



Coming to a battlefield near you

10 weapons and systems of the 21st century

Surrender? Forget about it

Surprising responses to ultimatums to surrender

"Let's go!"

Yuri Gagarin - the first man in space

Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler

Hitler's most loyal sycophant

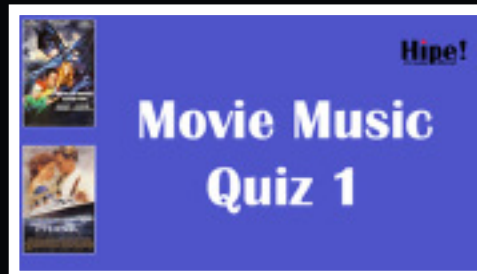


Click on any video below to view



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

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



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



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

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

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



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

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Nicknames

We give you the nickname of a famous military figure and you tell us who they are. Some of these nicknames were ones that the person did not approve of, but they stuck.



Editor's Sitrep

I'm sure that many of our readers will remember the hit song by Smokie "Living Next Door To Alice."

The chorus ends with the line, "And for 24 years I've been living next door to Alice."

It was originally released by Australian vocal harmony trio New World in 1972. But it was the Smokie version in 1976 that would go on to become a world-wide hit.

Then, in 1995, Dutch novelty act Gompie did their own version of the song. The chorus of their version ended with the words, "And for 24 years I've been living next door to Alice. Alice? Who the f*#k is Alice?"

Now, every time this song is played anywhere the entire crowd will scream out the line "Alice? Who the f*#k is Alice?"

Now you're probably wondering what I'm on about and why I'm telling you this. Well there are three reasons.

First of all it allows me to display my amazing knowledge of music.

Secondly, it's my editorial column and I can write whatever I want.

Thirdly, and the point I'm

getting at, is that "for more than a year I've been living under lockdown." And so have you.

Can you still remember when the president appeared on television and informed us that the country would be going into lockdown for three weeks?

I'm sure that I'm not the only one that is tired of wearing a mask everywhere. Hell, I'm starting to believe that I'm Jesse James. And don't even talk about sanitizing. Both my hands have become raving alcoholics.

We've gone through a first and second wave of COVID-19 and the experts warn that a third wave is one the way.

The thing is we still need to take every precaution to keep safe. History tells us that Dorchester native Charles Havlat was the last U.S. soldier to be killed in World War II. He was shot by a sniper just minutes before the cease fire was to take effect.

I'd hate for any of our readers to be remembered as the last person to die of COVID.

Until next time.

Matt

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Front Cover

Argentinian helmets and equipment litter the battlefield after the had surrendered to the British during the 1982 Falklands War.



10 Weapons of the future

Military technology of the 21st century, some of which is already being used.

Writing this article was not as easy as I first thought it would be. The problem was not finding what to include in the article, but rather what to exclude from the article.

In the end I came up with 22 items that could have easily made this Top Ten list.

The days of soldiers going *mano a mano* against each other have long passed. These days weapons and military systems rely on the latest technology that evolves at an alarming rate.

With many modern military conflicts it is a case of not who has the best men, but rather who has the best gadgets.

In this article we look at ten weapons or systems that will have a major impact on the way war is fought.

MAARS

Why send a soldier to carry out a dangerous task when a robot can do it just as well?

The Modular Advanced Armed Robotic System (MAARS) is a heavily armed bot designed to save lives and handle situations too dangerous to send real people into.

The system weighs 167 kg fully loaded with cameras, sensors, weapons, and ammunition. Its battery can last 3–12 hours, with a sleep mode to last for up to one week.

The MAARS can move at 11

kilometres per hour and travel 800–1000 meters from its controller. It has a seven cameras for driving, situational awareness, and for the weapon that can operate in daytime or thermal modes.

MAARS is armed with an M240B machine gun and four M203 grenade launcher tubes on a 360 degree rotating turret. It carries 450 rounds of 7.62×51mm NATO bullets and four 40mm grenades in the four M203s.

Grenades can include sponge, buckshot and tear gas for less-lethal purposes, while high explosive and air-burst can be used for lethal purposes. Each tube is loaded individually, allowing lethal and less-lethal capabilities to be available and selected when needed.

Other features include an onboard loudspeaker to communicate, a siren, a laser dazzler, and a gunfire detection system.

The weapons system can be replaced with a manipulator arm that can lift 54 kg, making it able to pick up 155 mm artillery rounds, and can pull over 140 kg, which means it can drag a wounded soldier to cover.

BLACK KNIGHT ARVC

The Black Knight is a prototype unmanned ground combat vehicle (UGCV) designed by BAE Systems.

It weighs approximately 12

tons and is deployable from a C-130; thus, the Black Knight can be airlifted by military transport aircraft.

Similar in appearance to a tank, it is armed with a turret-mounted 30 mm gun and a 7.62 mm coaxial machine gun. The vehicle is fitted with a 300-horsepower Caterpillar Inc. diesel engine.

The vehicle is currently being evaluated by the US Army.

After initially being tested in 2007, BAE reintroduced the Black Knight in March 2017 as the Armed Robotic Combat Vehicle (ARCV).

The Black Knight is ideal for missions deemed too dangerous for manned ground vehicles, including forward scouting, RSTA, intelligence gathering, and investigating hazardous areas.

Its biggest advantage is that the unmanned vehicle can investigate areas that are too hazardous for a group of soldiers to see or check and it can be controlled by a Dismounted Control Device.

These advantages allow operators to receive data from unmanned forward positions and verify their plan of attack by utilizing the information they received from the map data to check for unsafe conditions or obstacles.

The Black Knight can be controlled by soldiers safely from



MAARS ON THE MOVE: This heavily armed bot can accomplish a multitude of task with no danger to the operator.

inside a manned fighting vehicle (Bradley Fighting Vehicle) giving them protection.

The Black Knight's computer system allows it to perform a variety of functions by itself such as moving the turret, navigation, and planning a route.

X51A Waverider

Imagine you're manning an Early Warning System (EWS), sitting with a cup of coffee and looking forward to another quiet day.

The next thing a buzzer begins to loudly sound and an electronic voice starts to bleat, "Warning, incoming missile. Impact in..." The voice is interrupted by the sounds of a large explosion.

You see this was no normal missile, but rather an X51A Waverider travelling at a speed of Mach 6.

Dropped from a B-2 stealth bomber, the missile travels to its target at a speed of nearly 6,500 kilometres per hour. The

speed of the missile leaves you with little time to react.

Now while this may sound like something out of a sci-fi novel, the X51A Waverider is very real.

The Boeing X-51 Waverider is an unmanned research scramjet experimental aircraft for hypersonic flight. Its first test flight was back in 2010.

In May 2013, the U.S. Air Force planned to apply X-51 technology to the High Speed Strike Weapon (HSSW), a missile similar in size to the X-51. The HSSW could fly in 2020 and enter service in the mid-2020s.

It is envisioned to have a range of 1,100 nautical kilometres, fly at Mach 5–6, and fit on an F-35 or in the internal bay of a B-2 bomber.

HULC

Human Universal Load Carrier, or HULC, is an untethered, hydraulic-powered anthropomorphic exoskeleton developed

by Professor H. Kazerooni and his team at Ekso Bionics.

It is intended to help soldiers in combat carry a load of up to 90 kilograms at a top speed of 16 kilometres per hour for extended periods of time.

HULC is also easy to put on. It arrives folded in a small package, so soldiers just have to stretch out a leg and step into foot beds underneath the boot. Straps then wrap around the thighs, waist and shoulders.

Sensors in the foot pads relay information to an onboard microcomputer that moves the hydraulic system to amplify and enhance the wearer's movement.

The flexibility of the system allows soldiers to run, walk, kneel, crawl, and even go into low squats.

It could be used as a framework for body armour or sensor arrays that would allow for better situational awareness during combat. Lockheed Martin is also exploring exoskeleton designs to support industrial and medical applications.

Quantum Stealth camouflage

In the Harry Potter series of films one of the nifty items is a 'cloak of invisibility'. Imagine the fun you could have with that?

Still, it's just a fictional item right? No, not really. Canadian camouflage company Hyperstealth Biotechnology has patented the technology behind a material that bends light to make people and objects near

invisible to the naked eye.

The material, called Quantum Stealth, is currently still in the prototyping stage, but was developed by the company's CEO Guy Cramer primarily for military purposes, to conceal agents and equipment such as tanks and jets in the field.

As well as making objects close to invisible to the naked eye, the material also conceals them from infrared and ultraviolet viewing devices.

Electro-magnetic Rail Gun

This monster cannon is actually the culmination of over a decade's worth of development and testing. An electromagnetic rail gun capable of firing projectiles at over 7,200 kilometres per hour and smashing through concrete structures 160 kilometres away.

The result is a longer range weapon with much greater accuracy. They do, however, require a great deal of power and scientists are still working on perfecting the output for maximum performance without actually tearing the weapon apart when it fires.

Electromagnetic rail guns are said to be the future of warfare as, like other weapons on this list, they use laser energies rather than traditional explosive materials and controlled explosions.

CornerShot

Being able to shoot around corners is the military operator's dream - meaning they can fire at a target without exposing



CLOAK OF INVISIBILITY: The lower half of this person is covered in Quantum Stealth material, showing how effective it is.

themselves to risk.

The Germans tried it during World War II. The *Krummlauf* (curved barrel) was an attachment for the Sturmgewehr 44 rifle, which was used by the Germans in World War II.

It allowed the shooter to aim and fire around corners with its bent barrel and a periscope-style sight. A disadvantage of the device was its short life, due to the stress of firing.

CornerShot is a weapon accessory invented by Lt. Col. Amos Golan of the Israeli Defence Forces in cooperation with American investors.

It was designed in the early 2000s for use by SWAT teams and special forces in hostile situations usually involving terrorists and hostages. Its purpose is similar to that of the periscope rifle; it allows its operator to both see and attack an

armed target, without exposing the operator to counter-attack.

ADS amphibious rifle

For many years the prime weapon for a combat diver in an underwater environment was a knife. Not anymore.

The ADS is a Russian assault rifle specially made for combat divers. It is of a bullpup layout and is chambered in the 5.45×39mm M74 calibre. The ADS can adapt a suppressor and optical sights. It can also carry a grenade launcher.

The weapon uses 5.45×39mm bullets and fires at a firing rate of 700 rounds per minute with a range on land of 500 metres. The weapon's effective underwater firing range when using the specially designed cartridge is about 25 metres at a depth of five metres and 18 metres at a depth of 20 metres.



SAFE IN COVER: The CornerShot allows you to fire at a target without exposing yourself to risk.

MAHEM

The Magneto Hydrodynamic Explosive Munition (MAHEM) is a weapon being developed by the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) of the United States Department of Defence that would utilize molten metal to penetrate enemy armour.

The molten metal would be propelled by electromagnetic fields from explosions. The munition would be delivered to a target as a warhead "packaged into a missile, projectile or other platform."

It would penetrate the armour of an enemy vehicle then explode when it gets inside, destroying the vehicle from the inside out. DARPA predicts the weapon will have greater efficiency, control, and precision than conventional explosively formed penetrators.

It is driven by a compressed magnetic flux generator (CMFG).

BOEING LASER AVENGER

HEL MD

Boeing developed the High Energy Laser Mobile Demonstrator uses a 10-kilowatt laser to bring down enemy UAVs or drones.

Mounted on a truck and powered by lithium-ion batteries and a diesel generator, it's easy to use and maintain.

Boeing is currently working on improving the system so that it will be able to destroy incoming rocket, artillery and mortar rounds.

Along the same lines Boeing also developed a smaller version of the HEL MD.

The Boeing Laser Avenger is an aerial defence weapon that can be mounted to a vehicle and used to shoot down enemy UAVs.

Unlike conventional anti-aircraft weaponry, the Boeing Laser Avenger system doesn't create a muzzle flare or smoke trail when it fires. This means it can be fired from concealed positions keeping friendly troops safe and out of harm's way.

Military technology is developing at frightening pace and weapons and tech once considered science-fiction may soon become a reality.



Special Forces - Iraqi Special Operations Forces

Part twenty-five of a series that looks at Special Forces around the world. This month we feature the Iraqi Special Operations Forces.

Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) are Iraqi special forces unit created by coalition forces after the 2003

invasion.

The forces, directed by the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service, consist of the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Command, which has three brigades subordinate to it.

The Counter Terrorism Service (*Jihaz Mukafahat al-Irhab*, originally translated as Counter Terrorism Bureau) is funded by

the Iraq Ministry of Defence.

History

Special operations troops of the Iraqi Army were first established when Colonel Khaleel Jassim Al-Dabagh built the first royal special units in the name of

“Queen Alia Forces” in the mid-1950s.

It consisted of Sunni and Shia Arabs, as well as other components of the Iraqi population. They were mainly used on an emergency basis to carry out special missions inside of Iraq and outside when the country was at war.

Republican Guard

The Iraqi Republican Guard (*Haras al-‘Irāq al-Jamhūrī*) was a branch of the Iraqi mil-

itary from 1964 to 2003, primarily during the presidency of Saddam Hussein. It later became the Republican Guard Corps, and then the Republican Guard Forces Command (RGFC) with its expansion into two corps.

The Republican Guard were the elite troops of the Iraqi army directly reporting to Saddam Hussein, unlike the paramilitary force *Fedayeen Saddam*, and the ordinary Iraqi Army.

They were better trained, dis-

ciplined, equipped, and paid more than ordinary Iraqi soldiers, receiving bonuses, new cars, and subsidized housing.

Formed in 1969, it was originally created to be a Presidential Guard. Its primary objective was to maintain the stability of the regime and provide protection against internal and external enemies. During the Iran–Iraq War, it was expanded into a large military force.

Because of their elite status Republican Guards received



better equipment and uniforms than their regular Army counterparts, and could often be identified by distinctive markings or items of head dress.

Members of the regular Republican Guards conventionally wore a scarlet-coloured triangle insignia on both shoulders of their uniforms (sometimes backed with white material to form a white border around the edge of the triangle); they also wore black berets as did some

Army personnel, but as a distinctive marking a scarlet ribbon was often sewn to the right of the National cap badge to distinguish bravery in combat and/or loyalty to the Hussein regime.

The Special Republican Guards wore a maroon beret with the national eagle device, and a special variation of the triangle shoulder insignia in maroon with green Arabic lettering. The bright red *qardoon* (shoulder cord) distinguished Republican Guards as well. A similar cord with green and red bands was also worn by the Special Republican Guards.

Initially, the Guard had limited capabilities; however, during the Iran–Iraq War, it was expanded to five brigades, which was initially being mostly used in counter-attacks, notably in Operation Dawn 4. By 1986 the war had exhausted Iraq with both Iran and Iraq suffering heavy casualties.

