embarrassed that they had to recruit organized-crime to help in their war effort, declined to confirm Luciano's claim.

However, the Manhattan District Attorney's office validated the facts and the state parole board unanimously agreed to recommend to the governor that Luciano be released and deported immediately.

On 4 January 1946, Governor Thomas E. Dewey, the former prosecutor who placed Luciano into prison, commuted Lucky Luciano's sentence on the condition that he did not resist deportation to Italy.

Dewey stated, "Upon the en-

try of the United States into the war, Luciano's aid was sought by the Armed Services in inducing others to provide information concerning possible enemy attack. It appears that he cooperated in such effort, although the actual value of the information procured is not clear."

Luciano was deported to his homeland Italy on 9 February 1946. There was a media hype of Luciano's role after his deportation. The syndicated columnist and radio broadcaster Walter Winchell even reported in 1947 that Luciano would receive the Medal of Honour for his secret services. Obviously this never happened.

Controversy and criticism

There was considerable public controversy during the late days of the war and afterwards surrounding the connection between the U.S. Government and the Mafia.

In 1953, Governor Dewey, pushed by allegations that he sold Luciano his pardon, ordered a confidential investigation by the state's commissioner of investigation, William Herlands.

Herlands released his 2,600-page report in 1954, which offered proof of Luciano's involvement with the Navy without finding any wrongdoing by Dewey.

Naval officials reviewed the report and requested Dewey to not release it on the grounds that it would be a public-relations disaster for the Navy and it might damage future similar war efforts. Dewey agreed, and the report was not released until after his death in the mid-1970s.

Miracle of the skies

A mid-air collision over Tunis left an American B-17 bomber almost torn in half. Yet by some miracle it completed its bombing mission and returned home to its base.

In 1943 a mid-air collision on February 1, 1943, between a B-17 Flying Fortress and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area, Became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of WW II.

An enemy single-engine Messerschmitt Bf 109G fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control, probably with a wounded pilot, then continued its crashing descent into the rear of the fuselage of a B-17 Flying Fortress named "All American", Piloted by Lt. Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron.

When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17. The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress and left elevator were completely torn away.

The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak. The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged, the fuselage had been cut almost completely through. Connected only at two small parts of the frame, and the radios, electrical and oxygen systems were damaged.

There was also a hole in the top that was over five metres long and 1,2 metres wide at its widest; the split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner's turret.

Although the tail actually bounced and swayed in the wind and twisted when the

plane turned and all the control cables were severed. Except one single elevator cable still worked, and the aircraft miraculously still flew!

The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane. The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart.

While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the target. Talk about dedication to duty.

When the bomb bay doors were opened, the wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and haul him

back into the forward part of the plane.

When they tried to do the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off. The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.

The turn back toward England had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off. They actually covered almost 113 kilometres to make the turn home. The bomber was so badly damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky. For a brief time, two more Me-109 German fighters attacked the All American.

Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters.

The two waist gunners stood up with their heads sticking out through the hole in the top



LUCKY TO BE ALIVE: A closer view of the extensive damage caused by the mid-air collision.



HOW IS IT STILL FLYING? The B-17 bomber, *All American*, limps back towards its base at Biskra Airfield, Algeria.. This photograph was taken by an escorting P-51 fighter.

of the fuselage to aim and fire their machine guns. The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the plane to turn.

Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the All American as it crossed over the water and took one of the pictures shown. They also radioed to the base describing that the appendage was waving like a fish tail and that the plane would not make it and to send out boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out.

The fighters stayed with the Fortress, taking hand signals from Lt. Bragg and relaying them to the base. Lt. Bragg signalled that five parachutes and the spare had been "used" So five of the crew could not bail out. He made the decision that if they could not bail out safely, then he would stay with the plane to land it.

Two and a half hours after being hit, the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still over 64 kilometres away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear.

When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waved off because not a single member of the crew had been injured.

No one could believe that the aircraft could still fly in such a condition. The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited through the door in the fuselage and the tail gunner had climbed down a ladder, at which time the entire rear section of the aircraft collapsed.

This old bird had done its job and brought the entire crew home uninjured.

Boeing B-17F-5-BO Flying Fortress All American III Crew List

Pilot

Ken Bragg Jr.

Co-pilot

G Boyd Jr.

Navigator

Harry C. Nuessle

Bombardier

Ralph Burbridge

Engineer

Joe C. James

Radio Operator

Paul A. Galloway

Ball Turret Gunner

Elton Conda

Waist Gunner

Michael Zuk

Tail Gunner

Sam T. Sarpolus

Ground Crew Chief

Hank Hyland

When the Cold War turned Hot

There were a number of times that the Cold War almost turned hot. May 1960 was one such occasion.

Immediately after the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, Germany had become a country divided in two.

West Germany was controlled by the United States of America, Britain and France. East Germany fell under the Soviet Union.

Although Berlin, the capital of Germany, was in East Germany, it too had been divided in half - East Berlin and West Berlin.

From the start, Russia wanted control of the entire city of Berlin but America was determined that this was not going to happen.

The East and the West had different ideological and economic visions for postwar Europe. The resulting tension and hostility became known as The Cold War.

One of the first major international crises of the Cold War became known as The Berlin Blockade.

The Soviet Union blocked the Western Allies' rail, road and canal access to the sectors of Berlin under Western control.

In response, the Western Allies organised the Berlin airlift which lasted from 26 June 1948 to 30 September 1949.

Aircrews from the United States Air Force, the British Royal Air Force, the French Air Force, the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Royal Australian Air Force, the Royal New Zealand Air Force, and the South African Air Force flew over 200,000

flights in one year, providing to the West Berliners up to 8,893 tons of necessities each day, such as fuel and food.

Although unhappy that their plan was not working, the Soviets did not attempt to disrupt the airlift for fear that this may lead to open conflict. On 12 May 1949, the USSR lifted the blockade of West Berlin.

Intelligence needed

A Four Power Summit was scheduled to be held in Paris on 16 May 1960. One of the priorities on the agenda would be Berlin.

American President Dwight D. Eisenhower was under mounting pressure from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to see what the Russian military was up to. There were fears that Russia was developing intercontinental ballistic missiles. The CIA wanted to fly ultra-high altitude photographic reconnaissance missions over Russia.

Eisenhower was reluctant because he didn't want anything to jeopardise the Four Power Paris Summit. What if one of the planes was brought down by the Russians?

The CIA assured Eisenhower that this would not happen. They said that the Russians had no method of bringing down the plane, the Lockheed U-2.

The Lockheed U-2 was a high altitude recon aircraft that was built in 1957 to gather a range of information while cruising at



CAPTURED: CIA pilot Francis Gary Powers.

undetectable high altitudes. It has a surface ceiling of 21,000 metres and could be equipped with a variety of sensory and communications systems for spying purposes.

Nicknamed the 'Dragon Lady', the U-2 was safe from the MiG-17, the Soviet Union's best interceptor, which could barely reach 13,700 metres. The Americans also believed that Soviet radar, which used American equipment provided during the war, could not track aircraft above 19,800 metres.

Eisenhower finally relented to the pressure and gave the go ahead for two missions to be flown. There were, however, conditions attached.

He wanted the missions to be flown by British pilots from the Royal Air Force. This would give the Americans plausible deniability if the missions were compromised. The British government, still reeling from the aftermath of the Suez Crisis and



DRAGON LADY: Nicknamed the 'Dragon Lady' the single-jet engine ultra-high altitude reconnaissance Lockheed U-2 was operated by the United States Air Force. A U-2 flown by the Central Intelligence Agency was shot down over Russia.

in no position to snub American requests, agreed to the proposal.

The first two missions flown by the British pilots were a success. They confirmed that the Russians were indeed building intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Eisenhower was now under pressure to determine the number of Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles more accurately. He gave permission for two more missions to be flown before the Four Power Paris Summit. This time, however, the missions would be flown by American pilots.

Things go wrong

On 9 April 1960, a U-2C from the special CIA unit '10-10' took off from the US base at Peshawar, Pakistan. It was piloted by CIA pilot Francis Gary Powers.

He crossed the southern national boundary of the Soviet Union in the area of Pamir Mountains and flew over four Soviet top secret military ob-

jects: the Semipalatinsk Test Site, the Dolon Air Base where Tu-95 strategic bombers were stationed, the surface-to-air missile (SAM) test site of the Soviet Air Defence Forces near Saryshagan, and the Tyuratam missile range (Baikonur Cosmodrome).

What the Americans did not realise was that Soviet radar technology had increased greatly and Powers' U-2 was detected by Soviet Air Defence Forces when it had flown 250 kilometres over the Soviet border. Interception attempts by a Mig-19 and Su-9 were unsuccessful.

The U-2 left Soviet air space and landed at an Iranian airstrip at Zahedan. The mission had been a success and the CIA was delighted with the results. The next flight from Peshawar airport was planned for late April.

On 28 April 1960 a U-2C, codenamed Article 358, was ferried from Incirlik Air Base in Turkey to the US base at Peshawar by pilot Glen Dunaway.

Fuel for the aircraft had been

ferried to Peshawar the previous day, as well as the ground crew, mission pilot Francis Gary Powers, and the back up pilot, Bob Ericson.

On the morning of 29 April the crew was informed that the mission had been delayed for one day. As a result, Bob Ericson flew Article 358 back to Incirlik and pilot John Shinn flew another U-2C, Article 360, back to Peshawar. On 30 April the mission was delayed by yet another day due to bad weather over the Soviet Union.

The weather improved and on 1 May, 15 days before the opening of the Four Power Paris Summit, Captain Francis Gary Powers took off from Peshawar.

Under the code name 'Grand Slam', the mission would photograph targets including the ICBM sites at the Baikonur Cosmodrome and Plesetsk Cosmodrome, then land at Bodø in Norway.

Chelyabinsk-65, an important industrial center of plutonium processing, was another of the targets that Powers was to photograph. At the time, the USSR had six ICBM launch pads, two at Baikonur and four at Chelyabinsk-65.

The Americans had no idea that the U-2 flight was expected and all units of the Soviet Air Defence Forces in the Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Siberia, Ural, and later in the USSR European Region and Extreme North, were placed on red alert.

The U-2C was soon picked up by Soviet radar and Lieutenant General of the Air Force Yevgeniy Savitskiy ordered the air-unit commanders "to attack the violator by all alert flights

located in the area of foreign plane's course, and to ram if necessary".

Soviet attempts to intercept the plane using fighter aircraft failed yet again because of the U-2s extreme operating altitude.

The U-2s course was out of range of several of the nearest SAM sites. One of the SAM sites even failed to engage the target. 1 May is a holiday in the Soviet Union, and they were not on duty that day.

Finally, near Kosulion in the Ural Region, Powers' luck ran out. Three SA-2 Guideline (S-75 Dvina) surface-to-air missiles were fired by a battery commanded by Mikhail Voronov. One of the missiles exploded in the air behind the U-2. The resulting explosion was near enough to violently shake the aircraft, tearing off its long wings.

The plane began to nosedive and at a lower altitude Powers' bailed out. He had neglected to disconnect his oxygen hose first and struggled with it until it broke, enabling him to separate from the aircraft.

He parachuted safely to the ground but was soon captured. He had been issued with a modified silver dollar which contained a lethal, shellfish-derived saxitoxin-tipped needle, but he did not use it.

For more than 30 minutes the SAM command center was unaware that the U-2 had been destroyed. This resulted in 13 more missiles being fired by neighbouring batteries.

One of the missiles struck a Soviet MiG-19 fighter. The pilot, Sergei Safronov, was killed. The MiG's IFF transponders

were not yet switched to the new May codes because of the 1 May holiday.

US cover up

It didn't take the CIA long to realise that something had gone horribly wrong with the mission.

Four days after Powers' had disappeared, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) issued a very detailed press release.

They claimed that a weather research aircraft had gone missing north of Turkey. They speculated that while the aircraft was on autopilot the pilot had lost consciousness due to an oxygen failure. They even went as far as to claim that the pilot had reported over the emergency frequency that he was experiencing oxygen difficulties.

To bolster the claim that the U-2 was a weather research aircraft, a U-2 was quickly painted in NASA colours and shown to the media.

On the same day the US Senate made its first comments on the U-2 incident and it began a domestic political storm for Eisenhower.

He was caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place - he could admit responsibility for the U-2 flight, and likely ruin any chances for détente at the Paris Summit, or he could continue to deny knowledge and indicate that he did not control his own administration.

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was delighted by the American's cover story. He planned a political trap for Eisenhower.

Khrushchev released infor-

mation to the world that an American spy plane had been shot down over Soviet territory. He made no mention of the fact that the pilot was alive and had been captured.

With the information that Khrushchev released, the Americans believed that they would be able to continue with their cover story that the crashed plane was a weather research aircraft and not a military spy plane. The cover-up said that the pilot of the U-2 weather plane had radioed in that he was experiencing oxygen difficulties while flying over Turkey.

From there they claimed that the plane could have continued on its path because of autopilot, and that this could be the plane that crashed in the Soviet Union.

The final attempt to make the cover story seem as real as possible was the grounding of all U-2 planes for mandatory inspection of oxygen systems in order to make sure that no other "weather missions" would have the same result as the one that was lost and possibly crashed in the Soviet Union.

On 7 May, Khrushchev sprang his trap. "I must tell you a secret," he announced. "When I made my first report I deliberately did not say that the pilot was alive and well ... and now just look how many silly things the Americans have said."

It soon became obvious that not only was Francis Gary Powers alive and well, but that he had revealed the full details of his mission to the Soviets.

Also, because of the release of some photographs of the plane, there was evidence that most of



WORLD LEADERS: US President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. The Soviet Premier used the U-2 spy plane incident to embarrass the US President.

the covert U-2 technologies had survived the crash. From this Khrushchev was able to openly embarrass the Eisenhower administration by exposing the attempted cover-up.

Yet despite Khrushchev's political trap, the Soviet leader was a shrewd politician. He allowed Eisenhower a way out to save face, possibly to salvage the peace summit to some degree.

Khrushchev said that he did not lay the blame for the U-2 incident on Eisenhower himself, but rather on the CIA and its head Allen Dulles.

Khrushchev said that anyone wish to understand the U-2s mission should "seek a reply from Allen Dulles, at whose instructions the American aircraft flew over the Soviet Union."

On 9 May, the Soviet premier told US ambassador Thompson that he "could not help but suspect that someone had launched this operation with the deliberate intent of spoiling the summit meeting."

Francis Gary Powers

And what of the fate of the CIA pilot, Captain Francis Gary

Powers?

On 19 August 1960, Powers was tried and convicted of espionage. This was considered a serious crime covered by Article 2 of the Soviet Union's law 'On Criminality Responsibility for State Crimes'.

He was sentenced to 10 years confinement. Three years of his sentence were to be served in a prison, while the remaining seven years would be in a labour camp.

He was held in Vladimir Central Prison, about 240 km east of Moscow, in building number 2 from 9 September 1960 until 8 February 1962.

On 10 February 1962, Powers was exchanged, along with American student Frederic Pryor, in a well-publicized spy swap at the Glienicke Bridge in Berlin. The exchange was for Soviet KGB Colonel Vilyam Fisher, known as "Rudolf Abel", who had been caught by the FBI and tried and jailed for espionage. When released, Powers' total time in captivity was 1 year, 9 months and 10 days.

Powers initially received a

cold reception on his return home. He was criticized for having failed to activate his aircraft's self-destruct charge to destroy the camera, photographic film, and related classified parts of his aircraft before his capture. He was also criticized for not using an optional CIA-issued "suicide pill" to kill himself.

In 2010, CIA documents were released indicating that American officials did not believe Powers' account of the incident at the time, because it was contradicted by a classified National Security Agency (NSA) report which alleged that the U-2 had descended from 20 to 10 km before changing course and disappearing from radar. However, newly released declassified CIA documents confirm the accuracy of Powers' report. The NSA report remains classified.

Powers received the CIA's Intelligence Star in 1965 after his return from the Soviet Union. Powers was originally scheduled to receive it in 1963 along with other pilots involved in the CIA's U-2 program, but the award was postponed for political reasons.

Powers worked for Lockheed as a test pilot from 1962 to 1970, though the CIA paid his salary. In 1970, he published *Operation Overflight*. Lockheed fired him, because "the book's publication had ruffled some feathers at Langley." Powers became a helicopter traffic pilot reporter for KNBC News Channel 4.

On August 1, 1977, while conducting a traffic report over Los Angeles, his helicopter crashed, killing him and George Spears, his cameraman.

It's not really a game

It is vital that military forces train for real-life situations. But training exercises can cost a lot of time and money. It's a Catch-22 situation, but is there a solution?

There is a saying that most military people are familiar with. It goes "Train hard, fight easy."

And while this is an excellent concept, it is not one that is always practical. Nor is it cheap.

While training is vital for any military force it has to be weighed up by numerous considerations.

First of all are financial factors. A large-scale exercise can cost a lot of money and take a healthy bite out of any defence budget.

You need to have an area where the exercise can be held. Equipment and personnel need to be transported to the venue. While there personnel need to be provided with accommodation, food and, preferably, some sort of a salary. If they are reserve troops they need to be called up or mobilised for the exercise.

Then there is the cost of fuel, ammunition, food, and other

logistical factors. Equipment will suffer wear and tear and, in some cases, damage.

Take Operation Thunder Chariot for example. Held at the Army Battle School Lohathla in September 1984. It involved 7 Division and was the first divisional exercise held since World War II. More than 11,000 citizen force troops were used for the exercise.

All arms of the South African Army were used and they were supported by the South African Medical Services and the South African Air Force.

Live ammunition was used during the exercise and this included thousands of small arms rounds, artillery shells, rockets, and bombs and missiles from aircraft. One can only imagine what this exercise cost.

For those of our readers that may have been involved with Operation Thunder Chariot or those that would like to find

out more about it, click [here](#) to view a one hour documentary on Thunder Chariot. The quality and sounds is not great, but damn, it's nostalgic.

There is another important factor to take into consider and that is the more realistic the training, the more chance there is of casualties or accidents. Around the world thousands of troops have been killed or injured in training exercises.

And sometimes things just go wrong. Take this classic example for instance.

Back in the mid 1970s Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, or to give him his self-bestowed full title, 'His Excellency, President for Life, Field Marshal Al Hadji Doctor Idi Amin Dada, VC, DSO, MC, CBE, Lord of All the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Seas and Conqueror of the British Empire in Africa in General and Uganda in Particu-

lar', decided to hold an exercise to demonstrate the capabilities of the Ugandan Air Force.

With VIPs and the media present. four jets from the Ugandan Air Force, flown by their top pilots, were supposed to bomb a small island in a lake just outside of Kampala. On the island was a sign that read 'South Africa'.

Each aircraft dropped two bombs. Unfortunately for them, not a single bomb managed to hit the island. Even more unfortunate was that one of the bombs managed to hit a small boat filled with observers, resulting in a number of casualties. It is rumoured that Amin had all four pilots executed.

So, is there a safer and cheaper way of training for the military. And, if there is, just how effective can it be. Enter stage left the world of military simulations.

Military simulations, also known informally as war games, are simulations in which theories of warfare can be tested and refined without the need for actual hostilities.

Manual simulations have probably been in use in some form since mankind first went to war. Chess can be regarded as a form of military simulation (although its precise origins are debated).

In more recent times, the forerunner of modern simulations was the Prussian game *Kriegsspiel*, which appeared around 1811 and is sometimes credited with the Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian War.

Towards the end of the 19th century miniature wargaming began to become popular. Min-

iature wargaming is a form of wargaming in which players enact battles between opposing military forces that are represented by miniature physical models

Hobbyists used it to recreate historic battles, often attempting to change the course of a battle by using different tactics. It wasn't long before the military began using the same concept to test strategy and tactics.

The invention of the computer changed the face of wargaming. As computer processing and graphics improved, so did the capabilities of what could be achieved.

While wargaming software was developed mainly for the civilian wargaming enthusiasts, the military soon began to explore the value of using it for training.

The majority of the wargames developed are just that - games. Yet there are a number of them that are very realistic and they are regarded more as military simulators, known as milsim, rather than games. An example of this is ARMA 3.

ARMA 3 is an open-world, realism-based, military tactical shooter video game developed and published by Bohemia Interactive. It was released for Microsoft Windows in September 2013. To date it has sold more than five million copies. The image on the left is not a photograph, but a screen shot from ARMA 3.

While not officially used by the military, many military personnel use ARMA 3 for training.

When Bohemia Interactive saw how many military per-

sonnel were using ARMA 3 they developed VBS3, a Virtual Desktop Training & Simulation Host developed specifically for the military.

VBS3 provides a comprehensive virtual training environment for tactical training, experimentation and mission rehearsal for land, sea and air.

VBS3 is a multi-player, virtual training environment development platform for modelling and simulation uses.