In 1986 the government closed all colleges and universities and began a mass mobilization program to force draft dodgers into the Iraqi Popular Army.

This decision allowed for the drafting of thousands of university students, who were sent to military summer camps. In addition, the military began accepting volunteers from throughout Iraq.

With this massive influx of manpower the Republican Guard expanded to over 25 brigades which were led by loyal officers drawn from the Iraqi military.

Operation Desert Storm

The Iraqi Republican The Gulf War (2 August 1990 – 28 February 1991) was a war waged by coalition forces from 35 nations led by the United States against Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait arising from oil pricing and production disputes.

It was codenamed Operation Desert Shield (2 August 1990 – 17 January 1991) for operations leading to the build-up of troops and defence of Saudi Arabia and Operation Desert Storm (17 January 1991 – 28 February 1991) in its combat phase.

The coalition won with minimal losses while inflicting heavy losses on the Iraqi Army, but elements of the Republican Guard divisions were able to withdraw back into Iraq.

2003 Gulf War

At 05h34 Baghdad time on 20 March 2003 (9:34 pm, 19 March EST) the surprise military invasion of Iraq began.

There was no declaration of war. The 2003 invasion of Iraq was led by U.S. Army General Tommy Franks, under the code-name Operation Iraqi Freedom, the UK code-name Operation Telic, and the Australian code-name Operation Falconer.

Coalition forces also cooperated with Kurdish Peshmerga forces in the north. Approximately forty other governments, the “Coalition of the Willing,” participated by providing troops, equipment, services, security, and special forces, with 248,000 soldiers from the United States, 45,000 British soldiers, 2,000 Austral-

ian soldiers and 194 Polish soldiers from Special Forces unit GROM sent to Kuwait for the invasion.

The invasion force was also supported by Iraqi Kurdish militia troops, estimated to number upwards of 70,000.

The Republican Guard then consisted of between 50,000 and 60,000 men (although some sources indicate up to 80,000), all volunteers, and some 750 Soviet T-72 and Asad Babil tanks and scores of T-55 and T-62 tanks, along with other mechanized vehicles.

A further 90-100 T-72 tanks were operated by the Special Republican Guard. These forces were intentionally away from the capital to avert a possible rebellion against the regime.

Another unit that worked closely with the Republican Guard was the Fedayeen Saddam (‘Men of Sacrifice’).

Although not a special forces unit as such, the paramilitary Fedayeen Saddam warrants a special mention as they fought alongside elements of the Iraqi special forces in 2003 in a way that proved more successful than any regular unit of the Iraqi Army.

Formed in 1995 by Saddam Hussein's son Uday, the Fedayeen had an operational strength of some 40,000 members who were trained to mount operations against dissidents and foreigners alike. Some were even trained by the Chechens to carry out suicidal attacks in the same manner as the Palestinian Fedayeen. They managed several successful attacks against US service personnel, who greatly feared them.

The invasion was a quick and decisive operation encountering major resistance, though not what the U.S., British and other forces expected. The Iraqi regime had prepared to fight both a conventional and irregular, asymmetric warfare at the same time, conceding territory when faced with superior conventional forces, largely armoured, but launching smaller-scale attacks in the rear using fighters dressed in civilian and paramilitary clothes.

On 2 April 2003, U.S. Army Brigadier General Vincent K. Brooks said that the Baghdad Division of the Iraqi Republican Guard had been “destroyed”. Iraq information minister Muhammed Saeed al-Sahaf responded that this was another U.S. “lie”.

The Republican Guard was officially dissolved on 23 May 2003 per Order Number 2 of the Coalition Provisional Authority under Paul Bremer.

Formation of the ISOF

After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq, the Saddam Hussein-era Iraqi Army was disbanded by the occupation authorities. Because of that, the current Iraqi commando force was recruited from scratch, mostly from Shia, Sunni Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians and Turkmen.

In November 2005, after training in Jordan with Jordanian Special Forces and U.S. Army Special Forces (“Green Berets”), the Iraqi Special Operations Force had 1,440 men trained, composed of two combat battalions, considered equal in training and combat effectiveness to an average U.S.



Iraqi Special Operations Force

Army infantry battalion, and two support battalions.

By March 2008, the force consisted of a single brigade which in turn was made up of an Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Force (ICTF) battalion, three Commando battalions, a support battalion and a special reconnaissance unit.

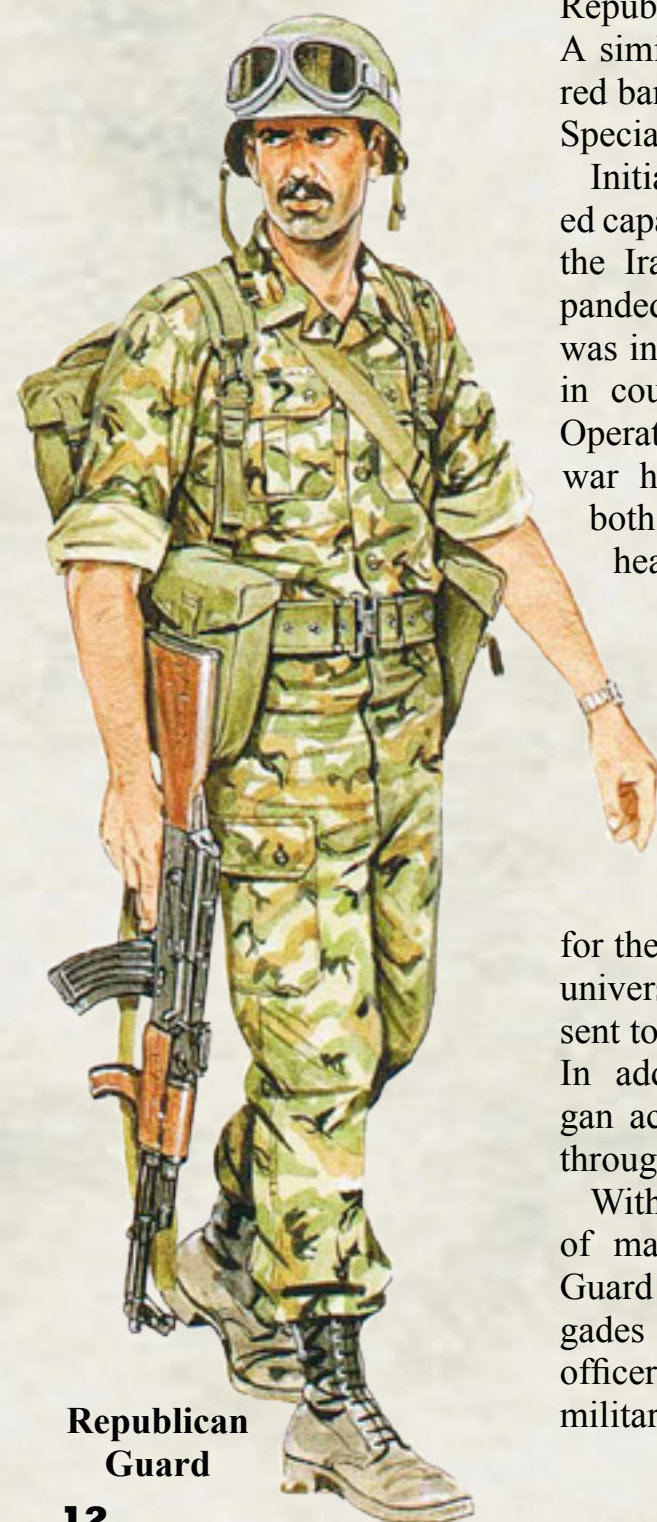
Nicknamed the ‘Golden Division’ their motto is “May you sleep peacefully in your bed tonight for a mighty sword stands ready to strike fear in the hearts of those who would terrorize us!”

Command structure

By 2009, the 1st Special Operations Brigade (ISOF-1) was based in Baghdad and had the 1st, 2nd, and 5th Battalions, a brigade support battalion and a training battalion/Iraqi Special Warfare Center and School.

The 1st Battalion was the renamed Iraqi 36th Commando Battalion. The 1st Brigade is often referred to as the Golden Division, and previously the Golden Brigade.

The 2nd Special Operations Brigade (ISOF-2) had four com-



Republican
Guard

Weapons used by the ISOF



M4A1 Carbine



VHS-K2/D2



Barrett M82A1



Glock 19



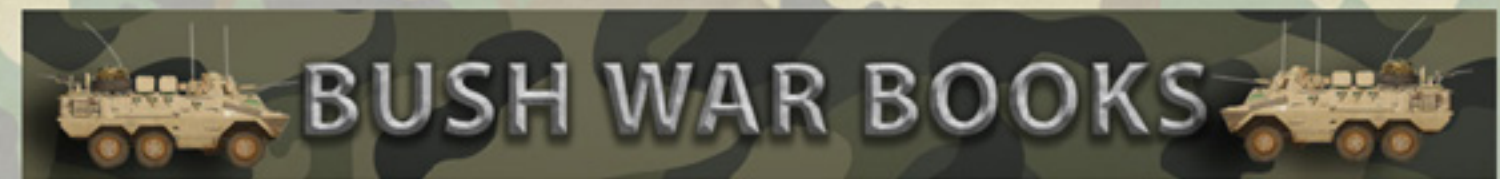
M249 LGM

mando battalions (1,440 men), which were at Basra, Mosul, Diyala and Al Asad prior to the formation of the 3rd Brigade. The battalions at Basra and Mosul achieved Iraqi Operational Control (IOC) in January 2008 and conducted local operations. Regional CT Centers (RCCs), similar to Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) organizations, were to be established at all four regional commando bases to develop intelligence on terrorist networks in their region.

The 3rd Special Operations Brigade was established in Basra by spring 2013, following an order by the prime minister in January 2012 that the forces expand by an additional brigade. It consisted of regional commando battalions in Basra, Diwaniya, Najaf, Maysan, Dhi Qar and Muthana provinces, a recon battalion, and a support battalion. A Special Tactics unit is also maintained.

Operations conducted by the ISOF include;

- Air assault
- Airborne force
- Close-quarters combat
- Counter Insurgency
- Counter intelligence
- Counter Terrorism
- Direct Action
- Hostage Rescue
- Raiding
- Special Operations
- Special Reconnaissance



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”

Happy birthday Uncle Syd

The South African Signals Association's oldest member, World War II veteran Sydney Ireland celebrated his 100th birthday in March.

On Tuesday 9 March Sydney Ireland, better known to all as Uncle Syd, celebrated his 100th birthday.

Not only is he the oldest living member of the South African Signals Association he is also, to the best of our knowledge, the last remaining South African signaller from World War II.

Sydney Thomas Ireland was born on 9 March 1921 on a dairy farm in the Parow district. At the age of six his family moved to Green Point where he attended Sea Point Primary School.

The family consisted of his mother, father, Sydney, his twin

brother Lionel, plus two other brothers and two sisters. After primary school he attended Cape Town High School, a high school for boys that was situated in Buitenkant Street. At school Sydney participated in sports, mainly soccer and cricket.

Sydney left school and joined the Post Office, while his twin brother joined the SA Railways. At the age of 18 he joined the Union Defence Force (UDF) and was drafted into the South African Signals Corps as a wireless operator. His first camp was in 1939 at a place named Klaasjagustfontein near Cape Point. His second camp was at Voortrekkerhoogte in Pretoria.

When World War Two broke out he was mobilised on 27 May 1940. Syd embarked a train at Monument Station, Cape Town, bound for Potchefstroom. At Potchefstroom military camp Syd did signals training for four months.

In October 1940 his

regiment was ordered to Durban where he boarded the Durban Castle Liner which took him to Mombassa in Kenya. The ship was escorted by two war ships. After arriving in Mombassa, they boarded a train for Nairobi and continued on to a camp called Gilgil.

At Gilgil his regiment trained with the infantry. He was attached to the Natal Mounted Rifles as their signaller. Syd remained with the NMR through the East African and Egyptian campaigns, and saw duty in Kenya, Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland. From there he went to the Western desert in Egypt. Syd escaped from Tobruk and linked up with his regiment at El Alamein.

Syd was sent home in 1943, three and a half years after he had left Cape Town. He became ill with pneumonia and pleurisy and was sent to Wynberg Hospital in Cape Town to be treated and to recuperate. Thereafter he was sent to Saldanha Bay to work on a radio station.

Back to Potchefstroom where he was seconded to the air force as a wireless operator. This entailed going to Tempe for a conversion course from army to air force procedures and training at Swartkop.

He was then posted to Bulawayo in Rhodesia for his first duty, followed by a posting to Ndola in Northern Rhodesia and then to Nchanga on the copper belt. Attached to the

South African Air Force as a wireless operator, he was on the shuttle service bringing soldiers back from Cairo to Pretoria by aeroplane.

Syd was demobilised in December 1945 in Potchefstroom. Syd went back to work at the General Post Office in Cape Town.

Before leaving for war, Syd had met Olga at Holy Trinity church and kept in touch with her all through the war years. In 1947 they married in the same church. They raised three children – Jennifer, Barbara and Geoffrey.

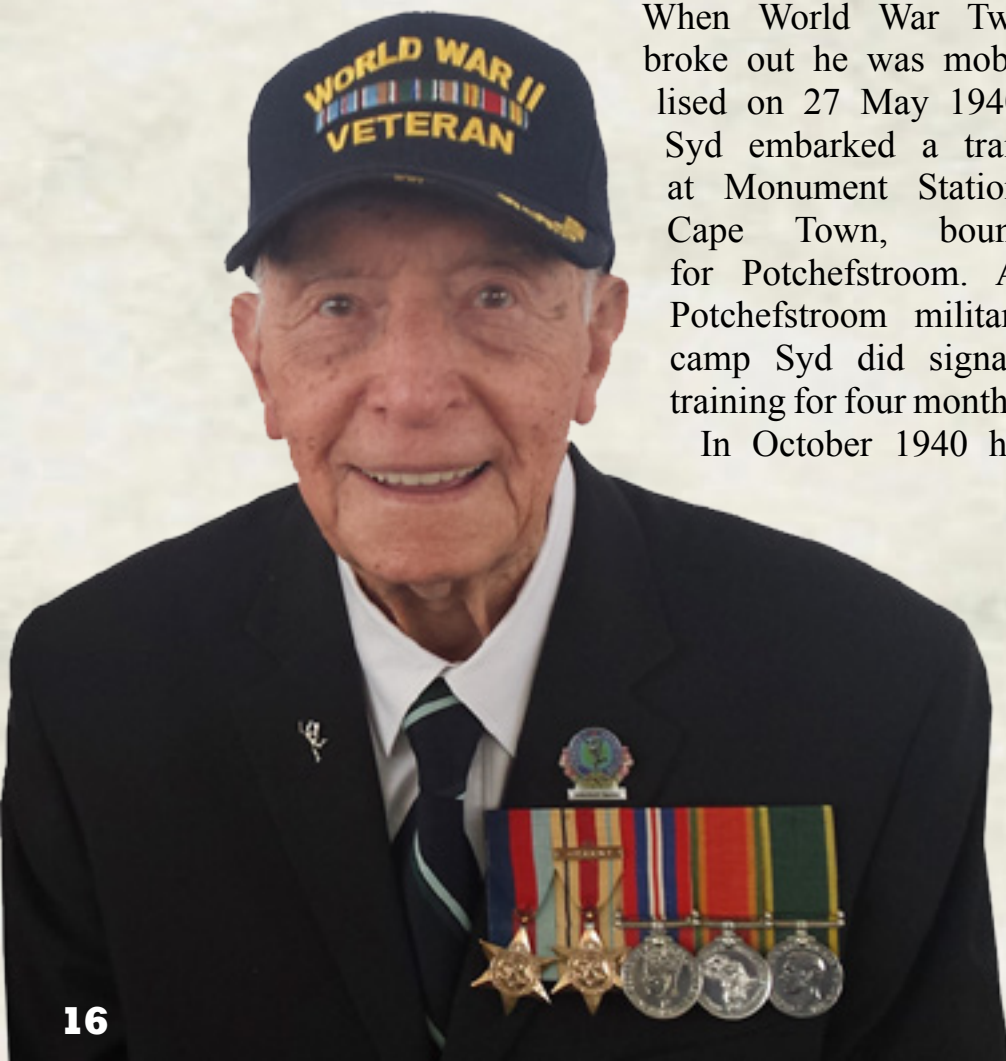
In 1975 Syd and Olga cruised on the Reina Del Mar to South America, visiting Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. The trip took four and a half weeks. What a wonderful holiday.