Based on commercial game technologies, VBS3 has evolved over more than 15 years into a comprehensive desktop trainer and mission rehearsal platform, adapted for hundreds of discrete training uses by militaries in over 50 countries.

It is cost effective and comprehensive with over 16,000 detailed models of military and civilian vehicles, weapons, and characters. VBS3 is a virtual sandbox, which reduces development costs associated with deploying a desktop training solution.

VBS3 combines a massive content library, scenario development tools, and after action review capability that immerses trainees in a high-fidelity, multi-player virtual environment.

It includes a user-friendly application that allows for interoperability with external HLA/DIS networks and host computers that use the CIGI protocol, a robust DIS-enabled voice communications system, and a mission planning tool for adding military markings to scenarios.

The training uses below are just a snapshot of what the simulator is currently used for.

- IED training





VIRTUAL BATTLESPACE: Bohemia Interactive's VBS3 is used by the military in more than 50 countries. It was developed using technology from their popular battle simulator ARMA 3.

- Driver training
- UAS training
- Route clearance
- Crew training
- Surveillance systems
- Enemy mindset training
- Convoy training
- Sensor training
- Vehicle ID
- Gunnery training
- FO/FAC training
- Vehicle check point
- Crew served weapons
- Engineer training
- Aircraft mission simulation.

Other companies have taken things even further. For many years commercial airlines have used flight simulators to train pilots. Especially in emergency procedures.

These flight simulators are basically large metal boxes mounted on a hydraulic system that allows it to move up, down, forward, backward and from side to side. The interior is

exactly the same as in a real aircraft and various screens give realistic and high definition images. They don't come cheap. For example a Boeing 777 simulator costs in the region of US\$320 million.

Various scenarios can then be programmed into the flight simulator.

For example the flight crew may be faced with a situation where they are coming in to land at night in an electric storm with gale force winds. To add to their problems the undercarriage will not lower, all four engines have cut out, and there is an on-board fire. They have to still attempt to land the plane.

It wasn't long before the military started to look at similar technology. Couldn't they use something similar for their aircraft? And why not develop something along the same lines for tanks and other armoured

vehicles, or even for something like a submarine.

A number of companies now produce complex simulators for military use. Germany's Rheinmetall Electronics is one such company.

They have developed simulators army, aviation and navy training.

Army simulators and training includes: (Click on the underlined blue links to watch a video).

[Live Training](#)

The modular and is easily scalable concept allows for realistic live training in all scenarios from individual up to and beyond reinforced brigade level including all combat supporting elements.

[Gunnery and combat](#)

The Combat and Gunnery Skills Training Systems address

the training needs of crews of armed and armored vehicles, including main battle tanks, armored infantry fighting vehicles, tactical patrol vehicles and others.

[Military vehicle driving training](#)

The military driver training systems are designed for basic and advanced driver training for any kind of wheeled and tracked military vehicle. City as well as country roads, motorways and off-road exercise areas are available at various seasons, weather conditions and traffic density.

[Tactical/constructive training](#)

The Tactical Training Systems range from constructive command and staff trainers to networked tactical real-time virtual training systems for training of commanders and staff of military formations and units in a realistic operational environment with representation of the tactical situation on the levels platoon - company - battalion - brigade and higher.

Aviator simulator and training includes:

[Flight training](#)

By exploiting and using the most advanced technologies Rheinmetall develops cutting-edge flight training systems to a level that presents an almost perfect simulation of the real world.

[Cargo loading training](#)

Rheinmetall provides the latest rear crew training aids for air transport platforms and is the world market leader provid-

ing Load Master Work Station Trainer (LMWST) and Cargo Hold Trainers for transport aircraft.

[Maintenance training](#)

A modern, integrated, holistic training concept for all phases of training.

Naval simulation and training includes:

[Naval bridge and navigation training](#)

Rheinmetall's naval bridge and navigation simulators provide training beyond standard ship handling and navigational tasks. Besides navigational ship's bridge systems the naval bridge and navigation simulators provide vessel specific equipment like Warship ECDIS (WECDIS) and combat systems.

[Tactical Training](#)

Rheinmetall offers a highly flexible training system. It simulates all operationally relevant parameters in realistic scenarios, creating the perfect environment for instruction in planning and decision-making for naval leaders.

[Sensore and weapon system training](#)

The effective use of modern combat systems requires well trained specialists. High-fidelity simulation guarantees a most realistic training for sensor systems such as sonar, radar and electro-optics as well as combat systems.

[Submarine Training](#)

Rheinmetall's modular con-

cept for simulation of submarine technical features permits step-by-step expansion of the submarine control simulation.

[Naval damage control Training](#)

Rheinmetall supplies virtual and live simulators for vital damage control tasks, designed to create maximum operational and decision-making competence.

[Naval Ship Engine Training](#)

Rheinmetall's ship engine simulator replicates the vessel's propulsion and electrical systems, including its supply and support systems. The flexible and modular system is based on highly precise thermodynamic mathematical models and can be adapted to any specific individual and team training requirement.

Of course Rheinmetall Electronics is not the only company that produces and sells technology such as this.

As technology develops military simulators will become even more realistic. Many simulators now make use of Virtual Reality (VR) software, something that is continually improving.

While it is true that some military simulators cost a great deal of money, they are still far more cost effective than full-scale live training exercises.

And let's face it, simulators are far safer than real-life exercises. After all, the greatest danger you face is getting a carpal tunnel injury in the wrist from overuse of a computer mouse.

Long distance air mail

The Excalibur extended-range guided artillery shell could become one of the deadliest weapons on the modern battlefield.

For nearly four decades the South African designed G6 self-propelled howitzer was rated as the best of its kind in the world. That long-standing record is now in serious danger.

The G6 could fire a 155mm high-explosive (HE) shell with great accuracy up to a distance of 30 km. Using an HE base bleed round it could reach a distance of 39 km.

On 19 December 2020 the United States Army's Extended Range Cannon Artillery (ERCA) system hit a target that was 70 km (43 miles) away. This is roughly the same as fir-

ing a cannon from Cape Town and hitting a target in Wellington.

The round was fired from an M109A7 Paladin Integrated Management (PIM) howitzer chassis. The 39-calibre gun was replaced with a 58-calibre with a nine metre barrel.

What made the difference, however, was the type of shell used. It was an Excalibur S 155mm XM113 High-Explosive Rocket Assisted (HERA) using supercharged propellant.

The round has been developed for the US Army by Raytheon Technologies Corporation is an American multinational con-

glomerate.

The Excalibur S round can use GPS and laser technology to change course and hit moving targets.

This type of shell offers major benefits on the battlefield. First of all its range means that it can fire at targets from a position that is far out of range of any other artillery currently being used.

Another benefit is that it makes it hard for counter-battery radar to determine the location of the cannon since the shell is not actually ballistic.

In this test, the Army took three shots. The first shot came

up short due to very high head winds at a high altitude and the second shot had a hardware failure, but the third shot proved that the service is getting closer to getting the right balance between propellant, projectile design and other factors that play into achieving greater distances.

"This demonstration is not a destination," Colonel Tony Gibbs, the Army's program manager for combat artillery system, told reporters. "This is really just a way point in our ongoing campaign of learning as we work to really realign U.S. supremacy in cannon artillery. It's definitely a big knowledge point for us today."

Each munition fired during the event had slight design differences to address how best to design and prepare the round to absorb the high-pressure and force of being fired at 1,000

meters per second from a gun tube of ERCA's calibre, Brigadier General John Rafferty, who is in charge of the effort, said. "What was consistent was the propellant configuration," he added. "So we got that propellant configuration, I think dialled in really close down, which is great."

The first shot, due to the winds, fell short by roughly 100 metres, which, Rafferty said, sounds like a lot, but is closer when considering when the munition has to travel 70,000 meters. The Army knew the first shot would come up short due to wind, but wanted to take it anyway in order to learn from it.

The second shot, the Army had modified the hardware configuration and experience a hardware failure, Gibbs confirmed. Specifically, the Army added an isolator for the iner-

tial measurement unit, which is essentially a shock absorber to counter the pressure spike in the chamber.

"We did have some concerns with the survivability of that," Rafferty said.

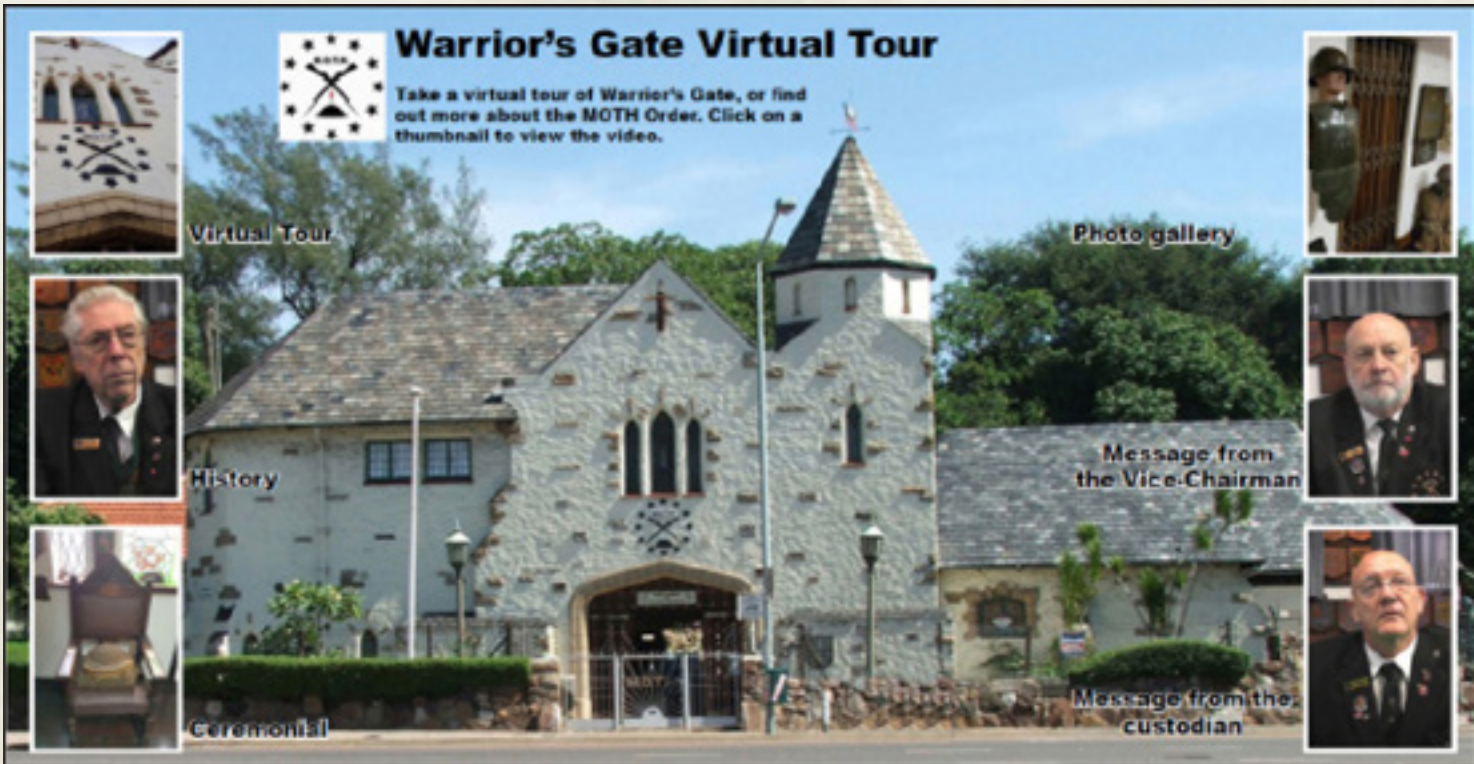
The Army will continue its soldier centred design effort to include ensuring the configurations for the propellant and charge are something the soldiers can handle and that it doesn't affect the rate of fire, Rafferty noted. "We obviously don't want to give them a configuration that's going to cause them to have to shoot slower."

And the configuration of projectiles and propellant also has to be optimally stowed in a howitzer to maximize the number of kills on board.

The Extended Range Cannon Artillery system could enter service with the US Army as early as 2023.



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.



Rank Structure - Angolan 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 Angolan Armed Forces.



The Angolan Armed Forces (*Forças Armadas Angolanas*) or FAA are the military of Angola.

The FAA include the General Staff of the Armed Forces and three components: the Army (*Exército*), the Navy (*Marinha de Guerra*) and the National Air Force (*Força Aérea Nacional*).

The FAA succeeded to the previous People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) following the abortive Bicesse Accord with the Armed Forces of the Liberation of Angola (FALA), armed wing of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

Exército (Army)

Non-commissioned Officers (NCO)



Segundo-cabo
Private First Class



Primeiro-cabo
Corporal



Furriel
Sergeant



Segundo-sargento
Staff Sergeant



Primeiro-sargento
Master Sergeant



Sargent-chefe
Chief Master Sergeant

Officers



Aspirante
Officer Cadet



Segundo-Teniente
Second Lieutenant



Primeiro Teniente
First Lieutenant



Capitão
Captain



Mayor
Major



Teniente Coronel
Lieutenant Colonel



Coronel
Colonel



Brigadeiro General
Major General



Teniente General
Lieutenant General



General
General



General de Aviação
Colonel General

Marinha de Guerra (Navy)

Non-commissioned Officers (NCO)



Primeiro-Marinheiro
Able Seaman



Cabo
Seaman 1st Class



Segundo Sargento
Petty Officer 2nd Class



Primeiro Sargento
Petty Officer 1st Class



Sargento Adjudante
Chief Petty Officer



Sargento Maior
Senior Chief Petty Officer



Sub-Tenente
Ensign



Tenente de Corveta
Sub Lieutenant



Tenente de Fragata
Lieutenant Junior Grade



Tenente de Navio
Lieutenant



Capitão Teniente
Lieutenant Commander



Capitão de Fragata
Commander



Capitão de Mare Guerra
Captain



Contraalmirante
Rear Admiral



Vicealmirante
Vice Admiral



Almirante
Admiral



Almirante da Armada
Armed Forces
Chief of Staff

Officers

Força Aérea Nacional (Air Force)

Non-commissioned Officers (NCO)



Segundo-cabo
Private First Class



Primeiro-cabo
Corporal



Furriel
Sergeant



Segundo-sargento
Staff Sergeant



Primeiro-sargento
Master Sergeant



Sargente-chefe
Chief Master Sergeant

Officers



Aspirante
Officer Cadet



Segundo-Teniente
Second Lieutenant



Primeiro Teniente
First Lieutenant





Capitão
Captain



Mayor
Major



Teniente Coronel
Lieutenant Colonel



Coronel
Colonel



Brigadeiro General
Major General



Teniente General
Lieutenant General



General
General



General de Aviação
Armed Forces
Chief of Staff



Military side arms

This month we're looking at side arms that are currently in use with military and police forces around the world. We show you 15 of them, you tell us what they are. Give yourself an extra point if you can tell us their country of origin. Answers on page 96.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15

International Seafarer Day

A Day in the Life of a Seafarer by Robin G Coles.

Some will argue life at sea was easier back before regulations were established by the IMO, US Coast Guard and ABS. But was it really? Most of the ships were Foreign Flags. That meant long tours of duty and no union. Today you'll find seafarers prefer American flagships; the pay is better, and they're unionised. "There's a lot more paperwork today," says Third Mate Mike Loesch. "Instead of doing just the noon report, you're now doing three reports a day."

In 1875, nine Houses of Refuge were built along the Florida coast; between Miami and Jacksonville; every 25 miles. Each Refuge House was commissioned by the United States Life-Saving Service. They had a keeper whose only job was to maintain the house, keep it supplied of food, clothing, and walk the beaches after the storms. When they came across a shipwrecked sailor they gave him "refuge" in their house. The men got to stay for a week or two. Some got back on ships heading north. A lookout tower was built and used to watch for enemy submarines in World War II. Over the years they've been operated by the US Coast Guard and the Navy. Today only one house remains in Martin County on Gilbert's Bar. In 1976 it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

This year the IMO's theme for International Seafarer Day is well-being. Since this is a

huge topic I thought I'd stay the course. And, enlist the help of a few seafarers. Tour duties last anywhere from 75 days to six months on board a ship. Before the sun even warms their faces, Third Mate Mike is on the bridge for his morning watch. Captain Tod is busy getting the morning report out before breakfast. After breakfast, Captain Tod continues his day responding to emails, handling personnel issues, payroll, orders, etc. Third Mate Mike attends to his safety inspections or maintenance if the chief mate needs it done. After lunch he relieves another third mate and stands watch till dinner. The end of his 12-hour day and another sunset. If the ship is docked, instead of standing watch on the bridge he would be in the cargo control room monitoring the cargo operations. Also making rounds on deck and checking the lines. One thing you don't need is the ship to slip away from the dock.

Hot and cold meals are provided three times a day. Breakfast is your standard fare. Lunch and dinner offers a variety of fish, meat and a salad bar. If anyone has a food allergy, like I do, you need to let the Captain know when you board the ship. According to Civilian Mariner Wendy, I would starve on the navy's ship. Their food is mostly deep-fried foods with a salad bar and overcooked veggies. Not exactly nutritious. I find this ironic since she's on a logistics ship. They provide

other Navy and NATO ships with fuel, parts, food and sodas.

Must be inspection day today. Tensions are high. Everyone's stressed. Not sure why. To me an inspection is a good thing. If they find something wrong on the ship it gets reported, then fixed. Right? Well, not necessarily true. Each inspector has their own interpretation of how things should be done. Usually from first-hand experience years earlier when they crewed. Surely not how things are done today or what you were told to do. Regulations are changing all the time, and everyone is expected to adapt. However, resources are not always made available.

Woohoo! After countless sunsets of reds, pink and gray, land is finally in sight. The ship is heading into port where its crew members get to go on-shore for a mental health break. The only question - is it full of security checkpoints or can you walk right off the ship and be in the middle of everything? Some guys like to get away or take a break. The ones that come in on a Foreign flagship usually head to Walmart before heading out again. Poor Wendy, that's when she gets the busiest. She arranges travel for any of her crew members that are leaving the ship for vacation. They don't get to leave the vessel until their replacement gets onboard. Mike and Captain Tod don't always go ashore either. They have this philosophy

work is work. I don't always agree. Sometimes it's good to get off the ship for a change of scenery. Even if only for a couple hours. Maybe today, a few more crew members will join the ship. That would be a great help. Just like in corporate, the crew is asked to do more with less people. According to Mike, the difference is that the office building isn't going to run into something.

If you've read any of my stuff, you'll know safety is a mega concern. Crowley Maritime puts it high on their list as well. Every meeting starts with a safety and cultural moment which includes wellness and behaviour. They realize to be a high performing company they must support their employees work life balance and health. Their trainings vary depending on the ship. Its operations. The seafarers and shore-side personnel. Each petroleum ship has magnetic signs throughout the ship. "We don't want to be reactive," says David DeCamp, Sr Communicator, Strategist for Crowley Maritime. "We're thinking prevention and avoiding incidents as much as possible." Just remember, when you're on the ship, it's one hand for the ship and one hand for you. Keep your balance and stay safe.

Back riding the waves, the crew appears happy. Many sunrises and sunsets later end of tour duty is fast approaching. I begin to wonder what signs to watch for that people are ready to get off the ship. Oye! How do they handle the stress? After all, my stints on recreational boats are much shorter and less crew. So, I asked around.

"When the guys get quiet," says Mike. "If you're standing watch with them and for four hours they don't say one word when normally you'd be having a good conversation. After that you'll see them start fouling things up a lot. Some guys will just explode, or they'll do something - either conscientiously or sub-conscientiously - where it's jeopardizing their job."

Wendy says you'll hear of someone who starts giving things away. Saying goodbye to others on the ship or just seems despondent. These are usually signs of suicide, she says. Especially, amongst the younger crew members.

When it comes time to de-stress, hit the gym onboard the ship or do some form of exercise. Talk with your peers and find some alone time. Regular contact with your family is also important. Especially if you're married. It helps ease their stress as well. If email is not readily

available, write those emails anyway, then once in port send them out all at once. Guaranteed the receiver will be looking forward to them. "Remember it's important to take care of yourself," says Captain Tod. "Not just mentally but physically. Sometimes you have to eat that pastry at 3:00am or drink that thick coffee. Working long hours adds extra stress to your body both physically and mentally."

Finally, it's important to enjoy your time off. Isn't that one of the beauties of going to sea? Somebody else is doing your job on the ship for the next 75 days or however long your tour of duty is. Get rested up. Re-charge. Then get ready to get back out there for those long hitches.

Robin G Coles is a freelance writer focusing on the Maritime and Software Industries. To learn more about Robin visit her website at; <http://RobinG-Coles.com>

Article Source: https://Ezine-Articles.com/expert/Robin_G_Coles/51846



Engine room under new command

The South African Sea Cadets is mindful of the vital importance that new appointments need to reflect the guiding precepts of youth and experience. By Captain W M Bartie, Secretary to the Board, South African Sea Cadets.

The Chairman of the Board has much pleasure in announcing the following appointments which were approved at the unassembled meeting of the board on 30 October 2020..

The Executive Director, Captain (SCC) W M Bartie will retire from the Board of Directors at the June 2021 Board Meeting, after 45 years of service to the Sea Cadet Corps.

He will continue to fulfil the position of Secretary to the Board until a suitable person either from within the Company or from outside the Company is appointed. As a result of this retirement, a number of new positional appointments will be made.

The South African Sea Cadet Company is a youth training organisation first and foremost and the engine room is the Sea Cadet Corps, whose sole function is the training of boys and girls in the art and skills of the maritime sector.

Thus the new appointments must reflect the guiding precepts of youth and experience necessary to achieve the goals of the Sea Cadet movement in South Africa.

To achieve a minimum disruption during the changeover of personnel, the personnel concerned are preparing themselves for the requirements of their new posi-

tions as well as the required Change of Command Parades during the period to 1 July 2021.

Captain (SCC) I Loubser, will be appointed to the Board of Directors as the Executive Director, Chairman of the Executive Management Committee and Prescribed Officer (Companies Act requirement) of the Company wef 1 July 2021.

Captain Loubser joined the then Naval Cadets as a Midshipman on the 1st April 1984 and has given 36 years service to the ideals of the Corps, finally reaching the pinnacle of success in being appointed as the Senior Officer Sea Cadets on 1 October 2012.

Lt Cdr (SCC) P Jacobs, Officer Commanding TS Woltemade, will be appointed to the post of Senior Officer Sea Cadets and promoted to the rank of Captain (SCC) wef 1 July 2021.

Lt Cdr Jacobs joined the Sea Cadet Corps on the 25 October 2007 at TS Woltemade. He was promoted to the post of Officer Commanding on 25 February 2012.

Sub Lt (SCC) (Mrs) G Pillay, 1st Lieutenant TS Woltemade, joined the Sea Cadets at TS Woltemade in August 2011. She will be appointed as Officer-in-Charge of TS Woltemade for 6 months wef 1 July 2021, during



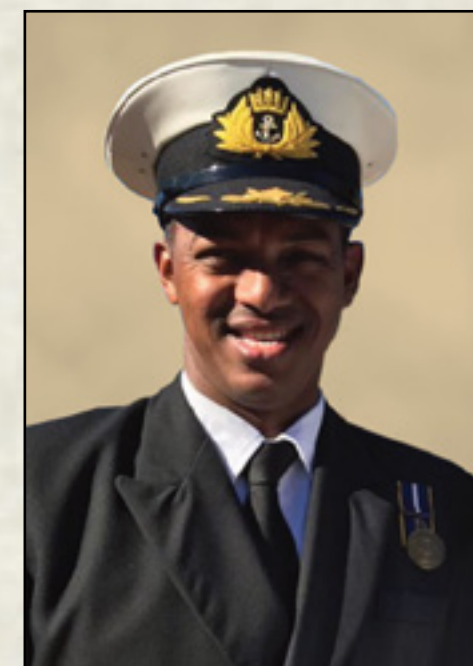
which time she would be required to complete the Officer Commanding Task Book and subsequent examination.

On the successful completion of these requirements, she will be confirmed in the post of Officer Commanding TS Woltemade. The Board of Directors congratulates the nominated officers on their advancement and look forward to the further development of the Sea Cadet movement in South Africa under their watch.

The Chairman of the Board has much pleasure in announcing the following appointments which were approved at the unassembled meeting of the board on 30 October 2020...



Captain (SCC) W M Bartie



Lt Cdr (SCC) P Jacobs



Sub Lt (SCC)
(Mrs) G Pillay



SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

Home About Us Join Us Contact Us

Welcome to the official website of the Signals Association.
Remember that this site will be constantly updated - so keep on coming back.
Should you wish to leave a comment or require any further information please send an e-mail to: chairman@signalsassociation.org.za.

Site Navigation

Click on any of the frequency numbers on the right to go to the relevant page.

1. Military Veterans Acts
2. Last Post / Memorial
3. Heritage
4. Welfare
5. Newsletter
6. Books written by members
7. Donations
8. Events and notices
9. Photo gallery
10. Useful links



Certa Cito

Certa Cito, Certa Cito, there's the corps for you. Worries over, Jimmy hurry, get the message through. Green and blue your colour, lead and sea and air, while your guide ways through the ether take the message there.

Certa Cito, Certa Cito, there's the corps for you. Worries over, Jimmy hurry, get the message through.

Listen to Certa Cito by clicking play above.

Read the latest issue of 'Jimmy's Own', the Signal's Association official newsletter, by clicking on the cover on the right.



[Return to Top](#)

Click here to visit the official website of the Signals Association.

Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day is a memorial day observed by members of the Commonwealth since the end of the First World War to remember all those who fought and died in the line of duty to keep us free.

By **Seaman Piper Pauwels**, TS Rook.

Why do we celebrate remembrance day? Remembrance Day is a Memorial Day observed by Canadians and other members of the Commonwealth since the end of the First World War to remember all those who fought and died in the line of duty to keep us free.

What is the meaning of Remembrance Day?

Remembrance Day (11 November) is a national holiday in France and Belgium. It commemorates the armistice signed between the Allies and Germany at Compiegne, France, for the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front, which took effect at 11:00 am - the "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month."

How do we celebrate Remembrance Day?

It marks the day World War One ended, at 11 am on the 11th day of the 11th month, in 1918.

A two-minute silence is held at 11 am to remember the people who have died in wars.

Remembrance Sunday is also marked each year, this falls on the second Sunday in November.

Why is the poppy a symbol of remembrance?

The reason poppies are used to remember those who have given their lives in battle is because they are the flowers



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM: Able Seaman Burger Bredenhann and Seaman Siebert Briel who laid a wreath on behalf of TS Rook. Taken on Remembrance Sunday 2020.

which grew on the battlefields after World War I ended.

This is described in the famous World War I poem "In Flanders Fields" by Lt Col John McCrae. It is also used to help those who have lost loved ones because of wars.

What does a red poppy mean?

Our red poppy is a symbol of both Remembrance and hope for a peaceful future. The poppy

is a well-known and well-established symbol, one that carries a wealth of history and meaning with it.

How long is the silence on Remembrance Day?

The two-minute silence is observed at 11 am on November 11 each year – that's the (passing of the) eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

The day itself is known as

Armistice Day – or Remembrance Day.

The Act of Remembrance

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning.

We will remember them.

When was the first Remembrance Day?

1919 – The first Remembrance commemoration was conducted in 1919 throughout Britain the Commonwealth with King George V marking Armistice Day at Buckingham Palace.

Which countries celebrate Remembrance Day?

Some of the 54 Commonwealth member states, such as



Seaman Piper Pauwels from TS Rook researched and wrote this article.

TS Rook



South Africa, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia, observe the tradition of Remembrance Day on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

Other nations observe a solemn day but at different dates. For example, ANZAC Day is observed in New Zealand on 25 April each year.



Catch Military Despatches editor Matt Tennyson every Sunday morning from 09h00 to 12h00 on the 'Sunday Breakfast Zone' on Zone Radio. Bringing you the best music of the 60s, 70s and 80s.

On Sunday morning at 09h30 you can catch the Retro Top 20 and listen to the Top 20 hit singles on the South African charts for a particular week or even a particular year.

Click here to listen live

My memories as a Cadet

Deene Collopy, Country Manager for Oil Spill Response Limited, remembers some of the annual courses he did as a young Sea Cadet.

Right through the '80s and very early '90s annual courses were run for the South African Sea Cadets by the South African Navy in Saldanha Bay and Simons-town at the end of each year.

- 1st course – Basic seamanship SAS Saldanha
- 2nd course – Advanced seamanship SAS Simonsberg
- 3rd Course – Leadership SAS Simonsberg
- 4th Course – Submarine acquaintance for cadets SAS Hugo Biermann

Cadets from all over South Africa and Namibia would travel to Cape Town by train or hired bus. If coming in on the train, those heading to Saldanha would be met by navy instructors and would board navy busses for the two hour trip to Saldanha.

Those heading to Simons-

town would do the trip to on a local commuter train or navy bus.

Courses with the South African Navy usually ran for two weeks. In July cadet bases themselves around the country ran courses as well.

The one I thoroughly enjoyed was the TS William Weller steam tug course run in July school holidays in Port Elizabeth.

The TS William Weller based in Port Elizabeth, was a former South African Ports and Harbours pilot tug and was donated to the cadets to provide cadets with a platform to give them first-hand experience of a basic understanding of navigation and engineering.

The tug was crewed by experienced and certified sea-going watchkeepers, who ensured the cadets did exactly what was needed to ensure a safe experience for them.

Cadets from all around the country made the trip to Port Elizabeth aboard a train. We were accommodated at the SAS Port Rex base in Port Elizabeth.

Below is from memory which might be incorrect as this course was more than 30 years ago.

On arrival, we were broken

into watches. Each watch would rotate daily throughout the two weeks we were on the vessel as we had a particular function to perform in 24 hours.

I was in red watch and our first task was to stoke the boiler under the direction of a qualified crewman throughout the first night to ensure the vessel had enough steam for her day's sailing the following day out in Algoa Bay.

After a tough and filthy first night, red watch remained in the port, to shower and get some rest – the watch doing the night in port stoking never went to sea the following day.

On the boats return in the afternoon, it was also the function of the watch that remained to clean out the ash from the stokehold – again a filthy job.

Following the completion of cleaning stations, the watch muster roster changed. White watch would then do the night shift stoking and red watch would carry out engine room watches and be the stokers for the day at sea.

On return to port, white watch cleaned out the ash and red watch would clean the engine room and shine up all the brass and brightwork and there was a lot of that, in a steam tugs engine room.

The following day red watch was on the bridge and steered the boat, learnt chart work, did lookout. So in short everybody did a bit of everything on



GOOD MEMORIES: The TS William Weller was a former South African Ports and Harbours pilot tug used to provide cadets with a basic understanding of navigation and engineering.

the boat and more than twice in the two weeks we spent on her.

In addition to ensuring the TS William Weller was kept clean and in top condition, cadets still also had to ensure there mess decks or sleeping quarters was also kept in tip-top condition, and everyday beds had to be made, floors or decks swept, and our sleeping areas inspected.

Our day on the William Weller would run as follows:

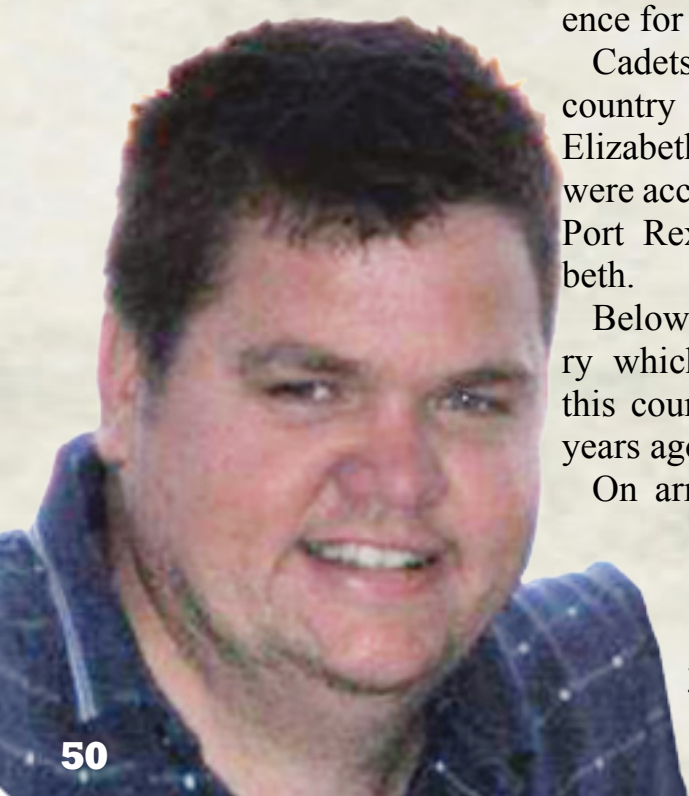
- 06h00 - Wakey Wakey
- 06h00 to 07h00 - Wash and clean
- 07h00 to 07h45 - Breakfast
- 07h45 - Muster for colours (flag raising)
- 08h00 - Colours
- 08h10 to 08h30 - Rounds (inspection)
- 08h40 - Report to TS William Weller

- 09h00 - Night shift watch turn too and return to the mess deck
- 09h00 to 10h00 - Pre sail checks
- 10h00 - Sail for the bay
- 14h15 - Previous night shit watch report to the jetty
- 14h30 - Alongside jetty
- 14h30 to 16h30 - Cleaning stations
- 16h30 - Rounds on board the vessel – watches called for the next 24hrs period
- 17h15 - Muster for sunset – flag lowering
- 17h30 - Sunset
- 18h00 - Dinner
- 19h00 - Off watch members relax
- 21h00 - Evening rounds
- 21h30 - Lights out

During our stay in Port Elizabeth, the local army unit took us to the shooting range outside

the city. Here we got to handle and conduct live firings of Uzi submachine guns, R1 and R4 assault rifles, under the guidance and watchful eye of the army shooting instructors.

Sadly the cost to operate TS William Weller became a burden and the old girl was scrapped in the early to mid-'90s.



Deene Collopy

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 becoming 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.

Infantry Equipment

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

- 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.

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



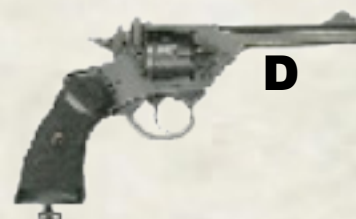
A



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



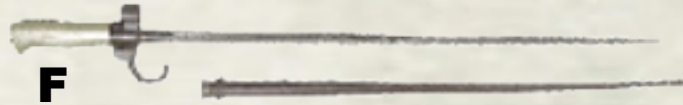
C



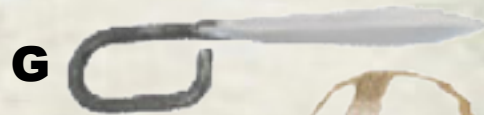
D



E



F



G



H



I



J



L



K



United States



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



J



H



I



K



L

Arthur D. Simons

Arthur D. "Bull" Simons (June 28, 1918 – May 21, 1979) was a United States Army Special Forces colonel best known for leading the Sơn Tây raid, an attempted rescue of U.S. prisoners of war during the Vietnam War from a North Vietnamese prison at Sơn Tây.

Although he served for 30 years as an officer, Arthur D. Simons never rose above the rank of colonel. He was deemed by the powers that be as someone that did not fit the 'career mould'.

Yet this was something that never worried Simons. All he ever wanted to be was a soldier - and a good soldier. To that end he was very successful.

An Air Force officer who helped plan and execute the Sơn Tây raid wrote of Simons: "He was not out to make a name for himself; he was there to do his duty. He did not attend all the professional advancement schools and did not cultivate any sponsors for his career. He just answered every call because it was the right thing for an American soldier to do."

Early Life

Arthur David Simons was born in New York City, moving to Missouri in his youth. His family was Jewish.[2] He attended the University of Missouri-Columbia and earned his degree with a major in journalism. In 1937 he entered the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC).

After graduation, he married his girlfriend, Lucille, eventually having two boys,

Bruce and Harry. He remained married to Lucille for 37 years until her death on March 16, 1978.

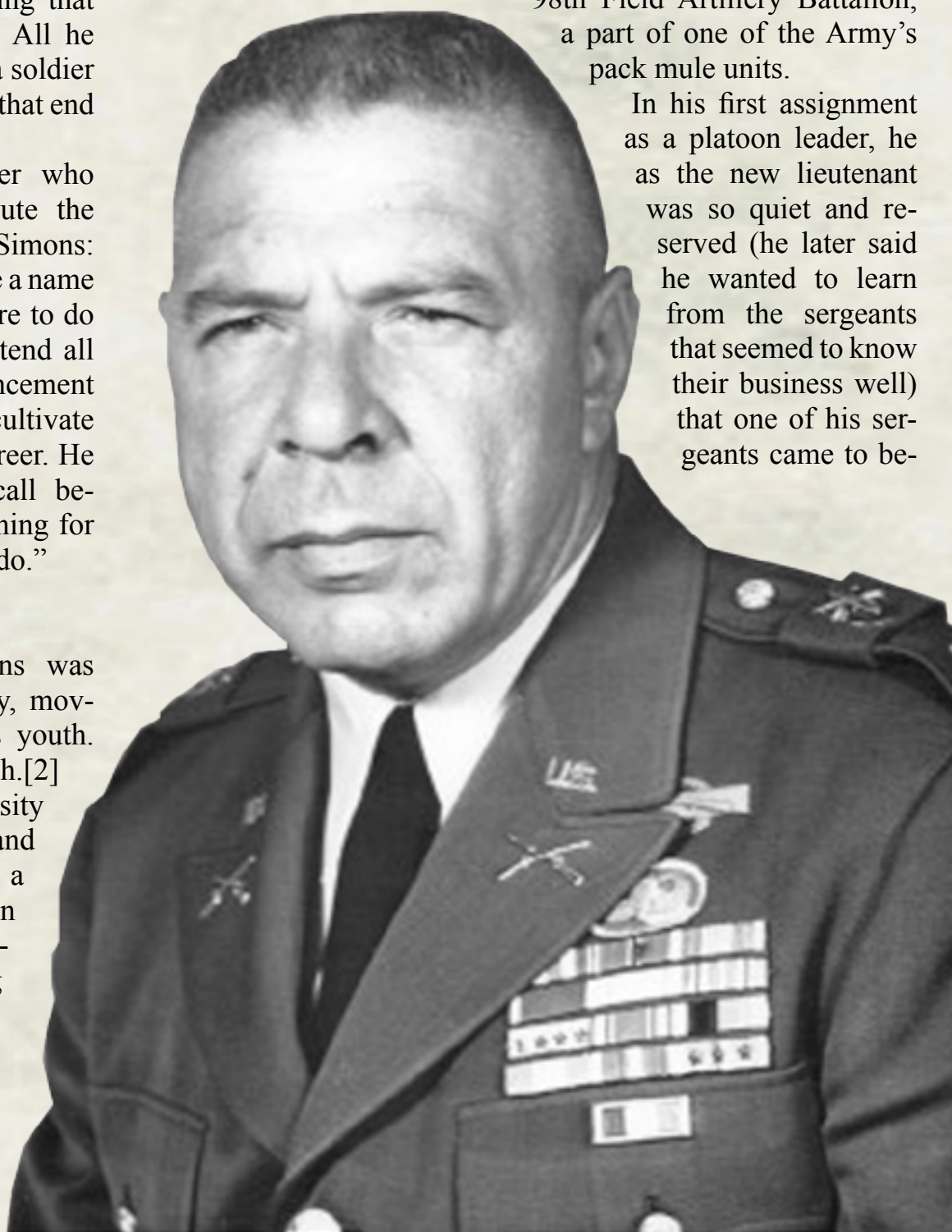
With the threat of war on the horizon, Simons decided to en-

list in the United States Army.

World War II

Simons was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Field Artillery Branch in 1941, and was initially assigned to the 98th Field Artillery Battalion, a part of one of the Army's pack mule units.

In his first assignment as a platoon leader, he as the new lieutenant was so quiet and reserved (he later said he wanted to learn from the sergeants that seemed to know their business well) that one of his sergeants came to be-



lieve that Simons was a mute.

The unit was dispatched to Australia, but immediately diverted to New Guinea in the early stages of World War II, and Simons thrived in the harsh jungle environment.

He was soon promoted to the rank of Captain and served as a Battery Commander in the battalion from 1942 to 1943. The mules did not prove suitable in the jungle, and the unit was dissolved in 1943.

Simons took his battery to the newly forming Ranger Battalion that would come out of the dissolution of his old unit. He soon became the commander of "B" (Baker) Company and later the battalion Executive Officer (XO) of the 6th Ranger Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Henry Mucci.

Simons participated in several hazardous landings with the Rangers in the Pacific. He led a team of engineers and Navy personnel tasked to de-mine the Leyte channel before the invasion of the island began in earnest.

On Luzon in the Philippines, he participated in the Raid at Cabanatuan that rescued approximately 500 POWs who were mostly survivors of the Bataan Death March. For his actions in the raid he was awarded the Silver Star.

He quickly rose to the rank of Major and continued to prove his worth as a combat leader. At the conclusion of World War II, Major Simons left the active Army for five years.

Post World War II

Simons was recalled to active duty in 1951 to serve as an infantry instructor and Ranger trainer in the Amphibious and Jungle Training camp at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.