His next trip was to England for three months, staying with Jennifer, their eldest daughter who was living there at the time. Whilst there they went on a conducted tour of Europe for two weeks. They returned a hired a car to tour England,



TOP: Uncle Syd is presented with a printed copy of the March issue of 'Jimmy's Own' by Signals Association Chairman Colonel (Ret) Robbie Roberts. The March issue of the magazine was dedicated to Uncle Syd.

BELOW: One of Uncle Syd's birthday cakes.



Scotland and Wales for three wonderful weeks.

Syd retired from the Post Office in 1981 after 43 years. He bought a caravan in 1982 and for 13 years toured South Africa as often as possible.

In the year 2001 Syd and Olga visited their son Geoffrey and his family in Toronto, Canada for three months. Olga passed away in June 2001. Syd sold his house in Devil's Peak, central Cape Town in 2001 and moved in with his daughter Barbara and son-in-law Korky and their two children Nicholas and Adam until he moved to Huis Luckoff in Rosebank in 2015.

Surrender! Forget about it

On given an ultimatum to surrender, some responses have been rather surprising to say the least. In this article we look at some of them.

When I was in my late teens, many years ago, I had a tee-shirt with a slogan on it that I really enjoyed.

It featured an eagle swooping down on a mouse. The mouse was sitting on its hind legs with its right paw in the air with the middle finger extended. The slogan read, "The last great act of defiance."

When faced with overwhelming odds and greatly outnumbered and given the ultimatum to surrender, the logical thing to do would be exactly that - surrender.

The following people, however, did not follow the rules. When given an ultimatum to surrender, they had other ideas.

The Spartans

Many people will have seen the film *300* where a mere 300 Spartans, wearing little more than tight little Speedo swimsuits, held out against hordes of invading Persians.

While the movie was a bit over the top, it was based on a real battle - the Battle of Thermopylae.

The battle took place during the Greco-Persian Wars, which were ultimately little more than a grudge match between the ancient Greeks and the kings of the Persian Empire.

The Persian kings were Xerxes the Great, and his subsequent successor Artaxerxes I. I always wonder if Artaxerxes

was also known as Artaxerxes the not as great?

During the First Greco-Persian War the Greek victory at the Battle of Marathon put a spoke in the Persian's wheels and brought the war to a close.

King Xerxes I was not all that impressed with the defeat and vowed to overthrow and destroy Greece. He amassed an invasion force which, according to the 'Father of History', Herodotus, was the largest ever to have walked the earth. He estimated the Persian army to measure well over one million men.

In order to buy the Greek army some time, a contingent of 300 Spartan troops gathered in the narrow coastal path of Thermopylae (The Hot Gates).

The Persian generals ordered them to lay down their arms. The Spartans' reply was "Come and take them!"

And make no mistake, the Persian army did exactly that. The thing is that it took them more than three days to achieve. The Spartans achieved their objective of buying time for the Greek army.

The Spartans were destroyed to the last man. A commemorative epitaph engraved on a plaque marks the spot where the last of the Spartans perished; it reads "Go tell the Spartans, thou who passest by, that here, obedient to their laws, we lie..."

Inspired by the courage of the

Spartans, the Greeks united and successfully drove the Persians out of the nation, winning the second Greco-Persian War in one of the greatest military upsets of all time.

Yet while "Come and take them" was a great response to a demand to surrender, the Spartans really outdid themselves over a century later.

Once again the Spartans found themselves threatened and imposed upon by the expansion of empire. This was in the mid 300s B.C. when the Macedonian Kingdom under Phillip II, predecessor of Alexander the Great, approached the heavily defended city of Laconia.

The Macedonian's warned that if the Laconians chose to resist, all inhabitants of the city would be slain if the Spartans were defeated.

The Spartan's replied with a single word: "If..."



DEFIANCE: The slogan on a tee-shirt that inspired this article.

Commander John Paul Jones

Often referred to as the "Father of the United States Navy", John Paul Jones is perhaps best remembered for his actions during a scrap between the Continental Navy and the British Royal Navy during the American Revolutionary War.

Jones was a mere 13 years old when he began his career at sea. He served on private merchant vessels before volunteering for the Continental Navy in 1775.

Jones distinguished himself in maritime military service and, as a result, was awarded command of the USS Bonhomme Richard, a rebuilt French merchant cargo ship gifted to the Continental Navy by Jacques Donatien LeRay.

On 23 September 1779, Jones ran into two escorts of the Baltic merchant fleet, the HMS Serapis and the Countess of Scarborough.

Logic dictates that the wise thing for Jones do have done was cut and run. Instead he decided to engage both British vessels.

HMS Serapis was armed with 44 guns, while the Countess of Scarborough had 22 guns. The USS Bonhomme Richard had 42 guns.

Not long after the battle began, the USS Bonhomme Richard was badly damaged. The captain of the HMS Serapis instructed Jones to surrender. Jones replied, "I have not yet begun to fight!"

And then, true to his word, Jones did begin to fight. Mounting a furious counterattack, the listing and heavily damaged USS Bonhomme Richard defeated and captured both enemy

vessels in a surprising victory.

The USS Bonhomme Richard sank the following day, and Jones took command of the captured HMS Serapis. The victory not only enhanced Jones' reputation, it stunned the British Royal Navy.

Ioannis Metaxas

To say that Ioannis Metaxas was a controversial figure in Greek political history would be putting it mildly.

His tenure as Prime Minister of Greece was marred with authoritarianism and elements of a fascist, strongman regime.

A former soldier, Metaxas was elected Prime Minister in 1936. For the first four months he toed the line and complied with Greek Constitutional Law.

It didn't last long and he soon began to abuse his power as he observed the rise of fascism in both Italy and Germany. Whatever Adolf and Benito could do, he could do just as well.

Yet his most famous moment came during the early years of World War II, towards the very end of his career.

As the German Wehrmacht *blitzkrieged* their way across Europe, it soon became clear that the Nazi war machine was unstoppable.

The Germans had already taken Luxembourg, France, Holland, and most of Belgium by the time Italian forces under the command of Benito Mussolini, ally of the German state, arrived on the doorstep of Greece.

On 28 October, 1940, Italian ambassador to Greece Emanuele Grazzi demanded unconditional Greek surrender and total

cooperation with Axis occupation. Metaxas gave a clear and simple answer - "No!"

The Italians crossed the border and attacked Greece. This initiated the Greco-Italian War and Greece's brief participation in World War II.

That same day Greek citizens poured into the streets shouting *Ohi* (No), in open defiance of the Italian invasion.

It all ended with a decisive Axis victory, with Athens being captured on 27 April, 1941, and the Battle of Greece ending on 30 April, 1941.

To this day 28 October is observed in Greece as *Epeteios tou "Ohi"* ("No" Day).

Maor Digby Tatham-Warter

The following incident may or may not have taken place. But it's worth a look at.

In a scene from the epic film *A Bridge Too Far* Lt Col John Frost and Major Harry Carlyle of the British Parachute Regiment watch as an SS *panzer* officer approaches their position during a lull in the Battle of Arnhem. The SS officer is under a white flag.

"Rather interesting development, sir," says Major Carlyle to Lt Col Frost. He then addressed the German. "That's far enough! We can hear you from there!"

"My general says there is no point in continuing this fighting! He wishes to discuss terms of a surrender!" shouts the SS officer.

"Shall I answer him, sir?" Carlyle asks Frost.

"Tell him to go to hell," says Frost.

"We haven't the proper fa-

cilities to take you all prisoner! Sorry!" Carlyle shouts to the SS officer.

"What?" says the SS officer, looking very confused.

"We'd like to, but we can't accept your surrender! Was there anything else?" shouts Carlyle.

The German walks off shaking his head.

"Well, that's that," says Frost.

The German officers returns to General Wilhelm Bittrich, commander of the 2nd SS Panzer Corps.

"They rejected our surrender offer. What are your orders, Herr General?" he tells the general.

"Flatten Arnhem," General Bittrich says.

Now while this makes a great scene for the movie, there is debate as to whether this incident really occurred as it was portrayed in the film.

It is a fact that General Bittrich did give the British an ultimatum to surrender at Arnhem.

What makes the dialogue above seem authentic was that the character in the film, Major Harry Carlyle, was based on the real life Major Allison Digby Tatham-Warter.

Better known as Digby Tatham-Warter, or simply Digby, he was a legendary figure in the Parachute Regiment.

He always had an umbrella with him which he carried into battle. When asked why, he said that he had trouble remembering passwords and felt that anyone who saw him with it would think that "only a bloody fool of an Englishman" would carry an umbrella into battle.

During Operation Market Garden he was part of A Com-

pany of the British Parachute Regiment. They were dropped kilometres away from Arnhem Bridge, their intended drop zone. To reach the bridge they had to go through Arnhem where the streets were blocked by German forces.

Digby led his men through back gardens of nearby houses, avoiding the Germans. They travelled nearly 13 kilometres in seven hours while also taking 150 German soldiers, including members of the SS, prisoner.

During the battle, Digby wore his red beret instead of a helmet and waved his umbrella while walking about the defences despite heavy mortar fire.

When the Germans started using tanks to cross the bridge, Digby led a bayonet charge against them wearing a bowler hat. He later disabled a German armoured car with his umbrella, incapacitating the driver by shoving the umbrella through the car's observational slit and poking the driver in the eye.

When the Regiment Padre was pinned down by enemy fire, Digby walked over, opened the umbrella as if to give him cover from the fire, and calmly escorted the padre to safety.

Injured by shrapnel during the Battle of Arnhem, Digby was captured. Because of his injury, Digby was sent to St. Elizabeth's Hospital but escaped out of a window with his second in command Captain Tony Frank.

Having made contact with the Dutch Resistance, Digby was given a bicycle and a fake Dutch identity card that allowed him to pose as Peter Jensen, a deaf-mute son of a lawyer.

Digby used the bicycle to vis-



LEGEND: Major Allison Digby Tatham-Warter, British Parachute Regiment.

it fellow soldiers in hiding. At one stage during his travels he helped push a German staff car out of a ditch.

He managed to gather 150 escaped British soldiers and led them towards the front line. Once there he used a torch to flash a V for Victory sign.

Members of XXX Corps then ferried them across the river. Upon return to the United Kingdom, Digby was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

So considering the type of character that Digby Tatham-Warter was, it would not have been unusual for him to give the type of answer depicted in the film.

Brigadier General Anthony Clement McAuliffe

During the winter of late 1944 things were not looking too promising for the Germans.

Since the D-Day landings in June 1944 in Normandy, the



NUTS: Brigadier General Anthony Clement McAuliffe (middle) poses with some of his officers at Bastogne.

Allies had advanced across the Rhine River and into Germany. At the same time on the Eastern Front, the Russians were pushing forward. It became clear that they would have to do something drastic if they were not going to lose the war.

The plan was *Unternehmen Wacht am Rhein* (Operation Watch on the Rhine). The Germans would launch an offensive through the densely forested Ardennes region of Wallonia in eastern Belgium, northeast France, and Luxembourg.

The offensive was intended to stop Allied use of the Belgian port of Antwerp and to split the Allied lines, allowing the Germans to encircle and destroy four Allied armies and force the Western Allies to negotiate a peace treaty in the Axis powers' favour.

Once that was accomplished, Hitler believed he could fully concentrate on the Soviets on the Eastern Front. The offensive was planned by the German

forces with utmost secrecy, with minimal radio traffic and movements of troops and equipment under cover of darkness. Intercepted German communications indicating a substantial German offensive preparation were not acted upon by the Allies.

The Germans launched their attack on the morning of 16 December 1944. The Allies were overconfident and preoccupied with their own offensive plans, so the Germans achieved total surprise.

The Americans retreated in disarray, causing a massive bulge in their defenses.

The US 101st Airborne, the "Screaming Eagles", retreated as far as the Belgian town of Bastogne. It was here that the commander of the 101st, Brigadier General Anthony Clement McAuliffe, decided to make a stand.

While the Allies held overwhelming air superiority, the dense overcast weather meant that they were effectively

grounded. The 101st were surrounded and outnumbered by 5 to 1. The Germans demanded that McAuliffe surrender. Like the Spartans and Ioannis Metaxas before him, McAuliffe's replied with a single word - "Nuts!"

The demand to surrender had been typed out and delivered by two German officers under a white flag. McAuliffe's response had also been typed out. When it was given to the two German officers they obviously did not understand American slang and asked if "nuts" was an affirmative or negative response to their demand.

PFC Ernest Premetz, a German-speaking medic, told the German officers, "Du kannst zum Teufel gehen." (You can go to hell.). That they did understand and they stormed off to take the reply back to their commanding officer.

Against all odds, despite being surrounded, outnumbered and outgunned, the 101st held Bastogne for a remarkable one month.

Then the weather cleared and the Allies were able to launch a counter-offensive. Bastogne was relieved by General George S. Patton and the US 3rd Army.

While officially known as the Ardennes Counteroffensive, it was also known as the Battle of the Bulge.

Patton rallied the American troops, and, in a brilliant counter thrust offensive, broke through the German line and pushed the German military back across the border.