Other assignments included a year as a Public Information Officer (PIO, now "Public Affairs Officer" or PAO) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, a job that he despised: He held a low opinion of the media, one that would prove itself in later years and assignments.

"The press hasn't done very well for the American soldier," he would later remark.

Simons also completed tours with the Military Assistance Advisory Group, Turkey and XVIII Airborne Corps before joining the 7th Special Forces Group in 1958.

In 1960 he served as Deputy Commander/Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Special Warfare Centre. Promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1961, he commanded the 107-man Operation White Star Mobile Training Team in Laos from 1961 to 1962 and was the first commander of the 8th Special Forces Group, Panama from 1962 to 1964.

From Panama, he was assigned to the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam - Studies and Observations Group (MACV-SOG), which conducted numerous behind-the-line missions in Southeast Asia.

Simons was unconventional, something that was often frowned upon by his superiors.

Yet those that served under him respected him and often held him in awe. They gave him the nickname 'Bull'.

Simons' nickname 'Bull' was taken from a physical training game called the "bull pit", where one soldier climbs down into a pit in the ground, and other soldiers engage in trying to pull the first soldier from the pit. Simons' large physical stature and great strength - even in his fifties, he did 250 push-ups every day - made him a formidable challenge to remove from the pit, and the name "Bull" stuck.

Operation Ivory Coast

In 1970, Simons was hand-picked to command the army component of Operation Ivory Coast, a joint special operations effort to rescue American prisoners of war from the Sơn Tây prison in North Vietnam.

While it did not rescue any prisoners (the camp was still used as a military installation but the prisoners had been removed a few months earlier in violation of the Geneva Convention), the otherwise highly-successful operation did force North Vietnam to consolidate all of the prisoners into a few central compounds in Hanoi, resulting in a boost in the prisoners' morale and improved treatment. They were also heartened to know that a rescue effort had been attempted.

The North Vietnamese were shaken at the ease in which Americans could invade so close to their capital, and no American lives were lost in the



OPERATION IVORY COAST: Special Forces troops that carried out the raid to rescue American prisoners from the Son Tây prison in North Vietnam. The raid was led by Bull Simons.

operation (and only one minor injury, a sprained ankle).

For his outstanding leadership, Simons was decorated by President Richard Nixon with the Distinguished Service Cross at the White House on November 25, 1970.

Retirement and death

Colonel Simons retired from the Army on July 31, 1971, and moved with his wife to a small farm in Red Bay, Florida, engaging in livestock farming and doing amateur gunsmithing on the side.

In late 1978, Simons was contacted by Texas businessman Ross Perot (who in 1992 would campaign to become President of the United States), who requested his direction and leadership to help free two employ-

ees of Electronic Data Systems who had been arrested shortly before the Iranian Revolution.

Simons organized a rescue mission and ultimately freed the two men from the Iranian prison. All involved returned safely to the United States. The rescue operation was described in *On Wings of Eagles* (1983) written by British author Ken Follett.

Three months after the rescue mission, while on vacation in Vail, Colorado, Simons suffered a heart attack. He was transported to Dallas, Texas by a private jet chartered by Perot.

He died one month later of persistent heart failure at the age of 60. He is interred in the Barrancas National Cemetery in Pensacola, Florida.

Legacy

Colonel Simons' great contributions to the army and the Special Forces community are honoured with a 3.7 metre tall statue that stands in front of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Centre and School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Centre and School presents an annual award called the "Bull' Simons Award" to an outstanding special forces operator. Colonel Simons was also inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame.

Ross Perot and others founded a scholarship initiative for the children of the casualties from the Iranian hostage rescue attempt, and named the fund in honour of Colonel Simons' memory.

What goes where?

The South African Sea Cadets is mindful of the vital importance that new appointments need to reflect the guiding precepts of youth and experience. By Captain W M Bartie, Secretary to the Board, South African Sea Cadets.

It was three years and nine months ago that I got this crazy idea to start an online magazine for military enthusiasts. The result was Military Despatches.

Since that first issue back in July 2017, the readership of the magazine has grown each month.

One of my major concerns every month is what do I actually put in the magazine each month. I try and include content that I think our readers will find interesting. And I'm also grateful that I have a few people that write regular articles for the magazine.

Over the three years and nine months I have also had a quite a few people that have sent through articles. Once again, I am really grateful.

In my editorial column this month I mentioned that someone had asked me why the Sea Cadets received quite a lot of coverage in Military Despatches. A good question.

The very first article I did regarding the Sea Cadets was back in Issue Three of the magazine in September 2017. And I have done regular articles since then.

Is it perhaps because I was once a Naval Cadet or Sea Cadet? Maybe it's because I was once a member of the South African Navy. No on both counts.

I was once a Boy Scout and during my entire military career I served in the South African

Army.

The reason is because of one person - Lt Commander Glenn von Zyl. He is the person that bothers to send articles through to me, and so I will publish them.

He will always send me an e-mail thanking me for publishing the article. This is something, I might add, that the actual Sea Cadet organisation has never done. They have never sent any official acknowledgement, nor have they ever invited Military Despatches to any of their functions.

I also feature other organisations each month. One of them is Bush War Books. Every month I give them a free advertisement. They have always acknowledged this and in return they promote Military Despatches on their website.

Other organisations I promote are the Memorable Order of Tin Hats (MOTH), the South African Signals Association, the SA Legion, and Nongqai, the unofficial police newsletter for veterans of the former South African Police Force and for those interested in Police History. All of them in turn promote Military Despatches.

And while on the subject, someone I am extremely grateful to is Lt. Colonel (Ret) Robbie Roberts of the South African Signals Association. He does such a lot to promote Military Despatches

I know that there are plenty of

other veterans organisations out there, many of them that also produce a monthly magazine or newsletter. Many of them are well produced and really interesting. Others have their own websites.

I would be only too happy to let our readers know about these publications and websites and place a link to them. I don't expect anything in return for this, but a bit of *quid pro quo* would be nice.

Remember, I am not in competition with anyone. Nor am I trying to steal readers away from your publication. Quite the opposite in fact. What I would really like to do is make people aware of your organisation or publication and get them to at least take a look at it.

Likewise if you have an organisation that is holding a fundraising campaign or a special event, I will be only too happy to let our readers know about it.

If you have an article that you think would be of interest to military veterans or enthusiasts, I will be only too happy to publish it.

Most of us read publications such as Military Despatches either because we are military veterans or because we are military enthusiasts. So let's all try and support each other.

The Lanc

Avro Lancaster Bomber

It first saw service with RAF Bomber Command in 1942 and as the strategic bombing offensive over Europe gathered momentum, it was the main aircraft for the night-time bombing campaigns that followed. The Avro Lancaster heavy bomber was forged in battle.

World War I had shown that not only were bombers necessary, they were becoming vital.

In the 1930s, the Royal Air Force (RAF) was primarily interested in twin-engine bombers. These designs put limited demands on engine production and maintenance, both of which were already stretched with the introduction of so many new types into service.

Power limitations were so serious that the British invested heavily in the development of huge engines in the 2,000 horsepower (1,500 kW) class in order to improve performance.

During the late 1930s, none of these was ready for production.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union were pursuing the development of bombers powered by arrangements of four smaller engines, the results of these projects proved to possess favourable characteristics such as excellent range and fair lifting capacity.

Accordingly, in 1936, the RAF also decided to investigate the feasibility of the four-engined bomber.

The origins of the Lancaster stem from a twin-engined bomber design that had been submitted in response to Specification P.13/36, which had been formulated and released by the British Air Ministry during the mid 1930s.

This specification had sought a new generation of twin-engined medium bombers suitable for “worldwide use”.

Further requirements of the specification included the use of a mid-mounted cantilever monoplane wing, all-metal construction; the adoption of the in-development Rolls-Royce Vulture engine was also encouraged”.

Various candidates were submitted for the specification by such manufacturers as Fairey, Boulton Paul, Handley Page and Shorts; all submissions were designed around two-engine configurations, using the Rolls-Royce Vulture, Napier Sabre, Fairey P.24 or Bristol Hercules engines.

In response, British aviation company Avro decided to submit their own design, designat-

ed the Avro 679, to meet Specification P.13/36.

In February 1937, following consideration of the designs by the Air Ministry, Avro’s design submission was selected along with Handley Page’s bid being chosen as “second string”.

Accordingly, during April 1937, a pair of prototypes of both designs were ordered. The resulting aircraft, named the Manchester, entered RAF service in November 1940.

Although considered to be a capable aircraft in most areas, the Manchester proved to be underpowered and troubled by the unreliability of the Vulture engine. As a result, only 200 Manchesters were constructed and the type was quickly withdrawn from service in 1942.

Enter the Lancaster

As early as mid-1940, Avro’s chief design engineer, Roy Chadwick, had been working on an improved Manchester design.

This redesign was powered by four of the more reliable but less powerful Rolls-Royce Mer-

lin engines, specifically adopted the form of the Merlin “Power Plant” installations which had been developed by Rolls-Royce for the earlier Beaufighter II, installed on a larger wing.

Initially, the improved aircraft was designated as the Type 683 Manchester III, it was subsequently renamed as the Lancaster. The prototype aircraft, serial number BT308, was assembled by the Avro experimental flight department at Ringway Airport, Manchester; the prototype was constructed from a production Manchester airframe, which was combined with a new centre section designed to accommodate the additional engines.

On 9 January 1941, test pilot H. A. “Sam” Brown performed the prototype’s maiden flight at RAF Ringway, Cheshire.

Flight testing of the new aircraft quickly proved it to be a substantial improvement on its predecessor, aviation author Jim Winchester referred to the Lancaster as being “one of the few war-



planes in history to be 'right' from the start."

The first prototype was initially outfitted with a three-finned tail layout, a result of the design having been adapted from the Manchester I; this was quickly revised on the second prototype, DG595, and subsequent production Lancasters to the familiar larger elliptical twin-finned tail unit that had also been adopted for the later-built Manchesters, discarding the stubby central third tail fin.

The adoption of the enlarged twin fins not only increased stability but also provided for a greater field of fire from the dorsal gun turret position. The second prototype was also outfitted with more powerful Merlin XX engine.

Based upon its performance, a decision was taken early on to re-equip twin-engine bomber squadrons with the Lancaster as quickly as possible. In October 1941, the first production Lancaster, L7527, powered by Merlin XX engines, conducted its first flight.

Overview

The typical aircraft was powered by an arrangement of four wing-mounted Rolls-Royce Merlin piston engines, each of which drove a set of four metre diameter de Havilland Hydromatic three-bladed propellers.

While not optimal, the Lancaster was capable of flying the return journey home on only two operational engines, along with very limited distances on a single running engine.

It is claimed that experienced Lancaster pilots were often able



HOT SEAT: The cockpit of a Lancaster bomber. The pilot's seat is on the left.

to out-maneuver Luftwaffe fighters. It possessed largely favourable flying characteristics.

Aviation authors Brian Goulding and M. Garbett described the Lancaster as being: "a near-perfect flying machine, fast for its size and very smooth...such a delightfully easy aeroplane to fly...there are instances of Lancasters having been looped and barrel-rolled, both intentionally and otherwise".

The Lancaster benefited from a structure that possessed considerable strength and durability, which had been intentionally designed to maximise structural strength-per-weight; this resulted in the Lancaster being capable of withstanding some levels of damage resulting from attacks by hostile interceptor aircraft and ground-based anti-aircraft batteries.

Compared with other contemporary aircraft, the Lancaster was not an easy aircraft to escape from; in a Halifax, 25 per cent of downed aircrew bailed out successfully, and in Ameri-

can bombers (albeit in daylight raids) it was as high as a 50 per cent success rate while only 15 per cent of the Lancaster crew were able to bail out.

The Lancaster was equipped with a retractable main undercarriage and fixed tail wheel; the hydraulically-actuated main landing gear raised rearwards into recesses within the inner engine nacelles.

The distinctive tail unit of the aircraft was outfitted with a large twin elliptical fins and rudder arrangement.

Crew

The standard crew for a Lancaster consisted of seven men, stationed in various positions in the fuselage.

Starting at the nose, the bomb aimer had two positions to man. His primary location was lying prone on the floor of the nose of the aircraft, with access to the bombsight controls facing forward, with the bombsight computer on his left and bomb release selectors on the right. He also used his view out of the

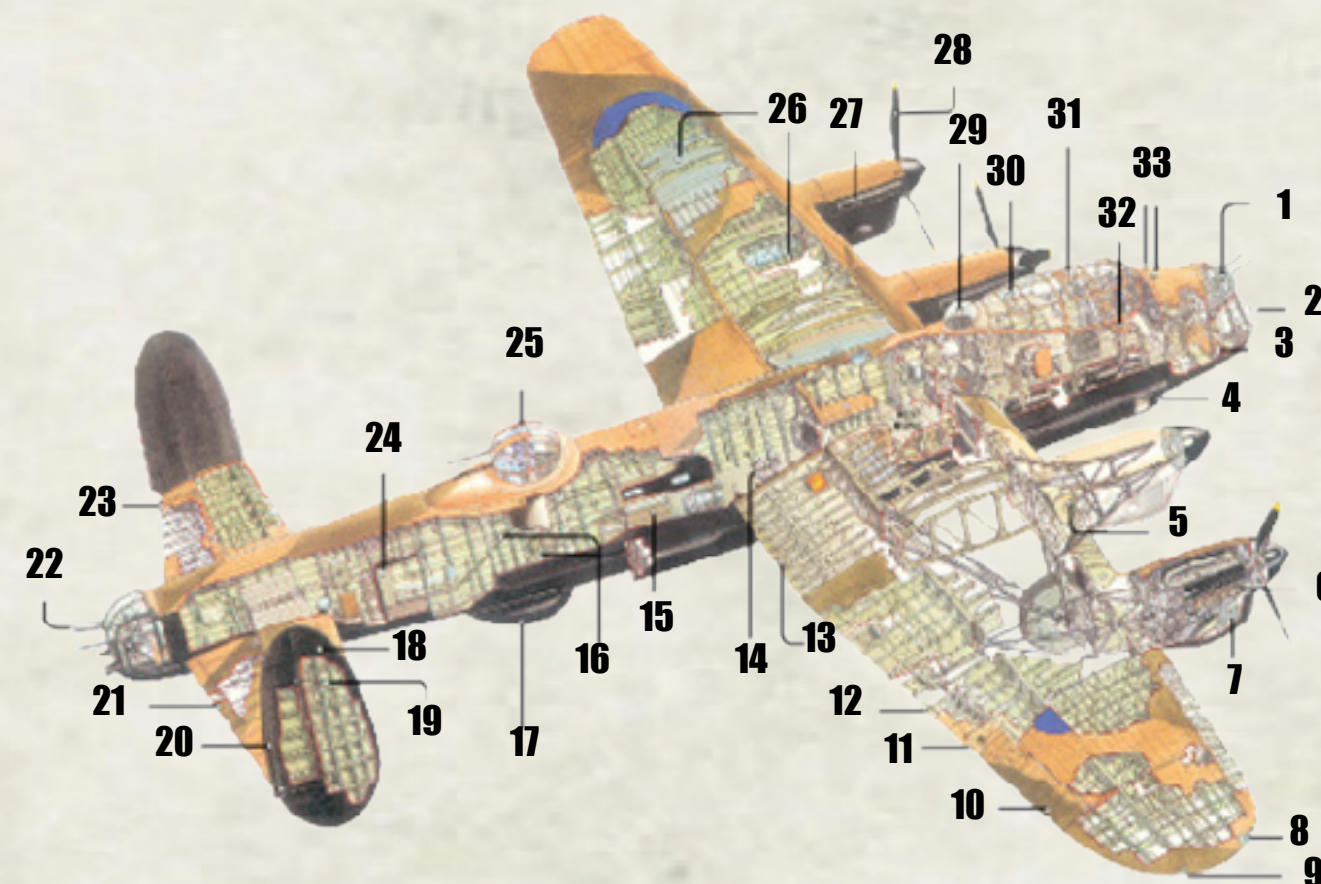
Avro Lancaster B Mk 1

1. FN5 turret with two .303 Vickers machine guns.
2. Nose blister.
3. Bomb aimer's chest support.
4. Front of bomb bay doors.
5. Oil tank.
6. Rolls-Royce Merlin XX engine.
7. Oil cooler radiator.
8. Right navigation light (green).
9. Right formation light (green).
10. Aileron.
11. Aileron balance tab.
12. Aileron trim tab.
13. Flap.
14. Flap operating hydraulic jack.
15. Ammunition boxes.
16. Cartridge belt to rear turret.
17. H25 (radar bombing) ventral antenna fairing.
18. Vertical stabilizer.
19. Rudder balance weight.
20. Rudder trim tab.
21. Elevator trim tab.
22. FN50 dorsal turret with four .303 machine guns.
23. Elevator.
24. Door and rear gunner's parachute exit.
25. FN20 turret with two .303 Vickers machine guns.
26. Wing fuel tanks.
27. Flame damper.
28. Three-bladed DeHavilland constant speed propeller.
29. Astrodome.
30. AD/F loop.
31. Cockpit canopy emergency escape hatch.
32. Pilot's seat.
33. Windscreen sprays.

large transparent perspex nose cupola to assist the navigator with map reading.

On the roof of the bomb bay the pilot and flight engineer sat side by side under the expansive canopy, with the pilot sitting on the left on a raised portion of the floor (almost all British bombers, and most German bombers, had only a single pilot seat as opposed to American practice of carrying two pilots, or at least having controls for two pilots installed).

The flight engineer sat on a collapsible seat (known as a "second dicky seat") to the pilot's right, with the fuel selectors and gauges on a panel behind him and to his right. The pilot and other crew members could use the panel above the cockpit as an auxiliary emergency exit while the mid-upper gunner was expected to use the rear entrance door to leave the aircraft.



The tail gunner escaped by rotating his turret to the rear, opening the door in the back of the turret, passing into the fuselage, and clipping on a parachute that was hung on the side wall. He could then exit through the rear entrance door.

Behind the pilot and flight engineer, and behind a curtain fitted to allow him to use light to work, sat the navigator. His position faced to port with a chart table in front of him. An instrument panel showing the airspeed, altitude, and other information required for navigation was mounted on the side of the fuselage above the chart table. The wireless operator's radios were mounted on the left-hand end of the chart table, facing the rear of the aircraft. Behind these and facing forwards the wireless operator sat on a seat at the front of the main spar. On his left was a window, and above him was the astrodome, used for visual signalling and by the navigator for celestial navigation.

Behind the wireless operator were the two spars for the wing, which created a major obstacle for crew members moving down the fuselage even on the ground. On reaching the end of the bomb bay the floor dropped down to the bottom of the fuselage, and the mid-upper gunner's turret was reached. His position allowed a 360° view over the top of the aircraft, with two Browning .303 Mark IIs to protect the aircraft from above and to the side. The mid-upper gunner sat on a rectangle of canvas that was slung beneath the turret and would stay in position throughout the flight.

Ammunition for the turret was 1,000 rounds per gun.

To the rear of the turret was the side crew door, on the starboard side of the fuselage. This was the main entrance to the aircraft, and also could be used as an emergency exit.

The Elsan chemical toilet, a type of aircraft lavatory, was located near the spars for the tailplane. At the extreme tail-end of the fuselage, the rear gunner sat in his exposed position in the tail turret, which was entered through a small hatch in the rear of the fuselage. Depending on the size of the rear gunner, the area was so cramped that the gunner would often hang his parachute on a hook inside the fuselage, near the turret doors. Neither the mid-upper nor the rear gunner's position was heated, and the gunners had to wear electrically heated suits to prevent hypothermia and frostbite.

Hard hitting

An important feature of the Lancaster was its unobstructed 10 metre long bomb bay. At first, the heaviest bomb carried was the 1,800 kg high capacity HC "Cookie". Bulged doors were added to 30 per cent of B Is to allow the aircraft to carry 3,600 kg and later 5,400 kg "Cookies".

The Lancaster also carried a variety of smaller weapons, including the Small Bomb Container (SBC) which held 236 x 1.8 kg or 24 x 14 kg incendiary and explosive incendiary bomblets; 500 x 230 kg and 450 kg General Purpose High Explosive (GP/HE) bombs (these came in a variety of designs); 840 kg parachute deployed

magnetic or acoustic mines, or 910 kg armour-piercing (AP) bombs; 110 kg Semi-Armour-Piercing (SAP) bombs, used up to 1942 against submarines; post 1942: 110 kg or 230 kg anti-submarine depth charges.

In 1943, 617 Squadron was created to carry out Operation Chastise, the raid against the Ruhr dams. This unit was equipped with B.III (Specials), officially designated the "Type 464 (Provisioning)", modified to carry the 9,250 lb (4,200 kg) "Upkeep" bouncing bomb.

Towards the end of the war, attacking special and hardened targets, other variants of B.I Specials were modified to carry the 6.4 metre long 5,400 kg "Tallboy" or 7.8 metre long 10,000 kg "Grand Slam" "earthquake" bombs. Aircraft intended to carry the "Grand Slam" required extensive modifications.

Proud history

The Lancaster conducted a total of 156,000 sorties and dropped 618,378 tonnes of bombs between 1942 and 1945.

Only 35 Lancasters completed more than 100 successful operations each, and 3,249 were lost in action. The most successful survivor completed 139 operations, and was ultimately retired from service and scrapped in 1947.

From 1942 onwards, the Lancaster became the mainstay of the British heavy bomber fleet; by the end of the war in Europe, there were roughly 50 squadrons equipped with the Lancaster, the majority of these being the Lancaster B.I model.

From its entry into service,

the original model of the Lancaster was operated in almost every major bombing raid of the European conflict.

Adolf Galland (commander of the Luftwaffe fighters) considered the Lancaster to be "the best night bomber of the war", as did his adversary, Arthur "Bomber" Harris, who referred to it as the RAF Bomber Command's "shining sword".

Goulding and Garbett wrote that: "The achievements of the Lancaster and the men who flew it have been widely acclaimed, and the aircraft has been described as the greatest single factor in winning WWII, an exaggeration but a pardonable one".

Throughout July 1943, large numbers of Lancasters participated in the devastating round-the-clock raids on the city of Hamburg during Air Chief Marshal Harris's "Operation Gomorrah".

A particularly famous mission performed by the Lancaster was the mission flown 16-17 May 1943, codenamed Operation Chastise, to destroy the dams of the Ruhr Valley. The operation was carried out by 617 Squadron in modified Mk IIIs carrying special drum-shaped bouncing bombs, which had been designed by British engineer Barnes Wallis. The story of the operation was later made into a film, *The Dam Busters*.

During the latter half of 1944, a series of high-profile bombing missions were performed by the Lancaster against the German battleship Tirpitz.

Executed by Nos. 617 and 9 Sqs, a combination of Lancas-

ter B.I and B.III bombers were armed with 5,400 kg 'Tallboy' bombs and were adapted with enlarged bomb bay doors in order to accommodate their special payloads and additional fuel tanks to provide the necessary endurance.

A total of three attacks, individually codenamed Operation Paravane, Operation Obviate and Operation Catechism, were conducted against Tirpitz, which was anchored in a fjord in Occupied Norway.

The first of these attacks disabled the vessel while the third mission was responsible for sinking the ship. As a result of actions such as Operation Chastise and the sinking of Tirpitz, No. 617 Sq was perhaps the most famous of all Lancaster squadrons.

During early 1945, a total of 33 Lancaster B Is were modified so that they could deploy the 10,000 kg Grand Slam bomb; the Grand Slam, considered to be the ultimate conventional bomb to be used during the conflict, was so heavy that the bomb and the Lancaster itself weighed roughly the same.

On 13 March 1945, the first operational use of the Grand Slam was performed by a Lancaster of No. 617 Sqn against the Schildesche viaduct at Bielefeld, North Rhine-Westphalia. Amongst the final war-time operations performed by the Lancaster was the destruction of Eagle's Nest, the extensive holiday home complex used by German leader Adolf Hitler.

The Avro Lancaster bomber was an aircraft forged in battle.

Victoria Cross

Many Lancaster crew members were highly decorated for actions while flying the aircraft.

Ten Lancaster pilots or crew members were awarded the Victoria Cross.

These included Wing Commander Guy Gibson, Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, and Captain (acting Major) Edwin Swales.

Specifications

- **Crew:** Seven - pilot, flight engineer, navigator, bomb aimer/nose gunner, wireless operator, mid-upper and rear gunners
- **Length:** 21.11 m
- **Wingspan:** 31.09 m
- **Height:** 6.25 m
- **Empty weight:** 16,738 kg
- **Loaded weight:** 24,948 kg
- **Powerplant:** 4 × Rolls-Royce Merlin XX liquid-cooled V12 engines, 1,280 hp (954 kW) each
- **Maximum speed:** 454 km/h at 29,000 kg) and 4,000 m)altitude
- **Cruise speed:** 322 km/h
- **Range:** 4,073 km
- **Service ceiling:** 6,500 m at 29,000 kg
- **Guns:** Two 0.303 inch (7.62 mm) Browning Mark II machine guns in nose turret, two 0.303 inch Browning Mark II machine guns in upper turret, and four 0.303 inch Browning Mark II machine guns in the rear turret.
- **Bombs:** Maximum normal bomb load of 6,400 kg of bombs or single 10,000 kg Grand Slam (with modifications to bomb bay)

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

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

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

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

10. Battle of Shanghai

(August 13 – November 26, 1937)

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

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

In the end, Shanghai fell, and China lost a significant portion of its best troops, while also failing to elicit any international intervention.

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

Casualties: 388,000

9. Siege of Changchun

(May 23 – October 19, 1948)

The Siege of Changchun was a siege operation launched by the People's Liberation Army during the Chinese Civil War against the city of Changchun, defended by the Nationalist forces.

The Siege of Changchun was part of the Liaoshen Campaign, and the fall of Changchun marked the end of its first stage.

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

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

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

8. Battle of Wuhan

(June 11 – October 27, 1938)

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

Over one million Chinese soldiers were defending against a force of 350,000 Japanese. Bombings, artillery strikes, and chemical weapons attacks weakened the Chinese defenses enough for the Japanese to capture Wuhan after 4 months of fighting.

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

Casualties: 540,000



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

7. Battle of Berlin

(April 16 – May 2, 1945)

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

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

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

Casualties: 681,000

6. First Battle of Kiev

(August 23 – September 26, 1941)

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

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

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

Casualties: 829,000

5. Battle of Verdun

(February 21 – December 18, 1916)

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

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

The German strategy in 1916 was to inflict mass casualties

on the French, a goal achieved against the Russians from 1914 to 1915, to weaken the French Army to the point of collapse.

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

Casualties: 976,000

4. Battle of the Somme

(July 1 – November 18, 1916)

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

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

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

Casualties: 1,000,000

3. Battle of Baghdad

(January 29 – February 10, 1258)

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

The Mongols were under the command of Hulagu Khan (or Hulegu Khan), brother of the khagan Möngke Khan, who

7 Deadliest Wars

1. World War II

1939 to 1945

Location. Worldwide

Between 40,000,000 and 72,000,000 deaths

2. Taiping Rebellion

1851 to 1864

Location. China

Between 20,000,000 and 100,000,000 deaths

3. World War I

1914 to 1918

Location. Worldwide

Between 15,000,000 and 65,000,000 deaths

4. Mongol Conquests

Location. Asia, Eastern Europe, Middle East

Between 30,000,000 and 60,000,000 deaths

5. An Lushan Rebellion

755 to 763

Location. China

Between 13,000,000 and 36,000,000 deaths

6. Qing dynasty conquest of the Ming Dynasty

1616 to 1662

Location. China

25,000,000 deaths

7. Conquests of Timur-e-Lang

1369 to 1405

Location. Middle East, India, Central Asia, Russia

Between 15,000,000 and 20,000,000 deaths



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

had intended to further extend his rule into Mesopotamia but not to directly overthrow the Caliphate. Möngke, however, had instructed Hulagu to attack Baghdad if the Caliph Al-Musta'sim refused Mongol demands for his continued submission to the khagan and the payment of tribute in the form of military support for Mongol forces in Iran.

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

Casualties: 1,000,000

2. Battle of Stalingrad

(August 23, 1942 – February 2, 1943)

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

It was marked by fierce close quarters combat, snipers, house to house combat, and assaults

on civilians by air raids.

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

The Germans did have a chance to break out from Stalingrad, but Hitler ordered that they stand their ground and “Fight to the last man and bullet.”

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

Casualties: 1,857,000

1. Siege of Leningrad

(September 8, 1941 – January 27, 1944)

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

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

Casualties: 4,016,000

If you're lucky enough to be Irish, you're lucky enough

Normally on the closest Friday to Saint Patrick's Day I hold a little get together at one of the Moth Shellholes to celebrate. I also invite readers of Military Despatches to come along and share in the fun.

This year, due to COVID-19, we will be unable to hold this event. So in lieu of this I have decided to do a short article highlighting some of the things said by or about the Irish.

It's not that the Irish are cynical. It's rather that they have a wonderful lack of respect for everything and everybody.

Brendan Behan

This is one race of people for whom psychoanalysis is of no use whatsoever.

Sigmund Freud

If you are lucky enough to be Irish, you're lucky enough.

Grace Boyle

In order to find his equal, an Irishman is forced to talk to God.

Stephen Braveheart

When Irish eyes are smiling, watch your step - they're up to something.

Gerald Kersh

Only Irish coffee provides in a single glass all four essential food groups: alcohol, caffeine, sugar, and fat.

Alex Levine

The Irish don't know what they want and are prepared to fight to the death to get it.

Sidney Littlewood

The Irish ignore anything they can't drink or punch.

Proverb

Irish Alzheimer's: you forget everything except the grudges

Judy Collins

I spent ninety percent of my money on good times, women and Irish whiskey. I wasted the other ten percent.

George Best, Irish footballer

Many a time a man's mouth broke his nose.

Irish proverb

The glass can be half empty or half full ... as long as there's whiskey in it.

Irish proverb

I'm Irish. Sarcasm is part of my charm.

Anonymous

And in closing, may I leave you with this old Irish blessing.

“May the roads you walk be straight, with never an uphill. May the sun shine down upon your face. May a gentle breeze blow at your back. And may you be in heaven for at least five minutes before the devil finds out that you're dead.”

You know you're Irish when...

- You swear very well.
- At least one of your cousins holds political office.
- You think you sing very well.
- You have no idea how to make a long story short.
- There isn't a huge difference between losing your temper and killing someone.
- Much of your food was boiled.
- You spent a good portion of your childhood kneeling.
- You are strangely poetic after a few beers.
- You are therefore poetic a lot.
- You will be punched for no good reason - a lot.
- Some punches directed at you are legacies from past generations.
- Someone in your family is incredibly cheap. It is more than likely you.
- You may not know the words, but that doesn't stop you from singing.
- You can't wait for the other guy to stop talking so you can start talking.
- “Irish Stew” is the euphemism for “boiled leftover from the fridge”.
- These wasn't a huge difference between your last party and your last wake.

WINSPMBT!

*War is hell. Especially if **Matt O'Brien** has anything to do with it as he gets to grips with **Steel Panthers: Main Battle Tank**.*

In the mid-1990s a game was released by the name of Steel Panthers. It was a DOS-based game that was set during World War II. And damn, it was a good game. Later they released Steel Panthers II.

Steel Panthers was named the best war game of 1995 by Computer Gaming World, PC Gamer US and Computer Games Strategy Plus. The editors of PC Gamer US called it "easily one of the best tactical simulations ever developed for the PC." Steel Panthers and Steel Panthers II were named, collectively, the 62nd best computer game ever by PC Gamer UK in 1997.

A decade later the rights to the series was later acquired by Matrix Games/Shrapnel Games. They later released Steel Panthers: Main Battle Tank for Windows. The game was set in the postwar years from 1946 to 2020.

It's a turn-based strategy simulation that you can play in three different modes. You can play either in single player (where you go up against the computer AI) or in multi-player where you can challenge an opponent.

The first mode is Scenario Mode. Here you are presented with real life or hypothetical scenarios.

The real life scenarios, which start with the Korean War in 1950, will present you with a

battle that really took place. The map will represent the actual terrain, the date of the battle, and the participants.

You select which side you want to be and you are given a briefing as to the tactical situation and what your objectives are.

All of the troops and equipment are exactly the same as during the real event. You are then given a number of turns to complete your objective.

At the end you can see what the real outcome was, as well as see if your tactics would have changed history.

There are also a number of hypothetical situations and battles. For example, what if Russia had invaded West Germany and the Cold War had turned hot. Would NATO have coped?

The game comes with no fewer than 272 scenarios. The second mode is Campaign Mode. These are a number of scenarios linked together and there are 12 different campaigns to choose from.

The last mode is Battle Mode. Here you can set up battles of your own. You choose the time (season and year), the terrain, and the participants. You also get to choose the parameters of a mission.

In Battle Mode there are no fewer than 92 countries you can choose from.

The troops and equipment available to a country will de-

pend on the year that you have chosen. Let's say you want to fight a battle using the United States Marine Corps in 1968. You will be able to select all of the troops types, weapons, vehicles, armour, aircraft, helicopters, artillery, etc. that was available to the USMC in 1968.

If, for example, you choose South Africa before April 1994 then they will be represented by the old South African flag and will be the SADF. Choose them after April 1994 and the new South African flag is shown and they are now the SANDF.

The graphics in the game are nothing to write home about. It is a top-down view and the map is divided up into hexagons. What makes this game special is the attention to realism.

The size of an infantry squad, for example, will be exactly the same size as that army used at a particular period. They will also be armed with the same individual and squad weapons that they would have actually used. They will also carry the same amount of ammunition, so it's quite possible for them to run out of ammo until they are resupplied.

The training, leadership and morale is also important, as it is in real life. A poorly trained unit will be more apt to surrender or retreat than an elite unit.

Vehicles, equipment, aircraft and helicopters are also realistic. Tanks, for example, are not



all the same. Each tank will be based on real life statistics. Various factors will be taken into account in the game.

What is the thickness of the armour at various points on the tank? What type of armour is it. What main gun does the tank use, and what is its range? Does it use HE, AP, SABOT, HEAT rounds, or combination? How many rounds does it carry. What is the rate of fire? What fire control system does it use? How many machine guns does the tank have, what calibre are they, and how many rounds do they hold? How many crew does the tank take? What is the speed of the tank? All of these factors are taken into consideration.

Vehicles and armour can become bogged down in muddy or swampy terrain. A hit could immobilise a tank, making it an easy target.

Artillery can play a vital role in the battles. These can include long-range artillery, self-propelled guns, anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft guns, mortars, and so

on. Sometimes you will have off-map artillery support.

Artillery can also depend on whether you firing a bombardment at an area, or whether you have forward observers guiding the fire.

The game also comes with a map editor which is brilliant. Using this you can set up your own scenarios. You can choose the exact terrain that you want, set the date and year, choose what units, vehicles, aircraft and equipment you want for all sides. You can also select how many turns the scenario should last, what the objectives are and any other parameters you choose.

You can put in buildings, bunkers, trenches, sandbags, barbed wire, tank traps, mine fields and whatever else you decide. Once you've set up a scenario you can then save it or even upload it online.

There are thousands of scenarios already online. And the good news is that many of these deal with Southern Africa, including scenarios set in Rho-

desia, Angola and South West Africa. You can find scenarios for Ops Savannah, Smokeshell, Protea, Cassinga, Cuito Cuana-vale and many more online.

You can even take paratroopers, load them into a Dakota or C-130, and then drop them onto the map.

Steel Panthers: MBT is one of the most realistic turn-based strategy games ever created.

Even if you've never played a computer game before, if you're interested in military history or tactics, you've got to try this game.

The good thing is that it will run on just about any computer. You don't need a high-end computer with tons of memory and a super graphics card to run it. It will even run on your laptop.

And the best of all is that you can get Steel Panthers: Main Battle Tank free of charge.

Just go to this link [here](#) and download it from Shrapnel Games. Once its downloaded, open the files and click on the .exe file to load the game.



Publisher - Shrapnel Games

Genre - Simulation

Score - 8/10

Price - Free



Series Review

Blackadder goes forth

Released: 28 September – 2 November 1989

Number of episodes: Six

Running time: 30 minutes per episode

Written by: Richard Curtis & Ben Elton

The fourth and final series of the Black Adder saga was, in my humble opinion, the best.

In 2000 it was placed 16th by industry professionals in a list of the 100 Greatest British Television Programmes compiled by the British Film Institute.

Blackadder Goes Forth is set in 1917 on the Western Front in the trenches of World War I.

Captain Edmund Blackadder (Rowan Atkinson) is a professional soldier in the British Army who, until the outbreak of the Great War, has enjoyed a relatively danger-free existence fighting natives who were usually “two feet tall and armed with dried grass”.

Finding himself trapped in the trenches with another “big push” planned, his concern is to avoid being sent over the top to certain death.

With Blackadder is his second-in-command, the enthusiastic but rather dim Lieutenant The Honourable George Colthurst St. Barleigh (Hugh Laurie) and his profoundly stupid batman Private S. Baldrick (Sir Tony Robinson).

Blackadder’s nemeses come in the form of his superior, the eccentric General Sir Anthony Cecil Hogmanay Melchett (Stephen Fry) who rallies his troops from a French château 56 km from the front, and Melchett’s bureaucratic assistant, Captain Kevin Darling (Tim McInnerny).

The characters in the series are memorable, as is the wit and sarcasm of Captain Blackadder. Blackadder describes the Great War as: “a war which would be a damn sight simpler if we just stayed in England and shot fifty thousand of our men a week”.

Private Baldrick, who always has “a cunning plan”, claims that the war started “when some guy called Archie Duke shot an ostrich because he was hungry.”

Episode One: Captain Cook

Field Marshal Haig’s new plan is to commission a man who can do a splendid painting for the front cover of the next issue of the famous war magazine, *King And Country*, a magazine which Blackadder hates.

Blackadder claims George’s painting as his own, seeing it as a way out of the trenches.

Episode Two: Corporal Punishment

When Captain Darling tries to phone Blackadder to order an attack, Blackadder fakes bad reception.

Finally a carrier pigeon is dispatched with the orders. Blackadder shoots and eats the pigeon. Unfortunately the pigeon turns out to be General Melchett’s pet, Speckled Jim.

Blackadder is court martialled (with Melchett as the judge) and the “Flanders Pigeon Murderer” is sentenced to death.

Episode Three: Major Star

Blackadder is placed in charge

of an entertainment show. If it is successful he will be sent back to London.

Episode Four: Private Plane

After a visit from Lord Flashheart, Blackadder, Baldrick and George intend on joining the “Twenty Minuters” at the Royal Flying Corps to go to Paris. Blackadder and Baldrick are shot down and captured.

Episode Five: General Hospital

Blackadder and Darling are tasked with finding a German spy.

Episode Six: Goodbye

With the big push coming, Blackadder decided to fake madness to get out of it.

The final scene was voted the ninth most memorable television moment of all time in a 1999 poll of *The Observer* and Channel Four.

You can find many episodes on YouTube.



Click on the poster to watch highlights from *Blackadder goes forth*.

At The Front

The late General Jannie Geldenhuys is widely regarded as one of the leading military commanders South Africa has ever produced.

As Chief of the South African Defence Force from 1985 to 1990 he brought his experience to bear on the South African Border War, and was part of the negotiating team which brought an end to the conflict in 1989.

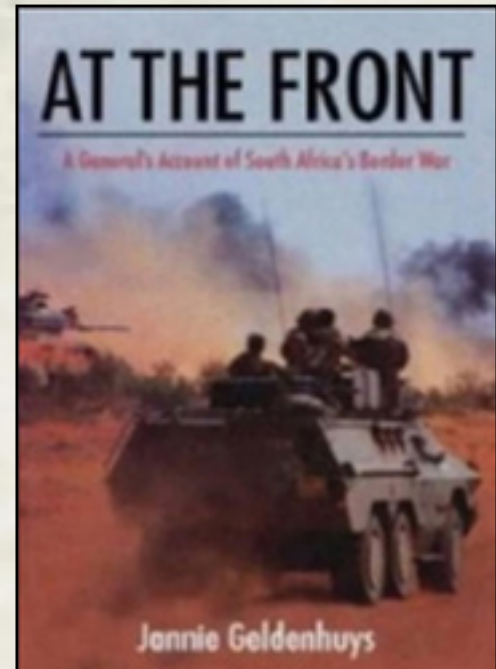
In this completely revised and updated edition, Geldenhuys reflects on a life defined as much by a military career spanning more than four decades as it was by politics and indeed the need for peace on the African sub-continent.

At the Front covers the years before and during the protracted

Border War. But rather than a blow-by-blow official history, it consists of Geldenhuys’ personal experiences and insights.

These include facts unknown to civilians and even to some high-ranking military officials. In particular, Geldenhuys sheds light on the final years of the conflict and the negotiated settlement. Geldenhuys also writes of his early years, as he evolved from a rugby-mad young subaltern officer to a deep-thinking, reflective man with ever-sharpening insights into, war, peace, politics and, most of all, himself.