The Germans never recovered, and continued retreating back towards Berlin for the remainder of the war.

Remembering Yuri Gagarin - Part One

From humble beginnings to the first man in space!

By REGINE LORD



When I was reading about the life of the first man in space, Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin, what struck me immediately is that this young man – he was only 27 years old at the time of his space flight – came from such humble beginnings.

His family lived in a small village west of Moscow, in what was then the Soviet Union. His schooling was interrupted for several years during World War II when occupying Nazi soldiers, on their way to Moscow, evicted his family from their home.

He worked hard to overcome these challenges, throwing himself wholeheartedly into learning how to fly, and becoming an experienced fighter pilot. According to reports from family, friends, colleagues and fellow astronauts, he was a down-to-earth young man who remained calm and kept his sense of humour even under intense pressure.

After his return from space, he rubbed shoulders with government leaders, political officials and influential people around the world, but his fame as Cosmonaut No. 1 of the Soviet Union did not go to his head.

With his friendly smile, intelligent eyes, and boyish good looks, and his easy ability to connect with people, he captured hearts and minds everywhere. For the political leadership at the time, he was the embodiment of the ideal Soviet citizen – and the perfect poster boy for the Soviet space program.

Humble beginnings

Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin was born on 9 March 1934, in the small village of Klushino, Smolensk Oblast ['oblast' is a type of administrative division], about 200 km west of Moscow. His father Alexei Ivanovich was a carpenter, and his mother Anna Timofeyevna was a dairy farmer. Yuri was the third of four children.

When German Nazi forces advanced towards Moscow in November 1941, the village was captured. They evicted Gagarin's family from their home and sent the two older siblings, Valentin and Zoya, as slave labour to Poland (they escaped and returned home in 1945 after the War ended). The family was permitted to construct a 3m x 3m mud hut on the land behind their house, where they lived for almost two years until the end of the occupation.

Yuri and his younger brother Boris did whatever they could to sabotage the garrison, by scattering broken glass on the roads, pushing potatoes up exhaust pipes of military vehicles, and generally causing mischief.

In 1946, after the end of WWII, the family moved their home to the nearby small town of Gzhatsk, 166 km from Moscow. They 'moved home' quite literally; they disassembled their house, physically relocated it, and re-constructed it in its new location. After Gagarin's death in 1968, the town of Gzhatsk was re-named 'Gagarin', in honour of its most famous resident.

Yuri and Boris started going to school here; his favourite subjects were science and

mathematics. He was fascinated by airplanes, and was part of a group of children who built model aircraft. As a young child, he had witnessed a Yakovlev fighter plane crash-landing near Klushino, and the sight of the pilot emerging from the crashed plane reportedly made a huge impression on him, leading to a lifelong love of flying.

Learning to fly

In 1950, at the age of 16, he enrolled at a vocational school in Lyubertsy, a city on the south-eastern outskirts of Moscow, where he entered an apprenticeship as a foundryman at a steel plant. At the same time, eager to further his education, he attended seventh grade evening classes at a local 'young workers' school. He graduated from both the following year.

Next, he underwent training at the Industrial Technical School in Saratov, a city on the Volga River, some 700 km southeast of Moscow. Here, he studied tractors, while earning money on the side as a part-time dock labourer on the Volga River.

More interestingly for Gagarin, however, Saratov had a local flying club, where he volunteered as a Soviet air cadet. He learned how to fly in a biplane and a Yakovlev Yak-18, which was a tandem two-seat military training aircraft. An amusing anecdote tells of how Gagarin, who was quite short in stature, struggled to master smooth landings – until his instructor gave him a cushion to sit on so that he had a better view of the runway!

After graduating from the Industrial Technical School in

1955, he was drafted into the Soviet Army and sent to study at the Air Force pilots aviation school in Orenburg, from which he graduated at the top of his class in 1957, with the title of Air Force Fighter Pilot. On the day of his graduation, he married Valentina Ivanovna Goryacheva, a medical technician, whom he had met earlier that year. They had two daughters, Yelena Yurievna Gagarina (1959) and Galina Yurievna Gagarina (1961).

His first posting was to the Luostari Air Base in Murmansk Oblast, near the Norwegian border. This fell under the Northern Fleet, whose headquarters and main base are at Severomorsk in the Soviet Arctic. Two years later, in November 1959, he was promoted to the rank of Senior Lieutenant.

Soviet space programme

Gagarin applied to join the Soviet space program, joining a pool of 3,000 of the best pilots from all over the USSR. His small stature (1.57 m tall, weighing less than 72 kg) and youthfulness (the Central Flight Medical Commission was looking for pilots between 25 and 30 years old) counted in his favour. The extensive and rigorous – even gruelling – medical, physical and psychological testing whittled this number down to 20 potential candidates.

The experiments and examinations included oxygen starvation tests in which candidates were locked into isolation chambers, while the air was slowly pumped out; they were placed in a centrifuge to test their responses to high



CLOSE STUDY: The cosmonaut training group, including Gherman Titov (centre left) and Yuri Gagarin (centre 2nd left), are closely studying the equipment.

G-forces; they spent many days on their own in sound-proofed isolation chambers to test their psychological resilience. They were subjected to experiments with weightlessness, their endurance in heat chambers was assessed, and their reactions to stressful situations were carefully monitored.

During the intensive training that followed, Gagarin reportedly excelled at completing all the required tasks, while keeping a sense of humour and remaining calm under pressure. He was exceptionally fit and healthy, as well as mentally disciplined, intelligent, curious, and eager to learn. He was also very popular among his cohorts.

Because some of the candidates, including Gagarin, did not have higher education degrees, they enrolled in a correspondence course at the Zhukovsky Air Force Engineering Academy. He only graduated from this in February 1968 (a

month before his death), after successfully defending his aerospace engineering thesis on the subject of spaceplane aerodynamic configuration.

The 'Chief Designer'

The head of the Soviet space program in the 1950s and 1960s was Sergei Pavlovich Korolev (1907 – 1966), who was a leading Soviet rocket engineer and spacecraft designer during the Space Race between the US and the USSR.

His name and identity were kept secret, to protect him from assassination attempts by the USA; he was officially only referred to as 'the Chief Designer' or by the initials 'S.P.'. Only after his death was his name revealed and did he receive the public recognition for his extraordinary ground-breaking work in Soviet space exploration.

Korolev's life had been turned upside down early in his career:

He was a hard-working disciplined man who was devoted to his work as chief engineer at the Jet Propulsion Research Institute (RNII), which designed and developed rockets.

In 1938, during Stalin's 'Great Purge', Korolev was arrested after being denounced by spiteful colleagues and accused of deliberately slowing down and sabotaging the RNII's work. Initially sentenced to death, he was instead sent to a Soviet Gulag labour camp in the far east of Siberia for some time, and exposed to such horrific conditions that he almost died.

After repeated appeals, his sentence was reduced, and he returned to Moscow – but not to be freed. Instead, he worked in a sharashka penitentiary for several years; these were secret research and development laboratories operating from the 1930s to the 1950s within the Soviet Gulag labour camp system. Korolev continued to work in his field (rockets and rocket motors) until his discharge in 1944.

Thereafter, he was appointed at a newly established research institute, which designed long-range and intercontinental ballistic missiles. Korolev's passion, however, was to get the Soviet Union's space program off the ground (quite literally), and his work culminated in the design of the R-7 Semyorka rocket, which would ultimately send Yuri Gagarin into space!

Preparing for the Vostok 1 mission

A few days before the launch of the Vostok 1 mission, Yuri Gagarin was chosen as the pi-

lot, with his fellow cosmonaut Gherman Titov as backup, and Grigoriy Nelyubov in turn chosen as Titov's backup.

The son of a humble peasant family, intelligent and bright, with a disarming smile and calm demeanour, Gagarin was the perfect poster child of the Soviet space program.

Before his flight, Gagarin recorded the following stirring speech:

"Dear friends, both known and unknown to me, fellow Russians, and people of all countries and continents, in a few minutes a mighty spaceship will carry me into the far-away expanses of space.

What can I say to you in these last minutes before the start? At this instant, the whole of my life seems to be condensed into one wonderful moment. Everything I have experienced and done till now has been in preparation for this moment. You must realize that it is hard to express my feelings now that the test for which we have been training long and passionately is at hand.

I don't have to tell you what I felt when it was suggested that I should make this flight, the first in history.

Was it joy? No, it was something more than that. Pride? No, it was not just pride. I felt great happiness. To be the first to enter the cosmos, to engage single handedly in an unprecedented duel with nature - could anyone dream of anything greater than that?

But immediately after that I thought of the tremendous responsibility I bore: to be the first to do what generations of people had dreamed of; to be the

first to pave the way into space for mankind. This responsibility is not toward one person, not toward a few dozen, not toward a group. It is a responsibility toward all mankind - toward its present and its future.

Am I happy as I set off on this space flight? Of course I'm happy. After all, in all times and epochs the greatest happiness for man has been to take part in new discoveries.

It is a matter of minutes now before the start. I say to you, 'Until we meet again,' dear friends, just as people say to each other when setting out on a long journey. I would like very much to embrace you all, people known and unknown to me, close friends and strangers alike. See you soon!"

On the morning of 12 April 1961, Yuri Gagarin settled into the small spherical Vostok 3KA space capsule on top of a Vostok K rocket, preparing to be launched from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. According to official records, he had slept well the night before, his pulse rate was steady and slow (64), and he seemed relaxed and calm. Korolev, in contrast, was fretting and worried, closely monitoring all the preparations at ground control, double-checking everything, and ensuring that no mishaps occurred.

Gagarin was wearing his orange SK-1 space suit and a helmet, with the letters CCCP painted on in red paint at the last minute. Someone had suggested, partly as a joke, that Gagarin could be mistaken for the pilot of an American spy plane if he landed somewhere unforeseen,

and officials promptly decided to paint the letters CCCP (the Russian abbreviation of the USSR) onto the front of his helmet, just in case.

The year before, on 1 May 1960, an American U-2 spy plane performing aerial reconnaissance deep inside Soviet territory had in fact been shot down by the Soviet Air Defence Forces over Sverdlovsk (Yekaterinburg), and the pilot (Captain Francis Gary Powers) had been captured. The subsequent cover-up by the Americans had caused great international embarrassment to the United States, and further strained relations with the Soviet Union.

So that was the reason why Gagarin's helmet sported the letters CCCP in red paint.

On their way to the launch site, Gagarin apparently asked the bus driver to stop in the middle of the steppe so that he could relieve himself. This story – possibly apocryphal – gave rise to the tradition of all subsequent astronauts flying out of Baikonur relieving themselves against the right rear tyre of the bus transporting them to the launch site. Female astronauts instead splash a vial of their urine against the tyre.

There are several other superstitions and traditions that originate from those early days of human space flight:

- Soyuz crews visit the memorial wall on the Cosmonauts' Avenue of the Moscow Kremlin to lay flowers.
- They sign the visitors' book in Yuri Gagarin's office, which is preserved as a museum at Star City.
- They plant a tree in the ave-

nue of trees behind the Cosmonaut Hotel in Baikonur; every person who has flown into space on a Soviet or Russian spacecraft has planted a tree here before departure.

- The Soyuz Launcher with the Soyuz capsule ontop is rolled out on a special railway carriage exactly 48 hours before the launch; although it is considered bad luck for the crews to see this happening, their families, personnel and visiting guests always put coins on the railway track for good luck.
- The crew always gets a haircut two days before launch.
- The night before launch, they watch the 1970 Russian movie 'White Sun of the Desert'. This tradition dates back to the Soyuz 12 mission in 1973, when the crew watched the movie before take-off; as the previous Soyuz 11 mission had resulted in the death of the entire three-man crew in 1971 due to asphyxiation when a breathing ventilation valve had ruptured during their descent, and the subsequent Soyuz 12 mission was a success, the movie became a good luck charm!
- On launch day, crew members sign the door of their room at the Cosmonaut Hotel, and sip a glass of champagne.
- Once the crew is sitting inside the capsule, and waiting for the countdown to start, mission control plays some music for them; this tradition started when Gagarin

asked them to play some Russian love songs while he waited for the launch.

Lift-off and orbit

Gagarin's exuberant exclamation "Поехали!" (Poyekhali!) – "Let's go!" – as the booster rockets of Vostok 1 ignited in a blinding flash of light and his spacecraft roared up into the heavens – has become legendary.

The name of the spacecraft, Vostok (Russian: Восток, translated as "East" or "Sunrise") and the timing of the launch in the early morning symbolised the dawning of a new age of space exploration.

His flight was a single orbit around the Earth, its trajectory taking him east across the Soviet Union, southeast across the Pacific Ocean, through the Straits of Magellan at the southern tip of South America, then northeast across Africa and the Middle East, before ending back in the Soviet Union.

Gagarin's entire mission was automatically controlled from mission control on the ground, as medical staff and engineers were uncertain how the human body would respond to the particular challenges of space flight, such as microgravity. Doctors were apparently fearful that he might become mentally unstable, unable to make rational decisions, and act erratically. The engineers added a three-digit security code that Gagarin would need to enter to enable him to take manual control of the spacecraft in an emergency; this was placed in a sealed envelope that he was handed just before take-off. As



READY TO GO: Yuri Gagarin and back-up cosmonaut Gherman Titov on the way to the launchpad on 12 April 1961.

it turned out, it wasn't necessary – and besides, both his instructor, as well as production designer Oleg Ivanovsky who escorted Gagarin to the capsule had revealed the secret code to him, just in case!

During his flight, Gagarin drank water, ate some space food from squeeze tubes, kept notes in his notebook (using a pencil, which he lost at some stage during the flight) and spoke into a tape recorder, describing what he observed through the capsule's window and the tasks he completed. He used a high-frequency radio and a telegraph key to communicate with ground control.

Gagarin's call sign was кедр ['Kedr' – meaning Siberian cedar], while the call sign for the launch site at Tyuratam (Baikonur) was Заря-1 ['Zarya-1' – meaning dawn]. There was a series of tracking stations along

the projected route; these used either VHF (Tyuratam, Kolpashovo [Tomsk Oblast, central Russia], Yelizovo [Kamchatka Krai in the far east]) or HF (shortwave) (Novosibirsk [central Russia] and Khabarovsk [far eastern Russia]). Moscow used both VHF and HF. The reason why HF needed to be used was because the Soviet Union at the time did not have a fleet of tracking ships that could follow Gagarin's flight once he left Soviet territory.

During a press conference a few days after his flight, Gagarin gave a speech, which described in vivid detail what he saw through the window of his capsule:

"The view of the Earth from an altitude of 175-300 km is very sharp. The Earth's surface looks approximately the same as seen from a high-flying jet plane. Clearly distinctive are

large mountain ranges, large rivers, large forest areas, shorelines and islands.