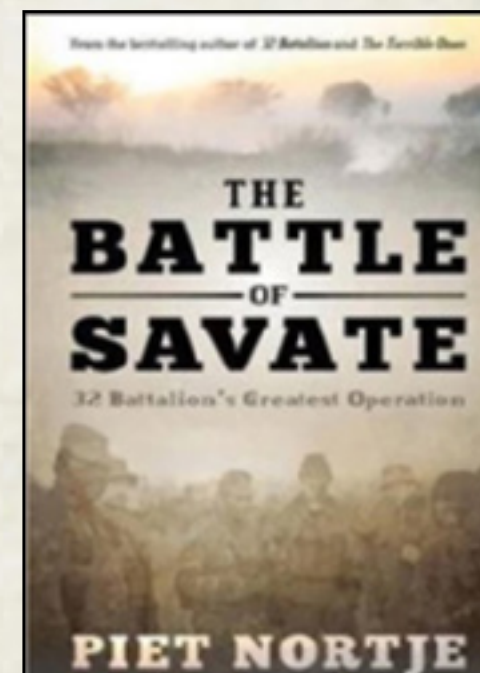
After joining 1 Special Service Battalion, he went on to higher command, serving as commander of South West Africa Command, General Officer



Commanding the South West African Territorial Force, Chief of the Army, and Chief of the South African Defence Force

Paperback: 394 pages

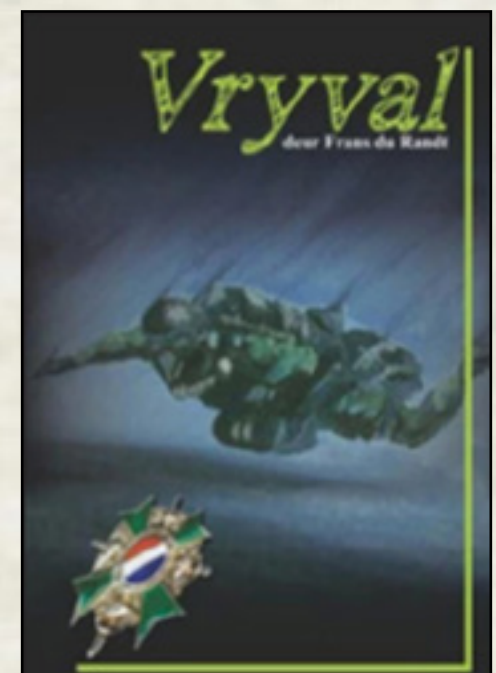
Cost: R275



The Battle of Savate
R300



We Conquer from Above
R395



Vryval
R275

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

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

1 March

- **1896** - Ethiopian forces defeat Italians at Adwa, northern Ethiopia, ending Italy's quest to create a substantial African colony.
- **1941** - German troops enter Bulgaria.
- **1951** - Pilots Doug McKellar and "Dizzy" Deans of the SA Air Force's No 2 (Flying Cheetah) Squadron, assisting the UN in the Korean War, locate seven trucks hidden in hilly terrain and strike target dive-bombing with napalm a procedure used for the first time by the squadron.
- **1954** - Bikini: US detonates 15 megaton hydrogen bomb.
- **1981** - Rifleman Peter Hall from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was accidentally killed during anti-insurgent operations in the Eenhana Area. He was 19.
- **1988** - Special Constable Thomas Kanitus 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 23.
- **1990** - State President F.W. de Klerk announces plans to bring covert operations by government agents under Cabinet control.
- **1990** - Two members of the

SADF were killed while traveling as passengers in a military minibus vehicle when the vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with a truck on the Pretoria-Potchefstroom Road. They were: Private Gerhardus Stephanus De Bruin (22) from Danie Theron Combat School. Gunner Jaques Terblanche (19) from 10 Artillery Brigade.

2 March

- **1900** - A council of war at Poplar Grove, OFS, gives Danie Theron permission to form a Scout Corps consisting of about 100 men.
- **1938** - Stalin initiates the Purges.
- **1943** - During World War II in the Pacific, a Japanese convoy was attacked by 137 American bombers as the Battle of Bismarck Sea began.
- **1945** - Philippines: Japanese resistance on Corregidor ends.
- **1951** - Two pilots of the SA Air Force's Cheetah Squadron, Lieutenant D.A. Ruiter and Captain W.J.J. Badenhorst, are killed in action while assisting the United Nations in the Korean War.
- **1955** - Egypt and Syria sign a defensive alliance.
- **1962** - Coup in Burma initiates an ongoing military regime.

- **1982** - Rifleman Lewis Francesco from 31 Battalion (201 Battalion SWATF) Died of Wounds accidentally sustained in an explosion inside an ammunition bunker at Omega Base. He was 22.
- **1984** - Rifleman Hendrik Francois van der Merwe from the Vanderbijl Park Commando apparently drowned in unknown circumstances. He was officially declared dead by the State President in 1986. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 25.
- **1985** - Rifleman Hilton Isaac Jacobs from the South African Cape Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Kuils River. He was 20.
- **1986** - Sapper Daniel Wilhelmus van Schalkwyk from 11 Field Engineer Regiment was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Messina. He was 22.
- **1988** - Special Sergeant Hepute Wakumbilwa 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 27.
- **1999** - Eight foreigners die in a shoot-out in a Ugandan

game reserve as soldiers try to free fifteen tourists who were kidnapped by Rwandan rebels.

- **2005** - At least fifty Congolese militiamen are killed by South African and Pakistani United Nations peacekeeping troops in a bloody gunfight in the Congolese district of Ituri. Several South African soldiers of 12 SA Infantry Battalion (12 SAI) are slightly hurt in the action.

3 March

- **1901** - The Battle of Lichtenburg takes place. The British soldiers move their horses into the Dutch Reformed Church building to shelter them from the fire of General De la Rey's troops.
- **1918** - Russia withdraws from WW I, signs Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany.
- **1945** - RAF bombs The Hague in error, 511 die.
- **1964** - Rifleman Brian Ivan Dummer from the Tygerberg Commando was killed in a military vehicle accident at Bethlehem. He was 19.

- **1976** - President Samora Machel of Mozambique closes his frontier with Rhodesia, seizes all Rhodesian assets in the country and places Mozambique on a war footing as a result of a "hot pursuit" attack by Rhodesian security forces during the previous week in which twenty-four guerrillas were killed inside Mozambique.
- **1976** - US government under President Gerald Ford discloses that it has decided to sell weapons to Egypt.
- **1980** - Rifleman Manuel Yenga from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action when he triggered a Soviet POM-Z2 Anti-Personnel Picket Mine inside an enemy bunker near Naulila during Operation Makalani. He was 25.
- **1983** - Special Constable Sam Iyambo 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.
- **1988** - The South West Afri-

ca Territory Force claims to have killed sixty Swapo insurgents in various skirmishes in the previous month, bringing the total this year to eighty-six. According to the SWATF, the security forces suffered no losses.

- **1991** - Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) chief-of-staff Chris Hani says as long as the SADF continues recruitment and training, his organisation will continue recruiting members and building underground structures.
- **1993** - An American soldier is killed by a land mine in Somalia and a second dies in a truck crash, bringing to six the number of Americans killed in Operation Restore Hope.
- **2004** - Angered by the way President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced to flee his country, the 15-nation Caribbean Community says it will not provide troops for the UN peacekeeping force to Haiti. Aristide claimed that he was abducted at gunpoint by US Marines and sent into exile in South Africa.

4 March

- **1900** - Boers are defeated by Lord Roberts at Driefontein in the Free State.
- **1945** - US Army Air Force B-24s accidentally bomb Zurich.
- **1945** - Finland declares war on Nazi Germany.
- **1968** - Leading Air Mechanic James Ross Brum-



Chris Hani

- mer from Air Operations School Langebaanweg was accidentally killed while mounting a radio antenna on the roof of a hanger at AFB Langebaanweg. The asbestos roofing gave way and he fell to his death. He was 24.
- **1970** - French submarine 'Eurydice' explodes while submerged in the Mediterranean, 57 die.
 - **1981** - Rifleman Frans Karel Petrus Burger from the Cape Town Highlanders was Reported Missing while crossing a river when on a patrol near Ruacana. He disappeared under the water and despite an intensive search, his body was never located. He was 22.
 - **1982** - Two members of 31 Battalion (201 Battalion SWATF) were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line. They were: Rifleman Mahorison Rodriques (21). Rifleman Llewellyn Verwey (20).
 - **1983** - Two members from 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola during Operation Snoek. They were: Sergeant Augusto Mande (30). Rifleman Joao Daniel Kativa (26).
 - **1984** - Rifleman Patrick Kudumo from 902 Battalion SWATF was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier while on duty in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
 - **1986** - Private Petrus Dolf from the Army Catering Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident, at Os-hakati. He was 24.
 - **1986** - Rifleman Benjamin Tjenda from 201 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19
 - **1990** - Ciskei's President Lennox Sebe is overthrown in a coup. The homeland's new military leader, Brigadier Oupa Gqozo, announces that his government's ultimate goal is reincorporating the territory into South Africa. Looting and burning continue for two days and about twenty-seven people die in violence.
- ### 5 March
- **1916** - SA troops led by General Jan Smuts invade East Africa in their confrontation with German forces in World War I.
 - **1936** - Maiden flight of the prototype Supermarine Spitfire.
 - **1942** - Burma: British appoint Sir Harold Alexander Commander-in-Chief.
 - **1942** - The US Navy Seabees are established.
 - **1945** - US VII Corps captures Cologne.
 - **1953** - Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin dies at the age of 73.
 - **1968** - Rifleman Cornelius Andre Grobler from 6 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident in Grahams-town. He was 20.

- **1974** - Rifleman Gerhardus Johannes Jacobus van Rhyne from 6 SAI died from gunshot wounds accidentally sustained at Bwabwata, Western Caprivi. He was 18.
- **1980** - Rifleman Johannes Jacobus Maass from Regiment Erongo was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1980** - Rifleman Eric Norman van Reenen from 52 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line in Northern Owamboland. He was 29.
- **1990** - SA sends troops to Ciskei to suppress mob attacks on factories and shops after military coup under Brigadier Gqozo ousted authoritarian President Sebe.
- **1993** - Lance Corporal Sydwell Boer from 3 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident on the N3 at Keyridge. He was 25.

6 March

- **1836** - Fort Alamo fell to Mexican troops led by General Santa Anna. The Mexicans had begun the siege of the Texas fort on 23February, ending it with the killing of the last defender. "Remember the Alamo" became a rallying cry for Texans who went on to defeat Santa Anna in the Battle of San Jacinto in April.
- **1881** - Armistice negotia-

- tions are concluded during the First Anglo-Boer War.
- **1944** - USAF begins daylight bombing of Berlin.
 - **1971** - Private Francois Nel from the Army Service Corps was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Pretoria. He was 16.
 - **1976** - Sergeant Trevor Walter August Booysen from Regiment Westelike Provinsie was accidentally killed at Ruacana when he fell off the back of a moving vehicle. He was 29.
 - **1980** - Lance Bombardier Matthew Johannes Naus from 14 Artillery Regiment died from a gunshot wound that was apparently self-inflicted. He was 19.
 - **1983** - Two members from 1 Medium Battery, 4 Artillery Regiment that were attached to 61 Mech Battalion, were Killed in Action while on guard duty on a farm near Tsumeb that was located well below the "Red Line". A small group of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents attacked the farm and shot them both at point blank range. The casualties were: Gunner Christo Francois Bezuidenhout (20). Gunner Jameson Bosse (19).
 - **1984** - Martin Niemöller, WW I U-boat skipper, anti-Nazi clergyman, at 92.
 - **1985** - Special Constable Matheus Oukongo 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 28.
 - **1986** - Private Dawid Johannes Retief from 6 Maintenance Unit accidentally drowned in the operational area when his Military vehicle skidded off the road and landed in a river, leaving him trapped inside the vehicle. He was 19.
 - **1986** - Corporal Pieter Jeremias Smith from the Specialist Unit died in the Tygerberg Hospital from multiple shrapnel wounds sustained in an accidental mortar bomb explosion. He was 21.
 - **1993** - Unita rebels capture Angola's second largest city, Huambo, after a two-month battle with government troops.
- ### 7 March
- **1876** - During the second invasion of Abyssinia by Egypt, the Egyptian forces are defeated at Gura by the Ethiopians under King Yohannes.
 - **1900** - The Battle of Poplar Grove (or Modderivierspoort) takes place. President Paul Kruger escapes with the help of General De Wet.
 - **1902** - General De la Rey defeats and captures General Methuen in the Battle of Tweebosch (or De Klipdrift) in Western Transvaal, the last important battle won by the Boer forces. Methuen

- and more than 870 soldiers are captured.
- **1936** - Hitler breaks the Treaty of Versailles, sends troops into the Rhineland, and the Allies fail to act.
 - **1941** - WWII: British troops invade Italian-occupied Abyssinia, now Ethiopia.
 - **1941** - Gunther Prien, daring submarine captain of 'U-47', is killed in action at the age of 34.
 - **1942** - First black cadets graduate from the USAAF flying school at Tuskegee.
 - **1943** - Japanese refuse a German request to join war against Russia.
 - **1945** - Troops of the US 9th Armored Div, commanded by German-born Lt. Karl Timmerman, capture the Ludendorff Bridge over the Rhine at Remagen.
 - **1952** - Job Masego, WW2 veteran who sunk a German supply boat while a prisoner of war after the capture of Tobruk, dies in Springs, Tvl. A street and a school in Kwa Thema have been named after him and in 1997 the SAS Kobie Coetzee was renamed SAS Job Masego.
 - **1977** - The Defence Amendment Bill, first published on 31 January 1977, becomes law. Under it the State President is empowered to invoke powers of censorship and of commandeering premises. Service in defence of the Republic now includes anti-terrorist operations as well as the prevention and suppression of internal dis-

order and there can be greater flexibility and speed in mobilisation.

- **1980** - Three members from 13 Field Engineer Squadron were Killed in Action at the Chandelier near Elundu when a booby-trapped landmine coupled together with other improvised explosive devices, exploded while they were in the process of defusing it. The casualties were: Sergeant Deon van der Vyver (21). Corporal Antonie Oberholzer (22). Sapper Willem Johannes Steenkamp Prinsloo (22).
- **1982** - Six Front Line States meet in Maputo and decide to coordinate further their military and economic policies to counter South Africa's economic and military aggression.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal Owen Christopher Williams from 5 SAI, attached to 101 Battalion Romeo Mike was accidentally killed in a Rifle Grenade explosion while on operations in Southern Angola. He was 21.
- **1985** - Corporal Deon van Niekerk from the Northern Transvaal Command Provost Unit was Reported Missing in Clubview, Pretoria while on official traffic control duty during a military exercise. A large truck filled with tons of builders gravel jack-knifed on the Old Johannesburg Road and overturned in the area where he had been doing duty. His body was only dis-

covered two days later when the builders gravel was removed. He was 20.

- **1986** - The State of Emergency imposed on 21 July 1985, is lifted.
- **1991** - 2nd Lieutenant Steven van Rooyen from the Dog Training Centre accidentally drowned in the Blyde River at Belvedere. He was 19.
- **1993** - Angola says its troops have withdrawn from Huambo after two months of fighting with rebels that left 10,000 dead.
- **1993** - The SADF's 31 Battalion, composed primarily of the San (Bushmen) battalion who fought in the war in Namibia and has lately been deployed in South African townships, is disbanded at a public ceremony in the Cape province. The 1,000 soldiers will be transferred to other units in the northern Cape and will help patrol the border to Namibia.
- **1994** - Multinational African army installs new government in Liberia.
- **2004** - Zimbabwe seizes a US-registered cargo plane carrying sixty-four suspected mercenaries and military equipment. Simon Mann, of the mercenary outfit Executive Outcomes, is arrested along with five others on the tarmac, after the Zimbabwean authorities have been tipped off by the SA government.

8 March

- **1902** - General De la Rey releases General Lord Methuen after his wounds are treated.
- **1916** - Battle of Dujaila: The Turks beat off a British attempt to relieve the siege of Kut.
- **1942** - Netherlands Indies surrender to the Japanese.
- **1950** - USSR announces they have developed the atomic bomb.
- **1963** - Air Mechanic Pieter Jacobus Hattingh from 35 Squadron was killed in a Ferret Armoured car accident while carrying out in-lying Picket duty patrol of the Security Fence at Air Force Base Ysterplaat. He was 20.
- **1964** - General of Infantry Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, dies aged 83.
- **1965** - First US combat troops (3,500 Marines) arrive in Vietnam.
- **1972** - Trooper Hubert Terrance Caddy from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed at Zeerust when his Eland Armoured Car overturned during a training exercise. He was 20.
- **1973** - Maritime headquarters at Silvermine is opened.
- **1977** - Corporal Abraham Liebergh Pelser from 7 SAI saved the lives of his fellow soldiers on the afternoon of 08 March 1977. Some of the troops used to straighten the pins on the hand grenades, making them easier

to extract and then hook the grenades into their webbing via the grenade handle. Unfortunately, when Abraham took off his webbing after returning to Nkurukuru Base from a patrol, his thumb caught on the grenade pin and pulled it out. The armed M26 grenade fell onto the floor in the middle of the tent and without hesitation, he dived onto the grenade and absorbed the full force of the explosion that killed him instantly but saved the lives of all the others in the tent. He was 21.

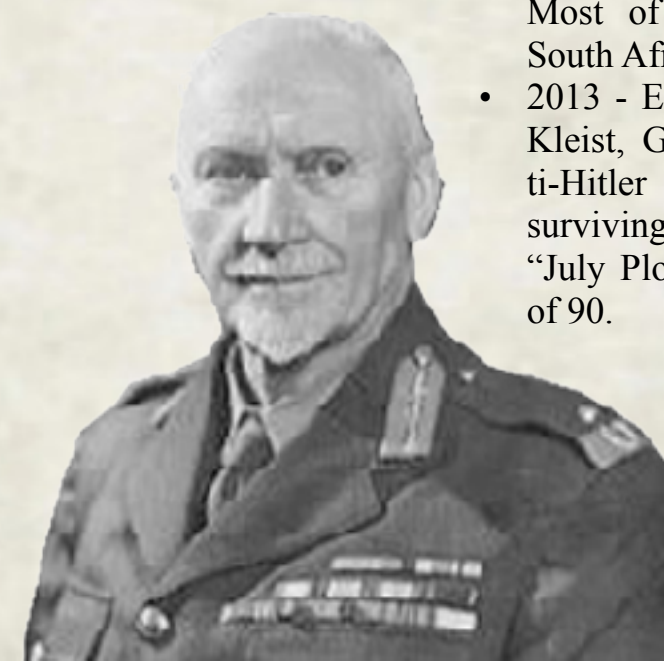
- **1983** - Rifleman Adriaan Jacobus Booysen Thirion from the Boksburg Commando was accidentally killed in a mortar bomb explosion in Southern Angola. He was 24.
- **1987** - Two members from 54 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents at Elundu. They were: Corporal Irvine Manuel Daniels (28). Rifleman Henry Jo-

hannes Metcalfe (27).

- **1987** - Private Allen Alberto Mariano from 101 Field Workshops was accidentally killed at Omauni in Owamboland while loading a damaged vehicle onto a low-bed. The crane lift chain broke and the vehicle fell onto him, killing him instantly. He was 19.
- **1988** - Trooper Mark Steven Bannell from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed whilst doing riot patrol on the outskirts of East London when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned. He was 19.
- **1994** - President Lucas Mangope calls out troops as unrest flares in Bophuthatswana.
- **1996** - Lt Col John "Mad Jack" or "Fighting Jack" Churchill, DSO, MC, who fought WW II with a longbow, claymore, & bagpipes, dies at the age of 89.
- **2004** - Fifteen suspected mercenaries are arrested in Equatorial Guinea, including the alleged leader of the advance party, Nick du Toit. Most of the suspects are South African.
- **2013** - Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist, German officer, anti-Hitler conspirator, last surviving veteran of the "July Plot", dies at the age of 90.

9 March

- **1831** - The French Foreign Legion is founded in Algeria to serve in the French colonies in Africa.
- **1864** - Ulysses S. Grant was commissioned as a Lieutenant General and became commander of the Union armies.
- **1916** - Germany declares war on Portugal.
- **1922** - General Jan Smuts declares martial law in the Transvaal after mobilising the active citizen force in a bid to quell the dispute of striking mineworkers.
- **1945** - US B-29s drop 1,665 tons of incendiaries on Tokyo, creating a firestorm; by dawn on the 10th between 80,000-120,000 have died, the highest toll in a single air raid, exceeding even the atomic bombs
- **1969** - Lt General Moneim Riad, chief of staff of Egypt's armed forces, is killed during Israeli-Egyptian gun battle across Suez Canal.
- **1977** - Lieutenant Gerrit Keulder from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action whilst on patrol in Henombe area of Southern Angola. He was 21.
- **1977** - Rifleman P. Katanga from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a Contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 19.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Errol Carl Moolman from the



Jan Smuts

Rand Light Infantry was accidentally drowned in a rowing boat accident while serving in the Operational Area. He was 20.