The clouds which cover the Earth's surface are very visible, and their shadow on the Earth can be seen distinctly. The color of the sky is completely black. The stars on this black background seem to be somewhat brighter and clearer. The Earth is surrounded by a characteristic blue halo. This halo is particularly visible at the horizon. From a light-blue coloring, the sky blends into a beautiful deep blue, then dark blue, violet, and finally complete black.

When I left the Earth's shadow, the Sun's rays penetrated the Earth's atmosphere. At this point, the Earth's horizon was dark blue, violet and finally black.

The transition into the Earth's shadow took place very rapidly. Darkness comes instantly and nothing can be seen. Obviously, the spaceship passed over the ocean during this period of time. If the spaceship would have passed over large cities, then I would have probably been able to see the lights of those cities. The stars were well visible.

The exit from the Earth's shadow is also rapid and sharp."

His entire speech can be found [here](#).

His craft reached a maximum height of 327 km above the Earth's surface, which is described as low earth orbit (LEO). It only emerged many years later that Gagarin's orbit had overshot the planned apogee (its highest point) of 230 km by almost 100 km; due to a faulty valve, the upper stage

engine worked longer than it should have. His spacecraft thus reached a height of 327 km, which could have had serious repercussions for his safe return to solid ground.

If the retrorocket system responsible for his reinsertion into the atmosphere had failed at the crucial moment, the Vostok 1's orbit would not have decayed naturally within a week to ten days, but only after 30 days. As Gagarin only had life support – air, food and water – for 10 days, he would not have survived this.

Re-entry and landing

The mission almost ended in disaster.

After the de-orbiting burn, the re-entry module with Gagarin inside failed to disconnect from the service or instrument module beneath, to which it was connected by 'umbilical cables', and the two started to spin at high speed about their axes. At the same time, the friction with the Earth's atmosphere caused the heat shield to start burning and temperatures to rise rapidly inside the cabin; Gagarin almost lost consciousness. Thankfully, the re-entry module eventually broke free and stopped spinning, and Gagarin could re-orient it.

About 7 km from the ground, the hatch opened and Gagarin was ejected. Both his parachute and that of the capsule deployed, and both floated safely back down to Earth, about 26 km southwest of the city of Engels in the Saratov region (where he had first learned to fly!).

There was almost another

mishap when Gagarin's reserve parachute partly deployed, as the two parachutes could easily have become entangled. Additionally, he struggled for some six minutes to open a respiration valve on his helmet to enable him to breathe atmospheric air while floating down. Tense moments indeed!

He landed in open countryside, near the village of Smelovka, just east of the Volga River. According to Gagarin's own description, he almost touched down in the river itself, but luckily the wind gave him a bit of a push. Gagarin tells this lovely story in his logbook, of his encounter with a local woman, Anikhayat Takhtarova and her five-year-old granddaughter Rumiya Nurskanova:

"Having stepped onto firm ground, I saw a woman and a girl who were standing near a spotted calf and who were watching me with bewilderment. When they saw me in my space suit and the parachute dragging alongside as I walked, they started to back away in fear. I told them, don't be afraid, I am a Soviet like you, who has descended from space and I must find a telephone to call Moscow!"

From lift-off (09h07) to landing (10h55), his flight lasted 108 minutes. A Russian docudrama/biopic about Gagarin's flight on the Vostok 1 called Gagarin – First in Space, released in June 2013, has a running time of 108 minutes, thus approximating the length of his flight. Other sources have marked the landing at 10h53, stating that the flight in fact lasted 106 minutes.

It was this landing – by par-

achute, and separate from his capsule rather than inside it – that almost led to Gagarin losing the title of first man in space on a technicality.

The institution tasked with certifying this achievement, the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI, or in English, the International Air Sports Federation) had previously, in the 1950s, drafted guidelines for what constituted a spaceflight. These guidelines made it clear that the pilot/cosmonaut/ astronaut had to land with (inside) his spacecraft (after all, the same rule applied to conventional flights in an aircraft).

When the Soviet Union submitted their official statement to the FAI, they declared that Gagarin had landed with the spacecraft. This was despite newspaper articles in the local press, in which witnesses said they had seen him parachute to earth; these were hurriedly confiscated by the KGB, as it would have contradicted the official story. Thus, Gagarin was officially recognised as the first man in space. Technically, however, he couldn't have landed inside the Vostok 1, as it did not have a braking system; so, the only and safest way to land, was for him to eject from his craft and for separate parachutes to deploy.

It was only after Gherman Stepanovich Titov's flight on Vostok 2 a few months later, on 6 August 1961, which involved a full day spent in orbit (17.5 orbits of Earth, to be precise), that flags were raised. Although the Soviet Union's official statement to the FAI was that Titov had landed with the spacecraft,



LIFT OFF: Take-off of the Vostok 3KA space capsule, mounted ontop of a Vostok-K rocket, at Baikonur on 12 April 1961.

Titov himself publicly admitted that he had ejected from Vostok 2 and landed by parachute. This implied that Gagarin too had not landed inside his craft but parachuted to safety separately.

This revelation naturally caused a stir, leading to a special meeting of FAI delegates, who re-examined the records – and subsequently decided to change the guidelines rather than change the record books: They acknowledged that the greatest technological accomplishment of spaceflight was the launch, orbiting and safe return of the human being on-board, regardless of how they landed.

Hero of the Soviet Union

A few days after his historic flight, Gagarin arrived in Moscow, where he was greeted by massive crowds, loudly cheering and waving hand-drawn pictures and large photographs of their heroic cosmonaut. They lined the surrounding streets and filled Red Square in front of the Kremlin, as a beaming Gagarin, standing on the balcony above Lenin's Tomb, next to Premier Nikita Khrushchev and

surrounded by party officials, waved cheerfully to the crowds.

He received the highest Soviet award from Premier Khrushchev – Hero of the Soviet Union, as well as the Order of Lenin, and an impressive list of further medals and awards.

During Gagarin's subsequent round-the-world tour of about 30 countries, he was greeted by cheering crowds everywhere. Everywhere except the United States, that is – US President John F Kennedy barred him from visiting the country.

During his visit to Manchester in the UK in July 1961, he made a huge impression on local residents, when, despite a torrential downpour, he insisted on standing in the car that was driving him around, with the roof up, so that the crowds could see him. He appealed equally to young and old, men and women. The Foundry Workers' Union even presented him with a medal and honorary membership, in recognition of his apprenticeship as a foundry worker. Gagarin's natural warmth and openness opened doors everywhere; he also cut a fine figure in his dashing military uniform! 50 years

later, in July 2011, a special plaque commemorating this visit was unveiled at Manchester International Airport.

All over, monuments were erected in his honour, and streets were named after him. The small town of Ghzatsk was renamed Gagarin. The launch pad from which Vostok 1 carried him into space is still called Gagarin's Start. A crater on the far side of the moon was named after him; even an asteroid in the asteroid belt, which was discovered in the year of his death, was given the name 1772 Gagarin. And, more recently, in March 2005, NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Opportunity used its rock abrasion tool to expose the interior of a rock called 'Gagarin', which is situated at a small crater that was informally named 'Vostok' in memory of his flight.

After his historic space flight and his tours around the world, Gagarin spent several years working at Star City (Zvyozdny gorodok), a closed military research and space training facility to the northeast of Moscow. Soviet and Russian cosmonauts have lived and trained here since the 1960s, and many Russian cosmonauts, past and present, and personnel of the training centre and their respective families, live here. Gagarin was working on designs for a reusable spacecraft, received the rank of Colonel in 1963, and became deputy training director of the Cosmonaut Training Centre, which was later named after him.

The Soyuz 1 disaster

Even though Gagarin was

eager to return to space, the government refused to allow it. However, he did train as back-up crew for Soyuz 1 (the word Союз means 'Union'), which was to be piloted by his close friend and fellow cosmonaut Vladimir Mikhaylovich Komarov. On 12 October 1964, Komarov had successfully commanded the three-man mission onboard Voskhod 1, which was the first spaceflight with more than one crew member. Komarov and his fellow cosmonauts Boris Yegorov and Konstantin Feoktistov completed 16 orbits in space aboard Voskhod 1.

The launch date for the Soyuz 1 mission was 23 April 1967. A plethora of serious problems with the spacecraft should have postponed the launch, but the new Premier Leonid Brezhnev (who had replaced Khrushchev in a coup in 1964) and the Politburo were very insistent that it go ahead regardless. The Chief Designer of the Soviet space program, Sergei Korolev, had died in 1966, leaving a power vacuum; Vasily Michin had been chosen as his successor. The launch of Soyuz 1 was the first crewed flight since Korolev's death.

The mission plan was complex and very ambitious: it involved the launch of a second craft – Soyuz 2 – the next day, a rendezvous in space during which two astronauts from Soyuz 2 were supposed to spacewalk to Soyuz 1, and then the return of both capsules to Earth.

Unfortunately, it all went tragically wrong, with multiple system failures onboard the Soyuz 1. A solar panel failed



HERO: Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and Yuri Gagarin arriving at Vnukovo Airport in Moscow, on 14 April 1961, after Gagarin's historic flight.

to unfold, leading to a shortage of power; orientation detectors malfunctioned; the automatic stabilisation system failed; the manual system was only partly working. Due to heavy storms at Baikonur, the launch of Soyuz 2 was scrubbed. Komarov in Soyuz 1 got the retrorockets to fire after 18 orbits and successfully re-entered the atmosphere.

But, tragically, things kept going wrong. Although the drogue parachute deployed, it did not detach as required; the main parachute did not unfold, and the manually deployed reserve parachute became entangled with the drogue. As a result, the capsule crash-landed on Earth at 140 km/h – an impact no one could survive. And finally, the retrorockets, which should have fired before touchdown to ensure a soft landing, only started firing once the craft had already crashed. When the raging inferno was finally extinguished by the ground crew, nothing much remained of Komarov's body.

It was an absolutely devastating loss of a talented, dedicated and experienced cosmonaut.

Tragically, Komarov's death had been avoidable – if more care had been taken with the design and construction of the spacecraft, if more checks and balances had been in place, if there hadn't been such relentless pressure put on the scientists and engineers to launch by a certain deadline, and if the politicians and people in power had bothered to listen to those actually working on the spacecraft and well aware of the multiple fatal flaws and problems.

But then, politicians seldom do.

And during the Cold War, with all its secrets and lies, propaganda and conspiracies, coupled with the political urgency of beating the USA in the conquest of outer space, it is perhaps not surprising that this tragedy happened.

Gagarin's death

After the Soyuz 1 crash, Gagarin was permanently banned from participating in any further spaceflights. But they could not keep him away from his beloved planes. Sadly, less than a year later, on 27 March 1968, tragedy struck again. Yuri Gagarin and flight instructor Vladimir Seryogin were killed while piloting a MiG-15 jet fighter.

Out of the swirling mists of speculation and secrecy emerged various theories about the reasons for the crash. It was only revealed many years later, in June 2013, that the accident had most likely been caused by a Sukhoi fighter jet that, due to bad weather, had been flying too close to the MiG at supersonic speed; the turbulence created by its backwash had sent Gagarin's jet into a spiral,

plunging it into the ground.

Gagarin, who had been born on 9 March 1934, died just a few weeks after celebrating his 34th birthday. His body and that of fellow pilot Seryogin were cremated and their ashes placed in the Kremlin Wall necropolis, where his friend and fellow cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov had been interred in April the previous year. The funeral was attended by hundreds of thousands of grieving mourners, and people across the world shared their grief.

In his short but extraordinary life, Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin had been the first human being on the planet to fearlessly launch himself into the darkness of space beyond the protective embrace of Earth's atmosphere – and return safely home.

Although he was a Soviet citizen by birth, and rightfully

revered by the Soviet people, he became a hero for the entire world. At a time when Cold War tensions between the USA and the Soviet Union threatened to boil over into mutual nuclear destruction, his amazing feat brought together and united people all around the globe.

As the inscription beneath his memorial reads, that now stands at the SANSA Space Science Centre in Hermanus:

"Orbiting Earth in the spaceship, I saw how beautiful our planet is. People, let us preserve and increase this beauty, not destroy it. – Y. Gagarin".

His flight onboard the Vostok 1 burnt a blazing trail of fire across the skies that, still today, inspires hundreds of cosmonauts and astronauts who are following in his footsteps.



Is that a fact?

Some facts about World War I. Short, sharp and to the point.

It has been nearly 103 years since the Armistice was signed, bringing World War I to and end.

It was known as 'The Great War', or 'The War to End All Wars'. Yet as we know, it didn't end all wars. A mere 21 years later the world was at it again in an even more devastating war that would be named World War II.

In this article we take a look at a few interesting facts about what became known as World War I.

To begin with, let's look at a few facts about the Great War.

A good chance of surviving

So you're in the army now. Hope your last will and testament is up to date. There's a horde of nasty Huns sitting just across no-man's land from you, just waiting to ventilate your hide. Your chances of survival don't look that good, right. Wrong!

It was rare for a British soldier to be in the firing line for long. Unless they were involved in a battle, a unit would only spend about 10 days a month in the trenches. And of those, only about three days were spent right up on the front line.

It was not uncommon for soldiers to be rotated out of the trench line for as long as a month at a time.

The fact is that nine out of 10 British soldiers survived the trenches. Out of the approximately six million British

soldiers mobilised, just over 700,000 were killed. Most of them during battles.

A bit of Beethoven

Most readers will know that after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour during World War II, America declared war on Japan. Between 110,000 and 120,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated in internment camps.

The ironic thing is that the US 442nd Infantry Regiment, comprising most of Japanese American volunteers, became the most decorated unit in U.S. military history.

What some readers may not know was that this was not the first time it happened.

During World War I there were more than 250,000 Germans living in the USA who were forced to register at a post office and then carry a registration card with them at all times.

Of these, over 2,000 Germans were arrested and put in internment camps.

Many of the interned were the musicians from orchestras, and in one camp they were able to perform a piece of Beethoven.

The Red Signaller

Manfred von Richthofen, better known as the Red Baron, was the top scoring fighter ace of World War I with 80 kills.

Yet he started off the war as a lancer in a cavalry unit. When this unit was disbanded, he was transferred to the Signal Corps.

For over a year he spent his days stringing telegraph wires along the western front, even earning himself an Iron Cross along the way.

Then, in 1915, he applied to join the Imperial Air Service. He became a legend and was both respected and feared by the Allies.

In April 1918 he was shot down and he crash landed behind Allied lines where he was found dead at the controls. The British and Australians buried him with full military honours.

You can read a comprehensive account of Manfred von Richthofen in the November issue of Military Despatches.

Child Soldiers

During World War I many soldiers, on both sides, lied about their age in order to enlist.

Sidney Lewis was the youngest British soldier. He was just 12 years old when he joined the British Army. Naturally the recruiting sergeant must have been myopic when Sidney claimed that he was 18 years old.