- **1982** - Rifleman John Verrooy from the South African Cape Corps attached to Wenela Base was accidentally drowned when he fell off a pont near Wenela Base in Eastern Caprivi. He was 21.
- **1984** - Rifleman W.K. Matende from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 20.
- **1985** - Two members from 6 SAI were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Grahamstown. The casualties were: Rifleman Shaun Patrick Atkins (21). Rifleman Orlando de Portugal Goncalves (19).
- **1985** - Rifleman Eduardo Jonas from 101 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 23.
- **1987** - Corporal Matthew William Wallace McGregor from 2 Field Engineer Regiment attached to 25 Field Squadron was critically wounded in Action during operations in South Western Angola.
- **1988** - Special Constable Fransiskus Lukas 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 25.

- **2007** - Chief of the SA Air Force (SAAF) Lieutenant-General Carlo Gagiano announces Waterkloof air force base the country's most prominent air force base is closing for all flying operations for eighteen months in order to upgrade the base's main runway. Work is to start in July and should last about eighteen months.

10 March

- **1880** - The Salvation Army was founded in the United States. The social service organization was first founded in England by William Booth and operates today in 90 countries.
- **1900** - The British under Lord Roberts defeats the Boers in the battle of Driefontein.
- **1922** - Angry White workers, on strike since 28 December, storm and occupy police stations, railway installations and mines on the Rand. They also attack the city's main post office and power station in a mass protest that has, in a few hours, turned into open rebellion against the state. Within four days the revolt is crushed. 153 people, including 72 of the state forces, lie dead, 534 are injured.
- **1944** - Severe restrictions

are imposed on all private travel in the UK, in preparation for D-Day.

- **1964** - US begins reconnaissance flights over East Germany.
- **1966** - North Vietnamese capture US Green Beret Camp in the Ashau Valley.
- **1970** - Corporal Hermanus Stephanus van der Merwe from Northern Air Defence Sector, Devon was killed while travelling in a military bus as part of a convoy en route to Devon. He was 18.
- **1982** - Rifleman Joao Baptista from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident near Rundu. He was 26.
- **1982** - The trial begins in the Natal Supreme Court of the mercenaries accused of hijacking an airliner to flee from the Seychelles after a failed coup on 25-26 November 1981.
- **1986** - Rifleman Pinecas Amupolo from 101 Battalion SWATF Died of Wounds received when his Samil 100 Kwevoel vehicle was hit by a Soviet RPG-7 anti-tank rocket. He was 25.
- **1988** - Rifleman Lodewickus Johannes Moolman from Regiment Bloemspruit was killed when he was attacked and trampled to death by an elephant during a patrol near the Nwamedzi Base in the Kruger National Park. He was 29.
- **1997** - South African arms manufacturer Denel an-

nounces that it will unveil six new products at a United Arab Emirates weapons exhibition to increase its sales, especially in the Middle East.

11 March

- **1779** - The US Army Corps of Engineers is established.
- **1941** - During World War II, the Lend-Lease program began allowing Britain to receive American weapons, machines, raw materials, training and repair services. Ships, planes, guns and shells, along with food, clothing and metals went to the embattled British while American warships began patrolling the North Atlantic and U.S troops were stationed in Greenland and Iceland.
- **1942** - Paris: First deportation train leaves for Auschwitz.
- **1945** - 1,000 Allied bombers drop over 4,000 tons of bombs on Essen.
- **1979** - Rifleman Paul William Ernest Carroll from 7 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 20.
- **1984** - Staff Sergeant David John Ward from 101 Battalion SWATF was critically wounded in the hip when his team was ambushed by SWAPO/PLAN and FAPLA forces in Southern Angola. He died from blood loss be-

fore he could be evacuated. He was 24.

- **1985** - Rifleman K. Iyango from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN and FAPLA forces in Southern Angola. He was 24.
- **1987** - Rifleman E. Nangula from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike Team 901 SSC-RM-3 SWATF was Killed in Action in Southern Angola after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds when he triggered a Soviet POM-Z2 Anti-Personal Picket Mine. He was 22.
- **1988** - Rifleman Pietter Leon Hendrik van Dyk from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned during anti-crime operations in Mamelodi Township. He was 18.
- **1994** - Three AWB members shot and killed during the invasion of Bophuthatswana.
- **1879** - A convoy of the British 80th Regt. is over-run at Ntombe River, northern Zululand by a force of 2 000 Zulus. Of the sixty men in the camp, only fifteen escape.
- **1918** - The British submarine 'D-3' is sunk off the French coast, by a French airship which mistook her for a U-boat.
- **1938** - Nazis invaded Austria, then absorbed the country into Hitler's Reich.

12 March

- **1945** - Anne Frank, dies in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp of typhus. She was 14.
- **1951** - North Korean/Red Chinese troops driven out of Seoul.
- **1962** - Defence Minister J.J. Fouché outlines the basic principles of South Africa's defence policy and gives details of measures being taken to build up the Defence Forces and to make South Africa self-supporting in military equipment.
- **1963** - Major Anthony Dennis Michael Lawrenson AFC from Air Force Base Waterkloof was killed when his Dornier Do-27A, Serial No. 5431 crashed near Belfast while on a training flight. He was 43.
- **1968** - P.W. Botha, the Minister of Defence, reports to the Senate on the progress of the Arms Industry and defines the main aims of South Africa's defence policy.
- **1975** - Lieutenant Christopher Stuart Franklin from 7 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed near Oudtshoorn. He was 21.
- **1984** - Rifleman L. Dala from 31 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 22.
- **1987** - Rifleman J.W.L. Johannes from 5 Recce Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy

- forces. He was 24.
- **1987** - Rifleman Faustino Sikote from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with FAPLA forces near Evale in Southern Angola during Operation Kakebeen. He was 27.
 - **1987** - Special Constable Simon Venusiu 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 24.
 - **1988** - Rifleman Stephen Ebenezer Futchter from 32 Battalion was Reported Missing after he disappeared in the Okavango River one night while swimming behind the Pont near Buffalo Base. It is suspected that he was either taken by a crocodile or a hippo. His body was never located despite an intensive search. He remains unaccounted for. He was 20.
 - **1989** - Rifleman Thulani Maxwei Khuluse from 121 Battalion was killed in a shooting incident in the Community Hall at Verulam. He was 25.
 - **1999** - Poland, Hungary, & the Czech Republic join NATO.

13 March

- **1900** - British forces under Lord Roberts take Bloemfontein.
- **1933** - Hitler makes Josef

Goebbels Minister of Information.

- **1942** - Julia Flikke, of the Nurse Corps, becomes the first woman colonel in the US Army.
- **1942** - The U.S. Army K9 Corps is established.
- **1943** - A plot to kill Hitler by German army officers failed as a bomb planted aboard his plane failed to explode due to a faulty detonator.
- **1954** - General Giap's Viet Minh attack That Bien Phu.
- **1977** - Rifleman Jacobus Frederick Steyn from 5 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident at the Kongola Bridge. He was 19.
- **1982** - Three members of 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during Operation Super in Southern Angola. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Petrus Johannes Stephanus Nel (HC Posthumous) (19). Corporal Phillip Thomas Stewart (23). Corporal Yombi João (32).
- **1983** - Rifleman Andrew Matthews Smit from 5 SAI was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion in Southern Angola. He was 18.
- **1986** - Corporal Victor Rodrigues Pedro from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment accidentally drowned in Durban during a training exercise. He was 31.
- **1988** - Private Carel Johannes Beneke from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed when his military vehicle

overturned near Buffalo. He was 18.

- **1988** - Lieutenant (Doctor) Herman Jan Roelof Gerding from the SA Medical Corps Headquarters was killed while travelling as a passenger in a military ambulance. He was 35.
- **2002** - The Angolan government announces a unilateral ceasefire in its 27-year civil war against Unita, to begin the next day.

14 March

- **1915** - German cruiser 'Dresden' scuttled off Chile.
- **1933** - Winston Churchill calls for better air defensive of Britain.
- **1941** - German Air Raid on Clydbank: After two night of bombing nearly every building the town is damaged or destroyed, more than 500 are dead, and over 50,000 homeless.
- **1961** - Two members from Air Force Base Zwartkop were killed when their Ferret Scout Car overturned while on a night Base Perimeter Patrol. The casualties were: Air Sergeant James George McKelvey (30). Air Sergeant Nicolaas Jacobus Neveling (23).
- **1979** - Two members of 12 Squadron deployed to Grootfontein for Operation Rekstok and Safraan were killed in action. They were: Lieutenant (Pilot) Dewald Wally Marais (24). 2nd Lieutenant (Navigator)

Owen John Doyle (21).

- **1980** - 2nd Lieutenant Phillipus Jacob Rudolph Oosthuizen from 5 SAI was Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds during an ambush on the Chandelier Road, about 10km from Nkongo Base when a Soviet 82mm High Explosive mortar bomb exploded next to him. He was 20.
- **1984** - Lieutenant Stanley Saillard Ponder from the South African Medical Corps, a Dental Practitioner attached to 2 Field Engineer Regiment, was killed at Grootfontein when his vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with a police vehicle while he was traveling to a nearby clinic. He was 25.
- **1985** - 2nd Lieutenant Guy Claude Udo Winsto Mogens De Beurges from 121 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy

forces in Southern Angola. He was 20.

- **1985** - Special Constable Joans Andungi 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 23.
- **1987** - Special Constable Ndjendjela Vilho 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.
- **1988** - Rifleman Zwelithini Andrias Lukhelo from 121 Battalion was killed while on patrol in the Tembe Elephant Park when he was trampled to death by an enraged elephant. He was 32.
- **1992** - Rifleman Marius Gottfreidt Uitenweerde from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Benoni. He was 26.

15 March

- **1900** - Lord Roberts issues his first proclamation, offering amnesty to burghers, except for the leaders.
- **1922** - The artillery bombards the strikers' strong-

**Josef
Goebbels**

hold at Fordsburg Square during the Rand Revolt and it falls to the government. Before presumably committing suicide in this building, the two communist leaders, Fisher and Spendiff, left a joint note: 'We died for what we believed in the Cause'.

- **1943** - Third Battle of Kharkov: Germans under Manstein retake the city from the Soviets.
- **1944** - The ancient Abbey of Monte Cassino is destroyed by Allied bombing and shelling.
- **1957** - Britain becomes the third nation to detonate a nuclear bomb.
- **1972** - Rifleman Werner Albrecht from the Technical Service Corps attached to 1 Field Ambulance Unit was accidentally killed when a steam pressure cooker exploded at Elandsfontein. He was 19.
- **1982** - Rifleman Johannes Jasva from Northern Transvaal Command was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 18.
- **1986** - Special Constable Ernesto Hishidivali 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 28.
- **1988** - Angola releases the bodies of two SA Defence Force commandos killed in



a raid on Cabinda oil depots in 1985, and the SADF repatriates twelve captured MPLA soldiers.

16 March

- **1802** - The U.S. Military Academy at West Point opens its doors on this day.
- **1916** - The new Dutch passenger liner 'Tubatina' is torpedoed off the Netherlands, Germany denies responsibility despite recovery of portions of the torpedo.
- **1935** - Hitler announces German rearmament, after years of covert efforts under the Weimar Republic, in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.
- **1968** - During the Vietnam War, the My Lai Massacre occurred as American soldiers of Charlie Company murdered 504 Vietnamese men, women, and children. Twenty-five U.S. Army officers were later charged with complicity in the massacre and subsequent cover-up, but only one was convicted, and later pardoned by President Richard Nixon.
- **1983** - Chief Petty Officer Nadiem Mooi from the South African Navy Provost Unit was accidentally killed while attached to 102 Battalion SWATF. He was 34.
- **1984** - Two members of the South African Cape Corps and one from the Army Catering Corps were killed after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental mortar bomb explosion at Ruacana. They were: Corporal Theo Christopeus Noel Maseti (Army Catering Corps) (21). Rifleman Charles Johannes Coram (19). Rifleman Willem Swartz (22).
- **1984** - Rifleman P. Hauptindi from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 20.
- **1984** - Prime Minister P.W. Botha and President Samora Machel of Mozambique sign the Nkomati Accord at the common border on the banks of the Komati River a step hailed as a major move towards peace, stability and international co-operation in Southern Africa.
- **1987** - Two members from 5 SAI were killed when their Samil 50 vehicle overturned 10km east of Colenso while ferrying troops from Durban Airport to the 5 SAI Base at Ladysmith. They were: Rifleman Gavin Gainsford (18). Rifleman John Adriaan Marlow (18).

17 March (St Patrick's Day)

- **1900** - President Kruger and President Steyn appoint Count Georges de Villebois-Mareuil as general in Kroonstad during the South African War. He is killed three weeks later in combat in Boshof, Free State.
- **1900** - A Great combined Republican Council of War is held at Kroonstad, attended by both presidents and com-

manders of the Boer forces, during which far-reaching tactical decisions are taken about the future conduct of the war.

- **1916** - The Imperial Japanese Naval Air Service is established.
- **1942** - Belzec Concentration Camp opens.
- **1966** - US mini-sub locates a missing H-bomb in the Mediterranean off Palomares, Spain.
- **1977** - Sapper Christo Kemp from 14 Field Regiment was Killed in Action during mine clearing operations. He was 23.
- **1977** - Angolan troops invading Zaire take important copper-mining centre of Kolwezi.
- **1981** - Rifleman Petrus Jacobus Viljoen from the Pietermaritzburg Commando was Killed in Action during a skirmish with FRELIMO troops near Ponta do Ouro. He was 23.
- **1984** - A Defence Force spokesman confirms in Cape Town that South Africa is to stop supplying the United States and Britain with intelligence reports on the movements of Soviet warships around the Cape by the end of the year.
- **1987** - Two members from 101 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents in Southern Angola just north of the Cutline. The Casualties were: Rifleman Craig Douglas

Wetton (19). Rifleman M. Moses (20).

- **1997** - Denel says no deal has been reached over the sale of arms to Syria.

18 March

- **1915** - British & French lose six ships attempting to force the Dardanelles.
- **1917** - French battleship 'Danton' is sunk off Sardinia by a German u-boat, 296 die.
- **1922** - The strike by mine-workers on the Witwatersrand, also known as the Rand Revolt, ends. More than 200 people were killed during the strike, which put thousands out of work and caused a devastating loss in coal and gold production.
- **1940** - Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini hold a meeting at the Brenner Pass during which the Italian dictator agrees to join in Germany's war against France and Britain.
- **1944** - German troops seize control of Hungary.
- **1949** - The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is founded.
- **1952** - Communist offensive in Korea begins.
- **1963** - War of independence is launched against Portugal in Guinea-Bissau.
- **1969** - Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, attends the launching in France of the first of three Daphne class submarines being built for the South African Navy.
- **1975** - Herbert Chitepo, 52,

ZANU leader, is killed in Lusaka when his car blows up in an explosion.

- **1986** - Warrant Officer Class 1 Frederick Petrus Johannes Cornelius from 5 Maintenance Unit was critically wounded in Northern Owamboland when his vehicle detonated a landmine. Evacuated back to the RSA, he succumbed to his wounds in 1 Military Hospital later that evening. He was 31.
- **1987** - Israel freezes military contracts and imposes cultural and tourism sanctions on South Africa.

19 March

- **1858** - War against the Basuto is declared in Bloemfontein.
- **1945** - Adolf Hitler orders total destruction of German infrastructure.
- **1979** - Private Louis Gerhard Nel was critically injured in an aircraft ejection seat accident on the Squadron and succumbed to his injuries in 1 Military Hospital. He was 20.
- **1981** - Gunner Cornelius Johannes Janse van Rensburg from 14 Field Regiment died in 1 Military Hospital after being diagnosed with a brain tumour. He was 19.
- **1988** - Major Jan Willem van Coppenhagen from 1 Squadron was Reported Missing in Action in Southern Angola when his Dassault Mirage F1AZ failed to return from a low level night diversion strike on enemy

installations at Baixa Longa in Angola with radio silence being enforced. After an intensive search, the wreckage of the aircraft together with the body of the pilot were located inside Angola, not far from the Cut Line. He was 33.

- **1989** - Maiden flight of the Boeing V-22 Osprey VTOL aircraft.
- **1994** - Rifleman Phethiso Simeon Makhatha from 115 Battalion was killed after suffering multiple head injuries when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned while on Township Patrol. He was 27.
- **2003** - The United States launched an attack against Iraq to topple dictator Saddam Hussein from power. The attack commenced with aerial strikes against military sites, followed the next day by an invasion of southern Iraq by U.S. and British ground troops.

20 March

- **1896** - The second Matabele war breaks out.
- **1902** - In the British House of Commons David Lloyd George suggests that there are as many as 30 000 armed Blacks in British military employ in South Africa.
- **1933** - The Nazis open their first concentration camp, at Dachau, near Munich.
- **1942** - General Douglas MacArthur vows "I shall return".
- **1981** - Seaman Derek Jerome Meyer of the 1st Ma-

- rine Brigade, South African Marine Corps, was killed instantly in a shooting incident while participating in military exercises being held near Vryburg. He was 19.
 - **1982** - Rifleman Dumba Katibelo from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action near the Cut-Line during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 23.
 - **1983** - Special Sergeant Atytale Amalua 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 32.
 - **1984** - Gunner Joachim Jacobus Badenhorst from 61 Mechanised Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned on a wet road at Tsumeb. He was 19.
 - **1985** - Rifleman Jan Andries Coetzee from 7 SAI was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident on the Witbank Highway. He was 20.
 - **1988** - Corporal Gregory MacKenzie Steward from 44 Parachute Pathfinder Company was called up for a three-month camp in March 1988. He was officially Reported Missing after participating in a Sunday night practice parachute jump at Murray Hill just north of Pretoria. An intensive search was launched and his body was located an hour later and recovered. He was 20.
 - **1989** - Lance Corporal Philip Swartz from 52 Battalion was killed in a motor cycle accident at Oshakati. He was 28.
 - **1999** - The African People's Liberation Army (APLA), armed section of the PAC, is disbanded in the Umtata stadium by Dr Stanley Mogoba.
- 21 March**
- **1918** - During World War I, the Second Battle of the Somme began as German General Erich von Ludendorff launched an all-out drive to win the war.
 - **1943** - A suicide/assassination plot by German Army officers against Hitler failed as the conspirators were unable to locate a short fuse for the bomb which was to be carried in the coat pocket of General von Gersdorff to ceremonies Hitler was attending.
 - **1945** - Okinawa: Japanese use Okha suicide planes for the first time.
 - **1946** - The US Strategic Air Command is established.
 - **1966** - Two members from Central Flying School Dunsfottar were killed when their AT-6 Harvard crashed near Eendrag during a routine training flight. They were: Lieutenant (Pilot Instructor) Johannes Nicolaas Taljaard (22). Candidate Officer (Pupil Pilot) Ian Ashton Fraser

- (19).
- **1975** - Two members from 17 Squadron were killed when their Alouette III, Serial Number 23 struck power lines 7km North of Windhoek and caught fire. The Crew and civilian passengers were killed during the subsequent emergency landing. The Crew were: Lieutenant (Pilot) Geoffrey Herbert Clark (28). Sergeant (Flight Engineer) Christiaan Hermanus Pretorius (29).
- **1976** - Warrant Officer Class II Keith Hugh Hamilton from 250 Air Defence Artillery Group, South African Air Force died in 1 Military Hospital after developing blood clots on the lungs. He was 30.
- **1979** - Lance Corporal Johannes Gerhardus Olivier from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in South Eastern Angola near the Kavangoland Border. He was 22.
- **1979** - Rifleman John Henry van Drutten from the Lydenburg Commando collapsed and died from heat exhaustion during a Route March at Phalaborwa. He was 23.
- **1980** - Rifleman Carlos Conceicao Da Trindade from 32 Battalion Died of Wounds in the Grootfontein Hospital after being critically wounded on 13 March 1980 during Operation Makalani in Southern Angola. He was 20.

- **1981** - Major Carel Arnold Briers from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike was accidentally electrocuted at the Miershoop training base just south of Okatope. He was 27.
- **1984** - Rifleman Eugene Cedric Terblanche from 6 SAI contracted malaria and was admitted to the Grahamstown Provincial Hospital where he died on 21 March 1984. He was 19.
- **1984** - Soviet sub collides with USS 'Kitty Hawk' (CV-63) off Japan.
- **1990** - Authorities ordered an inquiry into the funding of the Civil Co-operation Bureau, a secret military unit, accused of political assassinations.
- **1997** - South African mercenaries, hired by the Papua New Guinea government to help crush a separatist rebellion, arrive back in South Africa. Executive Outcomes say that the men should not be seen as mercenaries, but as consultants.