And Sidney was not the only one to lie about his age. Thousands of underage boys lied about their age to fight at the front.

Many of them were motivated by patriotism, wanting to fight for their country. For others though, it was the only escape from the poverty of their daily lives.



RED BARON: A replica of the Red Baron's Fokker Dr-1

No doing the dirty

Come on, let's get real. Most young men have one thing on their minds - the opposite sex (with a strong emphasis on the sex part). And just because you've put them in a military uniform is not going to change this.

National servicemen in the old South African Defence Force (SADF) would often talk about the importance of the three Ps - Post, Pass and P***y.

The Allied powers during World War I knew that there was no ways they were going to stop their troops from getting frisky with the local females. Condoms were standard issue to all Allied troops in order to keep them protected.

Did I say all? Well, with the exception of the United States. They were the only Allied power during World War I that did not provide its soldiers with condoms. Not that it stopped the troops.

More than 204,000 American troops were wounded during World War I. Yet more than

400,00 US soldiers were infected by STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases), with many of them rendered unfit for duty.

Fake news is nothing new

When America entered World War I in April 1917, the war had already been going on more than three years.

In those three years while America was not involved, British agents were planting stories in US newspapers, stirring up anger against innocent German civilians living in the USA.

And here you thought that fake news was all new and Internet-generation based. Just look at the Bible (New Living Translation). Ecclesiastes 1:9 - "History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new."

Donkeys and Lions

There is an old saying that the British soldiers in World War I were lions led by donkeys.

The brave soldiers (lions) were led by incompetent generals (donkeys) who lived miles

behind the front in luxury and out of touch with reality.

There is an old joke about a British general addressing his officers just before an attack.

"Remember lads, I'll be right behind you. About 100 miles behind you."

It was claimed that generals never went over the top with their troops. The fact was that standing orders stated that Generals were not allowed to go over the top as they were too valuable to lose.

Still, this didn't stop more than 200 generals being killed, wounded or captured. Most Generals visited the front lines every day. In battle, they were considerably closer to the action than their counterparts are today.

Non sexist tanks

The tank was a weapon that changed the face of warfare. When the tank first made its appearance on the battlefield they came in two models - male and female.

The male version of the tank was armed with cannons. The female was armed only with machine guns.

By the end of the war tank technology had developed, especially in British tanks. It was decided that tanks would be armed with both a cannon and machine guns. This practice continues to this day, so there is not longer a need for tanks to be designated male or female.

Big Bang

One of the things that both sides learnt during World War I was that launching infantry attack across no-man's land

was generally a waste of time, and a waste of lives. Not that it stopped the generals from planning the same type of attacks time after time.

An attack would normally begin with an artillery barrage on the opposing trenches. These would often last for two or three days.

Once the barrage had ended the troops would then 'go over the top', climbing out of their trenches and advancing across no-man's land towards the enemy.

The problem was that the barrage let the enemy know that an attack was coming. They would sit in the relative safety of bunkers dug into the side of the trenches and wait for the barrage to end.

As soon as it had ended the troops would emerge from their bunkers, take up their positions, set up machine guns, and wait for the enemy to advance.

The advancing enemy were normally mown down before they even managed to get halfway across no-man's land.

The Battle of the Somme started with an artillery bombardment that lasted for a week. 1,738,000 shells were fired at the Germans.

In the brilliant television series *Blackadder Goes Forth*, which is set during World War I, Captain Edmund Blackadder (Rowan Atkinson) is talking to Lieutenant The Honourable George Colthurst St. Barleigh (Hugh Laurie) and the dim witted Private Baldrick (Tony Robinson).

"Yes, but Jerry is safe underground in concrete bunkers," he tells them. "We've shot off over a million cannon shells and what's the result? One dachshund with a slight limp"

Both sides came to the conclusion that if going over the top



BIG BANG: Actual footage of the explosion at Hawthorn Rdige Redoubt during the Battle of the Somme. Click on the play button to view.

didn't work, why not go under?

Miners from both sides would build tunnels towards enemy trenches. Once under an enemy trench, the tunnel could be filled with explosives and detonated.

On the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the British detonated 19 mines under the German positions.

The mine beneath Hawthorn Ridge Redoubt was detonated at 07h20, ten minutes before Zero Hour. The area beneath the Germans had been packed with 18,000 kg of Ammonal and the resulting explosion was heard in London, 225 km away. The explosion was filmed by Geoffrey Malins.

Truce

There was never any official truce during World War I. That is not to say that they didn't happen.

The most famous one was the Christmas Truce of 1914 (See the article 'Silent Night' in the December 2017 issue of *Military Despatches*).

On Christmas Eve troops be-

gan shouting Christmas greetings across the trenches. On Christmas morning some of them began emerging from the trenches into no-man's land. Greetings and gifts were exchanged and the opportunity was taken to bury the dead that had fallen in no-man's land.

In one sector they even arranged a football match. The truce lasted the entire day and in some sectors continued to New Year.

Naturally the top brass were not impressed with this. Didn't the soldiers realise that the entire purpose of war was to kill each other.

There are also reports of smaller truces in 1915 and even 1916. In some trenches, the soldiers adopted a "live and let live" policy, trying not to open fire on the enemy so they would not fire on them.

To counter this the commanders would rotate their soldiers all over the front line to stop them from becoming familiar with the troops in the trenches across from them.



Nicknames

This month's quiz is by no means easy. We give you the nickname of a famous military figure and you tell us who they are. Some of these nicknames were ones that the person did not approve of, but they stuck. The answers are on page 107.

- 1. 31-Knot.
- 2. Balaclava Ned.
- 3. The Bear.
- 4. The Big Fella.
- 5. Black Baron.
- 6. Black Jack.
- 7. Black Knight.
- 8. Blondie.
- 9. Blood-n-Guts.
- 10.Bobs.
- 11.Bohemian corporal.
- 12.Bomber.
- 13.Boy.
- 14.Brad.
- 15.Breaker.
- 16.Bubi.
- 17.The Desert Fox.
- 18.Dolfo.
- 19.Ike.
- 20.Lion of the West.
- 21.The Little Corporal.
- 22.Mad Mike.
- 23.Pappa.
- 24.Sailor.
- 25.Schneller Heinz.
- 26.Silent Otto.
- 27.Stonewall.
- 28.Tin Legs.
- 29.White Death.
- 30.Wild Bill.



Remembering Yuri Gagarin - Part Two

*Memorial to Yuri Gagarin - the First Man in Space – unveiled at the southern tip of Africa.
Article and photographs by REGINE LORD.*

When we look back at human history on this planet, it seems that we have always raised our eyes up to the skies, and longed to soar among the birds and high above the clouds – and even to venture far beyond Earth’s atmosphere, among the stars!

Humankind’s presence in space officially began in April 1961, when Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin was chosen to be humankind’s first emissary to space.

On the morning of 12 April 1961, Soviet Air Force pilot Gagarin climbed into the small spherical Vostok 1 space capsule, mounted ontop of a powerful Vostok-K rocket, and prepared to be launched into orbit around our beautiful planetary home.

Gagarin’s exuberant exclamation “Поехали!” (Poyekhali!) – “Let’s go!” – as the booster rockets ignited in a blinding flash of light and his spacecraft roared up into the heavens – has become legendary. From take-off to landing, his daring flight – one orbit around the Earth – lasted 108 minutes.

12 April 2021 thus marks the 60th anniversary of the first manned space flight.

In recognition of this historic milestone of space exploration, a memorial honouring Gagarin was recently unveiled at the South African National Space

Agency’s (SANSA) Space Science Centre in the small coastal town of Hermanus. The ceremony, held on 5 November 2020, was organised by the Consulate of the Russian Federation in Cape Town.

Dr Lee-Anne McKinnell, the Managing Director of SANSA Space Science, explained why SANSA Hermanus had been chosen to host this memorial, referring to the good working relationship between South Africa and the Russian Federation on various forums:

“Yuri Gagarin’s achievement of being the first man in space provides inspiration for young and old as to what can be achieved, and what an incredible feat it was, given that this was 1961 – which pre-dates the technological advances we enjoy today.

South Africa and Russia have had a long association in various forums. The most formal one for space is the coordination and collaboration between the BRICS countries, a grouping in which both South Africa and Russia play an active role. In addition, both countries have Regional Warning Centres for Space Weather and as such sit together on many international committees that deal with the global challenges of space weather.” (Source: Email interview with Dr McKinnell)

Due to its geographical loca-

tion on the southern coastline, near the southern tip of South Africa, SANSA Hermanus is ideally placed to monitor the skies and the near-Earth space environment over the southern hemisphere. It is also only 120 km away from Cape Town, making it easily accessible to tourists and travellers, both local and international. Moreover, given that SANSA in Hermanus has a community outreach program and an interactive science centre that attracts visitors, both young and old, the Yuri Gagarin memorial provides a marvellous focal point for inspiring the next generation of space scientists and explorers:

“The Russian Consulate approached SANSA to host the sculpture, as the National Space Agency seemed like an appropriate home for a symbol of space achievement. In addition, it is anticipated that the sculpture will lead to additional active projects in space between the two countries.

SANSA Hermanus was also chosen as the location due to the presence of the SANSA Space Science Centre, which attracts many learners and public visitors throughout the year, and thereby has the potential to inspire many generations.” (Source: Email interview with Dr McKinnell)

Due to the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, only a small



WORTH VISITING: Space Weather Regional Warning Centre at SANSA Space Science in Hermanus.

group of people could attend the event. They included SANSA staff, local residents, Russian diplomats, Russian compatriots and members of the media. Gunner Kevin Ashton and Lt Cdr Glenn von Zeil (SA Navy) were among the attendees, and I was delighted to receive an invitation to join them.

The morning’s program included an introductory presentation, a guided tour, a video of Yuri Gagarin’s historic spaceflight, and the official ceremony.

What does SANSA do?

SANSA was formally established in 2010 to develop and promote space research in the country, as well as to foster international cooperation in all kinds of space-related activities and research. It became operational on 1 April 2011, and thus celebrates its 10th birthday this year.

Its four operational programs include earth observation imagery (geographical information systems, remote sensing,

etc.), space engineering (e.g., building satellites), space operations (monitoring of satellites, etc.), and space science.

SANSA’s operations are spread across three main sites: At the head office in Pretoria, earth observation data is collected, processed, archived and disseminated, and space engineering facilities focus on developing, building and testing satellite systems. Hartebeesthoek hosts the ground stations for satellite tracking, telemetry and command, as well as facilities for launch support, mission control, and space navigation. And the site in Hermanus is specifically responsible for the Space Science program.

SANSA Hermanus is part of a worldwide network of magnetic observatories. In fact, the site used to be known as the Hermanus Magnetic Observatory (HMO), which was the country’s national geomagnetic observatory.

This had been established in 1932-1933, initially at the University of Cape Town, and ex-

panded to include a network of measuring stations around the country. In order to understand the Earth’s magnetic field and its fluctuations, simultaneous observations need to be made all over the world. It became well known internationally for its accurate observations. The electrification of the railway network in the country in the 1940s disturbed magnetic observations, and thus the observatory relocated to the small town of Hermanus in 1940-1941. The HMO now forms part of SANSA.

Researchers and postgraduates here study various topics, such as space science, space physics, space weather, atmospheric science, geomagnetism, communications, navigation and Antarctic science. SANSA has access to sensors throughout Antarctica (where SANAE IV, the South African base, is located), Southern Africa, and the off-shore islands. There are about 80 different pieces of equipment supplying data related to the Earth’s magnetic field, the Sun and the near-space environment.

Space Weather Regional Warning Centre

We were shown the Space Weather Regional Warning Centre, which is currently a large room with a wall of monitors and screens, just inside the entrance to the main Space Science Centre building. Plans are afoot to construct a new centre in a separate building that will operate 24/7. The ground-breaking ceremony for this facility took place on 9 March 2021.

The Regional Warning Centre in Hermanus is the only one in Africa. In the southern hemisphere there are only two other countries with similar centres – Brazil and Australia. The other thirteen are in the northern hemisphere (one of them is in Moscow, Russia).

Space weather is a consequence of the behaviour of the Sun and its interactions with Earth's magnetic field and atmosphere.

The Sun's activity, in the form of solar flares, solar winds and coronal mass ejections (powerful blasts of plasma and magnetic field), can influence the performance and reliability of space-borne and ground-based technological systems.

Although we are largely protected by the Earth's atmosphere and geomagnetic field, solar activity – and particularly solar superstorms – can cause devastating damage to highly sensitive modern technology. They can damage – even shut down – our national power grids, disable satellites, and disrupt the high frequency radio communication, mobile phones and GPS systems on which our modern world relies.

Intense solar activity can affect the defence sector – e.g., radar and tracking systems, navigation, communication, aeronautics, and weapons control and targeting systems. Solar energetic particles also present a serious health hazard to astronauts on space missions, and can damage electronic systems on satellites, causing them to fail or to record incorrect data.

Fortunately for us, these Space Weather Regional Warn-

ing Centres keep tabs on sunspot activity and monitor variations in the Earth's geomagnetic field and changes in the ionosphere. They prepare space weather forecasts, and develop prediction and warning models to help mitigate the risks of extreme space weather events. And they issue alerts when solar flares or coronal mass ejections occur.

Interactive Science Centre

We also visited the interactive Science Centre.

SANSA Hermanus has an active outreach program and welcomes thousands of visitors every year, especially learners from surrounding communities, to this interactive Science Centre. The large room is filled with all kinds of gadgets and hands-on displays and playful experiments that are intended to spark an interest in science, space and technology.

In addition, there is a mobile lab that can be requested by schools in the area; such visits are always very popular among learners and teachers.

Video of Gagarin's space flight

As part of the morning's program, we watched a video of Yuri Gagarin's historic space flight in 1961, titled "The First Man in Space: Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin" and produced by Roscosmos Studios.

It included interviews with Oleg Ivanovsky (the Soviet rocket scientist who described his emotions on closing the hatch on Gagarin before the launch), Boris Chertok (a control system designer in the Soviet space program), Pavel Pop-

ovich (Soviet cosmonaut who trained with Gagarin), Alexei Leonov (Soviet/Russian cosmonaut who became the first person to do a spacewalk), Viktor Gorbalko (Soviet cosmonaut), Boris Volynov (Soviet cosmonaut), and Valentina Tereshkova (she flew a solo mission on Vostok 6 in 1963, making her the first and youngest woman cosmonaut).

Official ceremony

The morning's program culminated in the ceremonial unveiling of the memorial of Cosmonaut No. 1 – Colonel Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin, which now stands proudly in the rear courtyard of the Space Science Centre at SANSA Hermanus.

Attendees were welcomed by Russian Consular Attaché Dmitry Kryuchkov, who introduced the main speakers – Mr Iakov Baskakov, Acting Consul General of the Russian Federation in Cape Town, and Dr Lee-Anne McKinnell, the MD of SANSA Space Science. All stood to attention during the playing of the Russian and South African National Anthems, as the two countries' respective flags fluttered in the breeze.

Space research and exploration requires a global effort

Acting Consul General Baskakov spoke about the origins of the Soviet/Russian space programs and the context of Gagarin's spaceflight, and how the excitement and thrill of this achievement was shared by ordinary people all over the world:

"His feat united people around the globe in their aspi-



PROUD MOMENT: Dr Lee-Anne McKinnell and Acting Consul General Mr Iakov Baskakov unveil the Memorial to Yuri Gagarin.

ration to reach new heights. It was a general breakthrough that combined the determination of mankind to stretch the boundaries of science and technology together with personal bravery of the individual." (Source: Defenceweb)

He emphasised that space exploration and space research required a global effort, with countries around the world collaborating and combining their resources and expertise:

"This monument reminds us we should be together in the exploration and use of space, (it) will undoubtedly serve to strengthen friendship and collaboration between Russia and South Africa in this sphere." (Source: SANSA)

Dr Lee-Anne McKinnell echoed this sentiment:

"Space research and exploration is global – and while representing the African continent we also look to our international stakeholders to partner with us on an equal footing as we take on the global challenge of optimising space utilisation and

inspiring the next generation." (Source: SANSA)

The Yuri Gagarin memorial thus also acts as a visual reminder of the cooperation between the two countries, especially in the intertwined fields of space science, space exploration and space technology.

Three of South Africa's four satellites have been launched from launch sites in the Russian Federation: SumbandilaSat in September 2009 on a Soyuz-2 launch vehicle from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, ZA-Cube1 in November 2013 on a Dnepr launch vehicle from Yasny Launch Base (Dombrovsky missile deployment area) in central Russia, and ZA-Cube2 in December 2018

on a Soyuz/Fregat-M vehicle from Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia's Far East. South Africa's first satellite (SunSat) had been launched by NASA from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, in 1999.

In fact, the association between South Africa and the Russian Federation goes back

even further in time. The first African in space, South African-born Mark Shuttleworth, flew to the International Space Station (ISS) onboard the Russian Soyuz capsule in 2002!

In this regard, Acting Consul General Baskakov said:

"In 2011, the United Nations General Assembly declared April the 12th as the International Day of Human Space Flight. This is a tribute to the courage and fearlessness of the conquerors of space. Since 1961, hundreds of people of different nationalities have been in space. Among them is Mark Shuttleworth, a South African citizen, who performed his space flight onboard the Russian Soyuz spacecraft." (Source: Speech at event)

Mark Shuttleworth had spent a year training and preparing for his flight to the ISS, with seven months at Star City, the location of the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre north-east of Moscow, Russia, before the launch on 25 April 2002. During his 10-day mission, he conducted several experiments. After his return, he spoke widely and passionately about his experiences in space, seeking to inspire the next generation to follow careers in science, engineering, technology and space.

Inspiring the youth and igniting excitement in science and technology

It is this commitment to inspire future generations that is also shared by SANSA Hermanus. Dr Lee-Anne McKinnell explained:

"A significant part of achieving our dream for the African

continent is to inspire the youth and ignite excitement in science and technology. We are constantly looking for the future space explorers, the future space environment researchers, and the future space engineers. Our dream is a long-term one, which we know cannot be achieved by our generation alone.” (Source: SANSA)

Dr McKinnell recalled a visit by an astronaut to the Space Science Centre in 2011, and the impact this space traveller had on the awe-struck youngsters who were listening to him speak:

“I will never forget it. It was a Saturday during the school holidays, and much to our surprise, because we were told nobody would come, many members of the public and school children came to meet our guest and learn about how we work in space.

The astronaut gave a special presentation to the children, and as everyone was leaving at the end, there was a growing sense of wonder in the room. I could feel it.

A very young learner came up to me and said, ‘Do you think it is possible for an African to be an astronaut?’ Of course, it is possible. But what makes it possible are the seeds that we sow, that spark that desire. Ten years later, I believe we have sown many seeds and sparked a lot of desire.

This monument will help us to continue to sow seeds and spark desire for a future that is adventurous, technology driven and innovative, and most of all, allows our children of Africa to reach for the stars.”

So far, however, there has not been a black African astronaut, although Mandla Maseko, a young South African township lad from Pretoria, came very close.

Maseko was a candidate officer of the South African Air Force. In 2013, he attended a space camp in the Free State, where he excelled at completing all the challenges. As one of the top three winners, he flew to the Kennedy Space Centre in Orlando, Florida, where he – and more than 100 competitors from around the globe – participated in a week of very tough tests and challenges.

He was chosen as one of the winners to journey into space on an XCOR Lynx Mark II (designed to carry one pilot and one spaceflight participant) for a one-hour suborbital flight, initially scheduled for 2015. Unfortunately, before work on the plane could be completed, XCOR Aerospace went bankrupt in 2017, and the flight never happened. Maseko meanwhile returned to the SA Air Force and worked as a private pilot. A few years after winning the competition, he died tragically in a motorbike accident on 6 July 2019, aged only 30 years.

A shared passion for space unites people on a heart-to-heart level

After the speeches by Acting Consul General Mr Iakov Baskakov and Dr Lee-Anne McKinnell, a young Russian woman, Mrs Anna Toma (née Khlebnikova), stepped up to the microphone.

She had been invited to tell the story of her father’s involve-

ment in space development and specifically in the preparations for launching the Buran space shuttle from Baikonur Cosmodrome in southern Kazakhstan in the 1980s. Baikonur had been the launch site of Yuri Gagarin’s historic flight in 1961.

She was only one year old when her parents moved to Baikonur to work at the spaceport, and thus she spent her entire childhood and adolescence there. Her father, Vyacheslav Khlebnikov, had recently passed away, on 29 September 2020, and thus telling his story was her way of paying tribute to him.

She spoke about how a shared passion for space was able to bring together people from different countries and very different life experiences:

“I find it also quite incredible that in spite of the distance – the physical distance – between our countries [Russia and South Africa] that we are standing here all together and celebrating this man [Yuri Gagarin] who was and still is an inspiration to so many generations and to all of us. ...

I was reading about his life and biography. What struck me is that Yuri’s journey was not simple. It was full of challenges. He had a number of failures on the way and yet he could overcome them and he could do this – probably one of the most heroic things that you can think of - with such bravery and courage. This will always have a special place in my heart and, I am sure, in the hearts of many people in the world.

So what I wanted to bring across is that space really unites



COSMODROME: Mrs Anna Toma talking about her father’s work on the Buran-Energia space shuttle at Baikonur in the 1980s.

on-a-heart-to-heart level because people can really connect with each other’s stories across different generations. Through these stories we learn more about all the hard work behind the scenes in the space realm and in turn respect and admire the people behind it.” (Source: Email interview with Mrs Anna Toma).

A huge amount of hard work is necessary in order to prepare a spacecraft and its occupants for the spectacular event of the launch – and much of that work happens invisibly behind the scenes, involving a large number of people with different sets of skills, across many different industries:

“When my father came to Baikonur in 1983, he was part of the launching preparations of one of the most unique Soviet/Russian spacecrafts – Buran. It could go to space multiple times. It was a space shuttle that had a rocket that would carry a cosmonaut. It would also use a

completely safe fuel from the environmental point of view. There are other technical specifications that I am not aware of fully.

What is remarkable is that thousands of people all over the former Soviet Union were working on various parts and systems of this spacecraft in different parts of the country, in order to bring it all together and to make it happen. Every launch of any rocket requires a lot of hard work and efforts from many people that you wouldn’t even think of.”

Unveiling the bust of the first man in space – Yuri Gagarin

And then, Mr Iakov Baskakov and Dr Lee-Anne McKinnell, standing on either side of the memorial, together unveiled the bronze bust.

It depicts Yuri Gagarin wearing his space helmet with the letters CCCP (the Russian abbreviation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR])

clearly visible on the front.

Gagarin, who was only 27 years old at the time of his historic space flight, was a handsome and charismatic young man.

The bust perfectly captures his gentle smile and the almost wistful look in his eyes, suggesting his longing to return to space. Reportedly, Gagarin was eager to embark on another space mission – whether to the moon, Mars, Venus, or even beyond! However, his status as the first cosmonaut in the world – and Hero of the Soviet Union – made him too valuable for the Soviet leadership, and he was never permitted to fly another mission.

The inscription beneath the bust reads:

“Orbiting Earth in the spaceship, I saw how beautiful our planet is. People, let us preserve and increase this beauty, not destroy it. – Y. Gagarin”.

This beautiful bust was sculpted by his good friend and fellow cosmonaut Alexei Leonov. Born in 1934, like Gagarin, Leonov was part of the group of 20 Soviet Air Force pilots who had been selected for cosmonaut training in 1960. On 18 March 1965, Leonov became the first man to conduct a spacewalk; he was outside the Voskhod 2 spacecraft for just over 12 minutes. He was also a talented artist, and his experiences as a cosmonaut inspired him to create many extraordinary paintings about space exploration - as well as this unique bust of Gagarin. It was donated by “Dialogue of Cultures – United World”, a charity fund that was established in 2005. One

of their ongoing projects since 2011 has been the installation of memorials of Yuri Gagarin in educational institutions, parks and streets of various cities around the world. They have installed these memorials in about 37 countries around the world (possibly more by now). On the African continent, the first one was unveiled in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, on 6 June 2018, while the second one was installed at the Egyptian Space Agency's headquarters in New Cairo on 30 September 2020.

These memorials thus now stand at the northern tip of Africa, in the heart of the continent – and at the southern shores of Africa!

The Yuri Gagarin memorial is more than an acknowledgement of a single individual's heroic achievement. It is a recognition of the resourcefulness of human beings, of courage and fearlessness in the face of adversity, and of the longing to reach beyond the known world.

It stands as a reminder of how humankind's presence in space began, and of the many thousands of small steps that led to where we are today.

And may it indeed inspire the next generation of intrepid space travellers to follow in Yuri's footsteps!

Acknowledgements

Thank you very much to the Consulate of the Russian Federation for inviting me to attend. Thank you to the staff at the SANSA Space Science Centre – especially Dr Lee-Anne McKinnell, Ms Catherine Webster (Communications Officer) and Mr Jon Ward – for their input and the additional information they kindly shared with me. Thank you to Mrs Anna Toma for sending me a copy of her speech and so generously answering all my questions during my email interview. And lastly, thank you to Mr Kevin Ashton for the enjoyable drive and thought-provoking conversations!

Next month

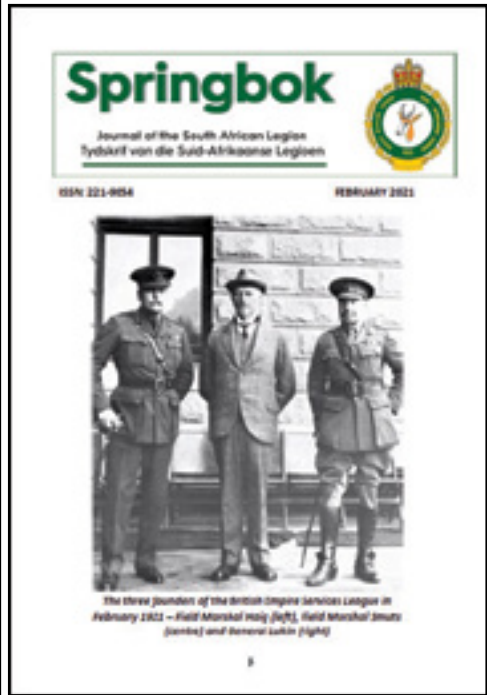
In the May edition of Military Despatches there will be another two articles by our Photographic Editor, Regine Lord.

The first article is about 60 years of space exploration - from Gagarin's first trip into space to the race to Mars.

The second article looks at some interesting facts and trivia about space.



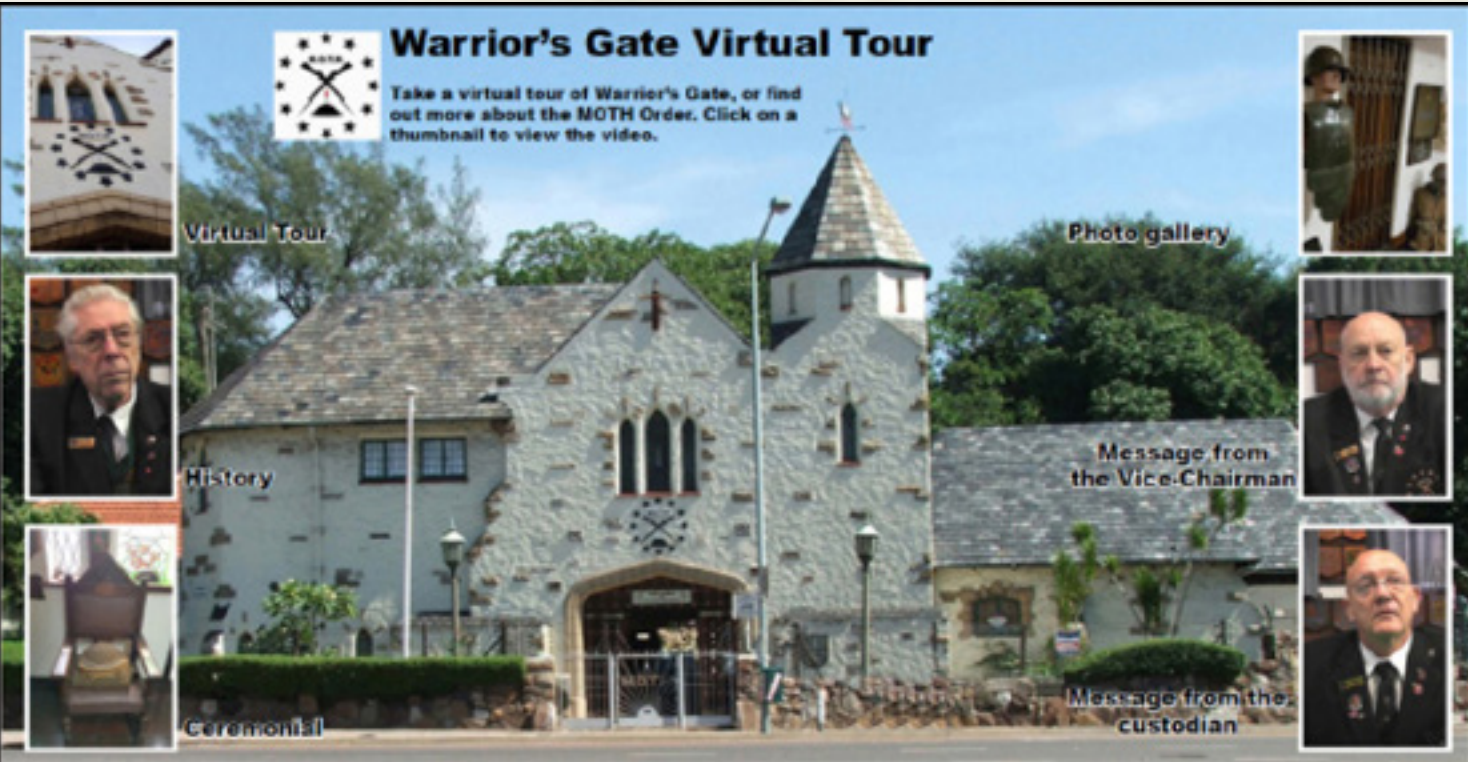
FIRST MAN IN SPACE: The bust of Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin that was unveiled at the South African National Space Agency's (SANSA) Space Science Centre in Hermanus in the Western Cape.