22 March

- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War the Portuguese government sanctions the passage of British troops and stores via Beira, Mozambique, thereby violating their previous policy of neutrality.
- **1945** - Patton's Third Army crosses the Rhine.



**George S
Patton**

23 March

- **1881** - During the First Anglo-Boer War a peace agreement between the Transvaal Republic and England is ratified and the final agreement is incorporated into the Pretoria Convention, which was signed on 3 August 1881.
- **1881** - The 3-months siege of British soldiers in the Old Fort in Potchefstroom ends amicably with Boer leader Piet Cronje inviting the British officers to dinner at the Royal Hotel. Twenty-five British soldiers and six Boer soldiers died during the siege.
- **1918** - Paris is shelled by German very-long range artillery.
- **1944** - RAF Flight Sergeant

Nicholas Alkemade survives a 5,500 m fall without a parachute after his Lancaster is hit near Berlin.

- **1962** - French government uses fighter planes and tanks in attempt to end insurrection by European rightists in Algeria.
- **1965** - Two SAAF members, one from 7 Squadron and one from 8 Squadron were killed when their AT-6 Harvard crashed near Bloemfontein during a night cross country exercise. It appears that the crew may have become disorientated as the aircraft flew vertically into the ground while still under full power. The crew were: 2nd Lieutenant (Pilot Instructor) Jacobus Johannes le Roux (22). Candidate Officer (Pupil Pilot) Robin Leslie Jarman (21).
- **1965** - Gunner Leonard Edward Parsons from Eastern Province Command was accidentally electrocuted. He was 18.
- **1980** - Corporal Renier Stephanus van Zyl from Regiment Namutoni SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1980** - Rifleman Robert Frederick McShane from the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg was critically injured in a hit-and-run accident just outside Hoopstad on 18 November 1979 while hitch-hiking home to Cape

Town on weekend pass. He succumbed to his injuries in hospital on 23 March 1980. He was 19.

- **1982** - Rifleman Johannes Dimbo from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds from a Soviet 60mm mortar bomb explosion during a SWAPO/PLAN insurgent attack near Nkongo. He was 22.
- **1982** - South Africa is to expand its military call-up to include all White men aged between seventeen and sixty-five, almost doubling the size of its forces. Commando units are to be strengthened.
- **1985** - 2nd Lieutenant Delarey Matthee from 3 SAI was accidentally shot and killed by own forces in his own ambush at Kamanjab. He was 24.
- **1988** - Constable Jacobus Ignatius van Zyl from the SWA Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action when his Z4S Casspir was hit by a Soviet RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1990** - Commandant Henry Walter Venter from 4 Vehicle Reserve Park was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Old Warmbaths Road near Pretoria. He was 40.
- **1997** - The first wave of a US military task force moves

cautiously into central Africa, preparing for a possible evacuation of Americans from Zaire.

- **2006** - Desmond Doss, conscientious objector who had earned a Medal of Honour as a medic on Okinawa, dies at the age of 87.

24 March

- **1900** - Newly appointed Combat General Count Georges de Villebois-Mareuil leaves Kroonstad with a 'flying column' consisting of fifty Dutchmen, twenty-five Frenchmen and eleven Afrikaners, aiming to blow up the railway line south of Kimberley to disrupt British lines of communications.
- **1941** - Donald Duck enlists in the US Army, for the first of six war cartoons.
- **1944** - The Great Escape: 76 Allied officers flee Stalag Luft 3.
- **1945** - Operation Varsity: Allied airborne crossing of the Rhine.
- **1951** - Two pilots of SA Air Force's No 2 (Flying Cheetah) Squadron, assisting the United Nations in the Korean War, blast a convoy of twelve stationary and camouflaged trucks with rocket-fire and destroy ten. In another operation, two "Flying Cheetahs" wipe out nine trucks.
- **1963** - Five members of the South African Defence Force were killed when the military vehicle in which

they were traveling as passengers, overturned at Voortrekkerhoogte. They were: Private Jacobus Gerhardus Roos Runkel (18). Signaller Ivan Leslie Taylor (19). Signaller Ulrich Andre Mulder from 2 Signal Regiment (18). Signaller Jacobus Johannes Helberg (17). Signaller Abraham Lodewicus Botha (20).

- **1972** - Private Leon George Muller from the Air Force Gymnasium died from heat exhaustion in 1 Military Hospital. He was 19.
- **1974** - Uganda crushes a coup attempt against President Idi Amin.
- **1975** - Rifleman Peter John van der Walt from 4 SAI died from a gunshot wound as a result of the accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while stationed in the Caprivi Strip. He was 18.
- **1976** - Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, British field marshal during World War 2 and commander of the Eighth Army in North Africa, dies at the age of 88.
- **1982** - Rifleman Gringo Jose' Manuel from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Buffalo. He was 23.
- **1986** - Commandant Charles Vernon Hochapfel from the South West Africa Gymnasium attached to 101 Battalion SWATF, died in 1 Military Hospital from Wounds received during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 44.

25 March

- **1858** - The battle of Koranaberg takes place during the Orange Free State-Basuto War.
- **1915** - First USN submarine disaster: USS 'F-4' sinks off Hawaii, 21 die.
- **1945** - US First Army breaks out of the Remagen bridgehead.
- **1966** - Lieutenant Francois Theron Mentz from Central Flying School Dunnottar was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed after flying into rising ground during low level flying near Middelburg. He was 22.
- **1976** - Trooper Reginald Edward Smith from the Natal Mounted Rifles died in Northern Owamboland from a gunshot wound as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle. He was 23.
- **1976** - Lance Corporal Willem Christoffel Swanepoel from 2 Parachute Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents north of Oshikango. He was 30.
- **1977** - Five members from Regiment Westelike Provinsie were killed and 71 injured on when a goods train loaded with iron ore collided with their stationary troop train at the Keetmanshoop station. The Casualties were: Rifleman Gary Albert Bricknell (22). Rifleman Petrus Johannes Jacobus Holtzhausen (27). Rifleman

Wilhelm Hugo (26). Rifleman Hermanus Johannes Uys (25). Rifleman Paul Kady Donovan van Zyl (24).

- **1978** - Rifleman R. Desenga from 31 Battalion was accidentally shot and killed by a fellow soldier in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1980** - Two members from 42 Squadron were killed when their AM-3C Bosbok, Serial No. 923 crashed near Potchefstroom while carrying out low level flying. The crew were: Lieutenant Edwin Johannes le Roux (20). Lieutenant Pieter Frederick Smit (22).
- **1980** - Two crewmembers from 44 Squadron and a SAAF female Personnel Officer (passenger), were killed when their C-47 Dakota, based at Air Force Base Grootfontein, crashed between Tsumeb and Grootfontein while carrying out unauthorised low level flight. The casualties were: Lieutenant Johan Heinrich Leeuw (22). Lieutenant Cornelis Johannes Wessels (21). Candidate Officer (Miss) Elna Susan Swart (23).
- **1982** - Two members of Witwatersrand Command Headquarters were killed in a Military Vehicle Accident in Houghton. They were: Rifleman Johannes Theodorus Lombard (21). Rifleman Ivan John van Heerden (20).
- **1982** - In announcing the 1982 Defence Budget, Owen Horwood reaffirms

that the government's highest priority remains that of giving South Africa an effective defence capability and a self-sufficient arms industry.

- **1985** - Rifleman Colin Graham Dockerill from 6 SAI, detached to the Equestrian Centre, was killed instantly in Northern Owamboland while returning from a waterhole when he fell off his galloping horse and hit a tree trunk, breaking his neck. He was 20.
- **1988** - Rifleman Nicolaas Jacobus Vermeulen from 54 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 23.
- **1988** - Rifleman Simon Haindula from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 22.
- **1994** - Lance Corporal Phiti Joel Mokgolo from 7 SAI was killed in a motor vehicle accident near Rustenburg. He was 27.
- **1994** - American troops withdraw from Somalia after a 16-month humanitarian mission marred by fighting with the Somalis.

26 March

- **1917** - First Battle of Gaza: The Turks hold the British.
- **1945** - Seventh Army attacks Worms on the Rhine.
- **1957** - Two members from Central Flying School Dun-

nottar were killed when their Harvard flew into rising ground near Trichardt during a night cross country flight. The aircraft disintegrated on impact and burnt out. The crew were: Lieutenant Andre Dewald de Klerk (25). 2nd Lieutenant Neil Rhodes Edward Ken-nauth (23).

- **1965** - Rifleman Andrew Mark Newton-Thompson from 1 SAI collapsed from heat exhaustion while on a cross country run and died in the Groote Schuur Hospital. He was 21.
- **1965** - Rifleman Johannes Rudolf Fourie from 5 SAI died from a gunshot wound resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle during a training exercise at Ladysmith. He was 18.
- **1976** - Rifleman Hermanus Stephanus Lombard Moss from the Kaffrarian Rifles was Killed in Action when his Unimog detonated a landmine just north of Ondangwa in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.
- **1977** - Rifleman Joao Antonio from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Buffalo while delivering supplies to the Base. He was 27.
- **1978** - Corporal Nicolaas Johannes Koekemoer from the Johannesburg Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Rhodesia. He was 24.
- **1979** - Camp David peace

treaty is signed, ending 30 years of war between Egypt and Israel.

- **1980** - Rifleman John Stephen Botha from 32 Battalion died at Buffalo Base from a gunshot wound apparently accidentally self-inflicted. No foul play was suspected. He was 19.
- **1984** - Lieutenant Hendrik Hans Jacob Maree from the South African Medical Corps attached to 202 Battalion SWATF was killed in a motor vehicle accident at Rundu. He was 23.
- **1991** - Soldiers overthrow Mali's military dictator after days of rioting and protests that leave dozens dead.

27 March

- **1881** - A Boer force of 150 men storms Majuba and drives out 400 British troops in the decisive battle of the Anglo-Transvaal War.
- **1900** - General Piet Joubert, commandant-general of the Boer forces and vice-president of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, dies of gastritis in Pretoria.
- **1933** - Japan leaves the League of Nations.
- **1941** - Himmler orders building of the Auschwitz concentration camp.
- **1945** - The last German V-2 rocket attack on Britain: 134 people, many of them Jewish, are killed Whitechapel, London.
- **1964** - UN peacekeeping troops arrive on Cyprus.

• **1968** - Captain Andries Jacobus Mouton from Air Operations School was killed when his De Havilland Vampire T-55 Mk II was involved in a mid-air collision with a Canadair C13L Sabre piloted by Lt Liebenberg of 1 Squadron near Pietersburg. He was 29.

- **1975** - Minister of Defence P.W. Botha presents a White Paper outlining defence policy and justifying the increased expenditure which now accounts for one-fifth of the country's revenue budget.
- **1979** - Rifleman Dixon Njunge from 201 Battalion SWATF was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1981** - Rifleman Daniel Johannes Louw from the South African Cape Corps killed at M'pacha after suffering a fatal gunshot wound as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 20.
- **1983** - Three members from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Special Sergeant Edward Mutuku (29). Special Constable Matheus Funet (24). Special Constable Johannes Muyongo (25).

- **1987** - Rifleman Manuel Maundu from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 22.

28 March

- **1879** - Nearly one hundred officers and men of Wood's column are killed in a desperate fight against a Zulu impi on Hlobane Mountain during the Anglo-Zulu War.
- **1915** - German submarine 'U-28' torpedoes the British liner 'Falaba' in St. George's Channel, 104 die.
- **1942** - Operation Chariot: Nocturnal Royal Navy/Royal Marine commando raid blocks the 'Normandie' dock in Nazi-occupied St Nazaire. Five VCs are awarded as a result of the raid.
- **1945** - Last V-1 buzz bomb attack on London.
- **1969** - Dwight D. Eisenhower, US President, 5-star general and Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe, dies at the age of 78.
- **1978** - Sapper Michael Andries Stephanus Nel from 101 Field Engineer Regiment was Reported Missing while swimming in the Okavango River after he was attacked by a crocodile. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 19.
- **1979** - The World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa is launched in London, with the support of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid. Several Heads of State and Government are its patrons and Abdul S. Minty its Director.
- **1979** - Sergeant Robert Daniel Burt from Sector 70 Headquarters SWATF was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 26.
- **1979** - Rifleman Dennis Colin Golden from 1 Parachute Battalion was accidentally killed by own forces near Otavi. He was 19.
- **1979** - Rifleman Nikos Pavlakis from Infantry School Died of Wounds when his patrol, while moving along the Cut-line, was ambushed by a numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents between Beacon 11 and Beacon 12. He was 20.
- **1980** - Trooper Leon Oosthuizen from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed after suffering multiple shrap-

nel wounds in an accidental hand grenade explosion at the General De Wet Training Area. He was 18.

- **1981** - Three members of 1 Parachute Battalion died of multiple shrapnel wounds at the Barracks in Bloemfontein. The casualties were: Rifleman Petrus Jacobus Pieterse (18). Rifleman Johannes Daniel van der Westhuizen (19). Rifleman Elias Jacobus Nicolaas Beukes (18).
- **1982** - ARMSCOR's Chairman announces that South Africa has produced a world-beating 155-millimetre artillery system the G5 gun.
- **1983** - Special Constable Ng-hiwaniva Nghiyayela 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.
- **1985** - Rifleman Kleopas Mbango from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut Line. He was 23.
- **1987** - Special Sergeant Martin Lukas 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 32.



V1
'Buzzbomb'

- **1988** - Special Constable Manuel Sevelenu 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 25.
- **1990** - Commandant John Orr, Officer Commanding 2 Squadron returned from a training sortie in his Mirage IICZ and while debriefing at the Squadron, he suddenly collapsed. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he succumbed. He was 37.
- **1977** - Staff Sergeant Gert Jacobus Voges from 29 Field Workshops died from injuries sustained in a military vehicle accident at the Otavi-Tsumeb crossroads. He was 39.
- **1988** - Gunner Hendrik Jacobus van der Westhuizen from Regiment Potchefstroom University was killed when he accidentally shot himself in Southern Angola during operations against FAPLA Forces near Cuito Cuanavale. He was 33.
- **1994** - Cease-fire ends Serbo-Croat War.

30 March

- **1945** - Soviet troops enter Austria.
- **1945** - The Red Army captures Danzig.
- **1972** - Private Sydney Eric Wienand from the Air Force Gymnasium was killed in a military vehicle accident in Pretoria. He was 19.
- **1973** - Private Andrew James MacPherson from Natal Command Headquarters was killed in a military vehicle accident in Durban. He was 18.



**M1911
.45 ACP
Pistol**

29 March

- **1879** - The battle of Kambula during the Anglo-Zulu War, takes place.
- **1911** - The U.S. Army adopts the M1911 .45 ACP pistol as its official sidearm.
- **1962** - The minister of defence, J.J. Fouché, discloses that South Africa is buying supersonic Mirage III jet fighters from France, and that South African forces are being equipped with French alouette helicopters.
- **1971** - 1st Lt William L Calley Jr found guilty in the My Lai massacre.
- **1973** - Private Johan Marthinus Kruger from 2 Mobilisation Centre was killed in a military vehicle accident at Petrusburg. He was 18.
- **1973** - Last US troops leave Vietnam, nine years after the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.

- **1984** - Four members from the Congella Regiment and one member from Group 10 attached to the Regiment were killed and one critically injured when their Military Landrover Vehicle was struck and flattened by an articulated vehicle loaded with logs that jack-knifed across the road approximately 9 km outside Richmond. The casualties were: Staff Sergeant Kevin Ernest Parker (37). Lance Corporal Roderrick William Bekker (28). Rifleman Winston Churchill (25). Rifleman Stefan Henry Conrad (27). Rifleman Grant Edward Brierley (27) died from his injuries on 31 March 1984.
- **1984** - Corporal Daniel Matsetse from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with

SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.

- **1987** - Sergeant (Flight Engineer) Daniel Lan from 16 Squadron was Killed in Action after being hit by enemy small arms fire while acting as door gunner in Alouette III 624 during a close-air support operation against SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in the Oshivello area. He was 27.

31 March

- **1900** - General Christiaan de Wet and his men, in a battle that marks the first of the guerrilla phase of the Second Anglo-Boer War, clash with British forces under General R Broadwood and capture 421 men, seven guns and 83 wagons. The battle is fought at Sannaspost (Sannahs Post), east of Bloemfontein.
- **1921** - The Royal Australian Air Force is established.
- **1941** - Germans launch a counter-offensive in North Africa in World War II.
- **1943** - USAAF accidentally bombs a residential area of Rotterdam, 326 die.
- **1954** - USSR offers to join NATO.
- **1960** - Four more regiments

of the Citizens' Force are mobilised. Legal authorities in Johannesburg state the emergency regulations create a situation of virtual martial law.

- **1970** - Marshal of the Soviet Union Semion Timoshenko dies at the age of 75.
- **1977** - A Defence White Paper analyses South Africa's defence requirements in the context of the Soviet and Cuban intervention in Angola. South Africa is to be placed on a war footing.
- **1977** - Private Wilhelm Jacobus Johannes van Nieuwenhuizen from 32 Field Workshop Squadron was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 28.
- **1989** - Johan Papenfus, a SA Defence Force rifleman captured in Angola nearly a year previously, returns to South Africa from Cuba. His return is part of an exchange for prisoners held by Unita.
- **1992** - UN Security Council votes to ban flights and arms sales to Libya, branding it a terrorist state for shielding six men accused of blowing up Pan Am Flight 103 and a French airliner.
- **1994** - South African President F.W. de Klerk declares a state of emergency in Natal and orders the army into the Zulu stronghold.



**Semion
Timoshenko**



QUIZ

General Knowledge

1. Walther PPQ. (Germany)
2. Beretta Px4 (Italy)
3. SIG-Sauer P320 (Switzerland)
4. Taurus Judge (Brazil)
5. Glock 21 (Austria)
6. KBP GSh-18 (Russia)
7. Springfield XDM (USA)
8. Heckler & Koch HK P30 (Germany)
9. Kel-Tec PF-9 (USA)
10. PT Pindad G2 (Indonesia)
11. IWI Jericho Model 941 (Israel)
12. Heckler & Koch HK 45 (Germany)
13. Arsenal Firearms AF-1 (Italy)
14. Smith and Wesson MP

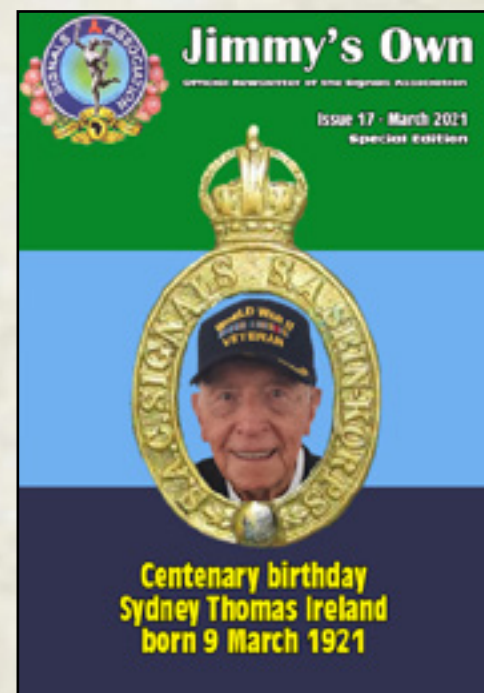
15. CSGC QX-04 (China)



Useful links

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

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



Military Despatches Website



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

Steve Jobs



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



Have you checked out the bookshelf on the website? Here you can open and read individual articles on screen with no need to download anything.

You will find articles on numerous different topics that have been published over the past two years as well as video clips and documentaries.

Hipe!

media

E-mail
editor@hipe.co.za



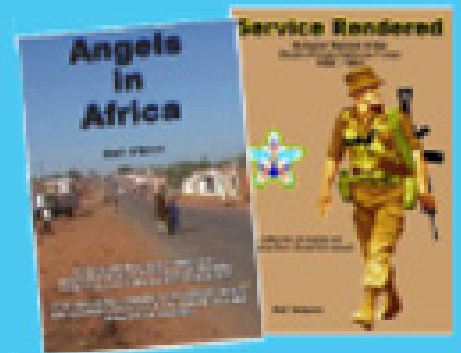
Online Magazines

Flip book magazines with pages that can be turned.



E-books

Produced in any electronic format required.



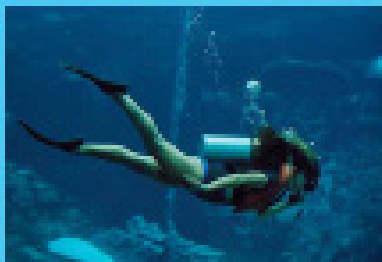
2D & 3D Animation

Produced in any video format.



Video Production

Scripting, storyboard, filming and editing done to any video format required. We also do aerial and underwater video and stills.



Still Photography

If you're thinking digital media then think Hipe Media.