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.

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.



The importance of positive role models

Sea Cadets invest in the youth's future - Officer Training 2021. By LT CDR GLENN VON ZEIL.

Motivated and competent adult Instructors, Officers and Commanding Officers are paramount to grow and develop the South African Sea Cadets. This week twelve Officers, representing 6/12 units volunteered to take leave from their careers to attend a week long Officers course hosted at TS Woltemade.

These men and women were coached by retired South Africa Naval Captain's Herman De Vries and Dr Chris Mertz who have many years of theoretical and practical naval and nautical training themselves. Capt (SAN) Judy Rustin-Patrick, OC SAS SIMONSBURG, and Adm (JG) Koos Louw (Retired) opened the course and shared a few thoughts on leadership, command and what being an officer entails. Joseph Conrad's "Command at Sea: the prestige, privilege and burden of command" served as an anchor.

"Only a seaman realizes to what great extent an entire ship reflects the personality and ability of one individual, her Commanding Officer. To a landsman, this is not understandable - and sometimes it is even difficult for us to comprehend - but it is so !

A ship at sea is a different world in herself, and in consideration of the protracted and distant operations of the

fleet units, the Navy must place great power, responsibility and trust in the hands of those leaders chosen for command.

In each ship there is one man who, in the hour of emergency or peril at sea, can turn to no other man. There is one who alone is ultimately responsible for the safe navigation, engineering performance, accurate gunfire and morale of the ship. He is the Commanding Officer. He is the ship !

This is the most difficult and demanding assignment in the Navy. There is not an instant during his tour as Commanding Officer that he can escape the grasp of command responsibility. His privileges, in view of his obligations, are almost ludicrously small; nevertheless, this is the spur which has given the Navy its great leaders.

It is a duty which richly deserves the highest, time-honoured title of the seafaring world - Captain."

Parents of youth from 13 to 17 years entrust their children to these Officers for a few hours a week and on school holidays to shape them while providing maritime, leadership, discipline and learning opportunities whilst having "serious fun".

Capt / Dr Chris Mertz acknowledged that Sea Cadet Officers make a difference to the Sea Cadets lives – the effect

isn't always seen immediately." This positive influence is also carried and impacts the family and the community the Sea Cadet resides in and is schooled in.

The course covered 9 modules necessary to effectively manage a Training Ship and comprised:

1. Company environment & Governance.
2. Command & Control.
3. Budget & Finance.
4. Ceremonial.
5. Liaison.
6. Unit Administration.
7. Risk & Safety.
8. Policy & Regulations.
9. Training.

The course culminated with a syndicate project where each of the two syndicate teams presented a project of the formation, opening and setting up of a new Training Ship "TS Port Nolloth" to ensure that she can fulfil her mission of training Sea Cadets, making a positive difference in the community and the local youths lives. The teams were briefed that that a kind benefactor had made available a disused fish factory, offices and boat shed.

The two syndicate groups delivered a culmination of training to a panel including Adm (JG) Koos Louw (Chairman of Sea Cadets Board), Capt (SAN) Judy Rustin-Patrick (Direc-



OFFICERS TRAINING: All the instructors, facilitators and participants of the first South African Sea Cadets Commanding Officers Course at TS Woltemade.

PHOTOGRAPH: MIDSHIPMAN KELLY-MAREE CHITTER (TS WOLTEMADE)

tor Sea Cadets), Mr Malcolm Alexander (TETA) and Mr T Goduka (Deputy Chairman Sea Cadets).

Adm (JG) Louw provided feedback to both syndicates. Each had provided a different approach and when amalgamated completed a 360 degree insight. Adm Louw has confirmed that a Training Ship will be opening soon in Port Nolloth and that the exercise was very relevant to the immediate future.

All the Officers who attended the course reported that they had learnt from the "Old Salts" regarding officership, how to command and manage a Training Ship effectively. They recommend that all the other Sea Cadet Officers attend the next

course so that the standard and uniformity of training can be enhanced in the South African Sea Cadet Corps.

All the Sea Cadet Officers are volunteers, they receive no salaries, their passion, commitment and enthusiasm are fundamental to the establishment and continuation of a Training Ship. Should there be any ex Sea Cadets, SA Navy, SANDF or other trained and qualified adults who wish to apply as adult instructors please contact the Commanding Officer of your nearest Training Ship listed below.

Capt / Dr (SAN) Chris Mertz acknowledged and reminded all the Officers that they played a vital role in being "positive role models" for the Sea Cadets.

Thank you to Bart Reimann, an ex TS Woltemade Sea Cadet, for sponsoring the course and to Pick n Pay Rondebosch for food vouchers.

Bravo Zulu to the Sea Cadets in investing in the volunteer adult Officers and future Commanding Officers to ensure that the youth continue to live in hope.

For Noting:

Admiral (JG) Koos Louw is a retired Naval Officer who retains a strong interest in things maritime as well as a keen interest in maritime youth development. He is the Chairman of the Board of the South African Sea Cadets.

Captain (SAN) Judy Rustin-Patrick is the Officer Commanding SAS SIMONSBURG,

SA Navy’s training unit in Simon’s Town. She also serves on the board of the South African Sea Cadets.

Captain (SAN) Dr Chris Mertz (Retired) served as a training Officers in the SA Navy. He has a PhD in education and has also been involved in the False Bay College. His expertise is developing curriculum.

Captain (SAN) Herman De Vies (Retired) served as an Officer Commanding SAS Windhoek and as training officer. After retirement he was the director of a Maritime College in Ethiopia for 3 years and now manages a guest house in Kleinsee. His expertise is in maritime training and developing curriculum.

Those Sea Cadet Officers, their roles, units and civilian occupations who attended the Officer Course were:

1. Cdr (SCC) Paul Jacobs – Executive Officer Sea Cadet Corps & nominated Senior Officer – Operations Manager Fish Processing Factory
2. Lt Cdr (SCC) Chris Hand – Commanding Officer TS Springs – Project Manager
3. Lt (SCC) Thurston – Commanding Officer TS Outeniqua – SAPS Detective
4. Lt (SCC) Lisa Spencer – Commanding Officer TS Rook – Accountant
5. Lt (SCC) Gaylene Pillay – Officer in Command TS Woltemade – Accountant
6. SLt (SCC) Rajesh Sepwper-shad – Officer in Command TS Tiburon – MD of own company
7. WO1 (SAN) Noel Dreyer (Retired) – OiC TS Birkenhead – Community Organiser
8. SLt Jonathan van Reenen – Officer TS Knysna – Labour Inspector, Department of Labour
9. Ens Mikaila Pillay – Officer TS Woltemade - Administrator
10. Ens Ruben Pillay – Officer TS Woltemade – Electrician
11. Mid Mario Aimes – Officer TS Woltemade – Production Manager
12. Mid Irvin Sauls – Executive Officer TS Birkenhead – Fisherman

UNIT	AREA	COMMANDING OFFICER	CONTACT E MAIL
TS ATTIKWA	Oudtshoorn	Ens Juwayriah Syster	tsattikwa@gmail.com
TS BIRKENHEAD	Hawston	WO1 (Ret) Noel Dreyer	noelmdreyer@gmail.com
TS BOUNTY	Vereeniging	SLt Peter Howill	peter@cellulartraining.co.za
TS KNYSNA	Knysna	Lt Charl Lamini	seacadet@seanet.co.za
TS LANHERNE	Port Elizabeth	Lt Gert van Staaden	lanherne04@gmail.com
TS OUTENIQUA	Mossel Bay	Lt Amsterdam Thurston	thurston.amsterdam@yahoo
TS OWL	Potchefstroom	SLt Mattys van Tonder	matthysvantonder@gmail.com
TS ROOK	Krugersdorp	Lt Lisa Spenser	lisaspencer1209@gmail.com
TS SALDANHA	Saldanha Bay	Cdr Luigi Le Roux	luigi_leroux@yahoo.com
TS SPRINGS	Springs	Lt Cdr Chris Hand	oc@tssprings.co.za
TS TIBURON	Durban	SLt Rajesh Sewpershad	rajesh@yamadalube.co.za
TS WOLTEMADE	Cape Town	Lt Gaylene Pillay	tswoltemade@gmail.com

Please contact the Commanding Officer at the e mail address given OR the National Marketing Manager at seacadetswc@gmail.com.

Coming soon



Military Despatches YouTube Channel

In April we will be launching our very own YouTube Channel.

- It will include:**
- **Interesting articles**
 - **Quizzes**
 - **Trivia**
 - **Video clips**
 - **And a whole lot more**

We will send our subscribers an e-mail informing them of when the channel is active.

Remember to subscribe to the channel to receive content that will not be available to everyone.

Rank Structure - Iraqi 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 Iraqi Armed Forces.



The Iraqi Armed Forces consist of the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi Air Force, and the Iraqi Navy.

The armed forces of Iraq have a long and very active history. They were initially formed in the early 1920s.

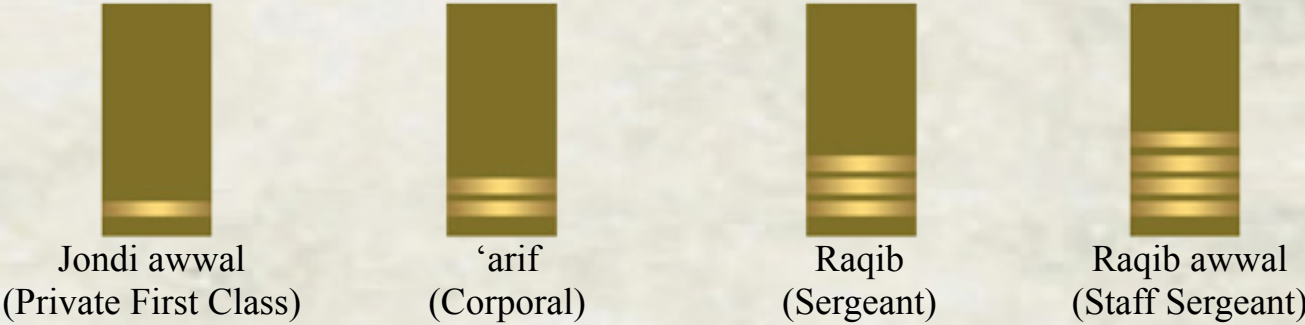
The armed forces are administered by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which toppled the Saddam Hussein regime, the Iraqi Armed Forces have been rebuilt with substantial as-

sistance from the United States Armed Forces. Since the implementation of the U.S.-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement on January 1, 2009, the Iraqi Armed Forces and the forces of the Iraqi interior ministry are responsible for providing security and upholding law and order throughout Iraq.

The Iraqi Army, in particular, is one of the most trusted national institutions of Iraq.

Iraqi Ground Forces

Non-commissioned Officers (NCO)



Officers



Iraqi Navy

Non-commissioned Officers (NCO)



Officers





Commander



Captain



Flotilla Admiral



Rear Admiral



Vice Admiral



Admiral



Admiral of
the Fleet



Lieutenant Colonel



Colonel



Brigadier General



Major General



Lieutenant General



Colonel General



Air Marshal

Iraqi Air Force

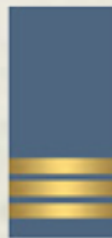
Non-commissioned Officers (NCO)



Senior Airman



Corporal



Sergeant



Staff Sergeant

Officers



Second Lieutenant



First Lieutenant



Captain



Major



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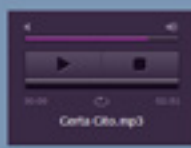
1. Military Veterans Acts
2. Last Post / Memorial
3. Heritage
4. Welfare
5. Newsletter
6. Books written by members
7. Donations
8. Events and notices
9. Photo gallery
10. Useful links



Certa Cito

Certa Cito, Certa Cito, there's the corps for you. Worries over, Jimmy hurry, get the message through. Green and blue your colours, land 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.



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



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Weapons & Equipment: Falklands War

This month in the first of a series of three articles we look at the weapons used by the ground forces of both Britain and Argentina during the Falklands War.

The Falklands War (Spanish: *Guerra de las Malvinas*) was a 10-week undeclared war between Argentina and the United Kingdom in 1982 over two British dependent territories in the South Atlantic: the Falkland Islands and its territorial dependency, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. The result of the war was a British victory.

The conflict began on 2 April, when Argentina invaded and occupied the Falkland Islands, followed by the invasion of South Georgia the next day. On 5 April, the British government dispatched a naval task force to engage the Argentine Navy and Air Force before making an amphibious assault on the islands. The conflict lasted 74 days and ended with an Argentine surrender on 14 June, returning the islands to British control. In total, 649 Argentine military personnel, 255 British military personnel, and three Falkland Islanders died during the hostilities.

The conflict was a major episode in the protracted dispute over the territories' sovereignty. Argentina asserted (and maintains) that the islands are Argentine territory, and the Argentine government thus characterised its military action as the reclamation of its own territory. The British government regarded the action as an invasion of a

territory that had been a Crown colony since 1841. Falkland Islanders, who have inhabited the islands since the early 19th century, are predominantly descendants of British settlers, and strongly favour British sovereignty. Neither state officially declared war, although both governments declared the Islands a war zone.

The conflict has had a strong effect in both countries and has been the subject of various books, articles, films, and songs. Patriotic sentiment ran high in Argentina, but the unfavourable outcome prompted large protests against the ruling military government, hastening its downfall and the democratisation of the country. In the United Kingdom, the Conservative government, bolstered by the successful outcome, was re-elected with an increased majority the following year. The cultural and political effect of the conflict has been less in the UK than in Argentina, where it has remained a common topic for discussion.

Diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and Argentina were restored in 1989 following a meeting in Madrid, at which the two governments issued a joint statement. No change in either country's position regarding the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands was made explicit. In 1994,

Argentina adopted a new Constitution, which declared the Falkland Islands by law as an Argentine province. However, the islands continue to operate as a self-governing British Overseas Territory.

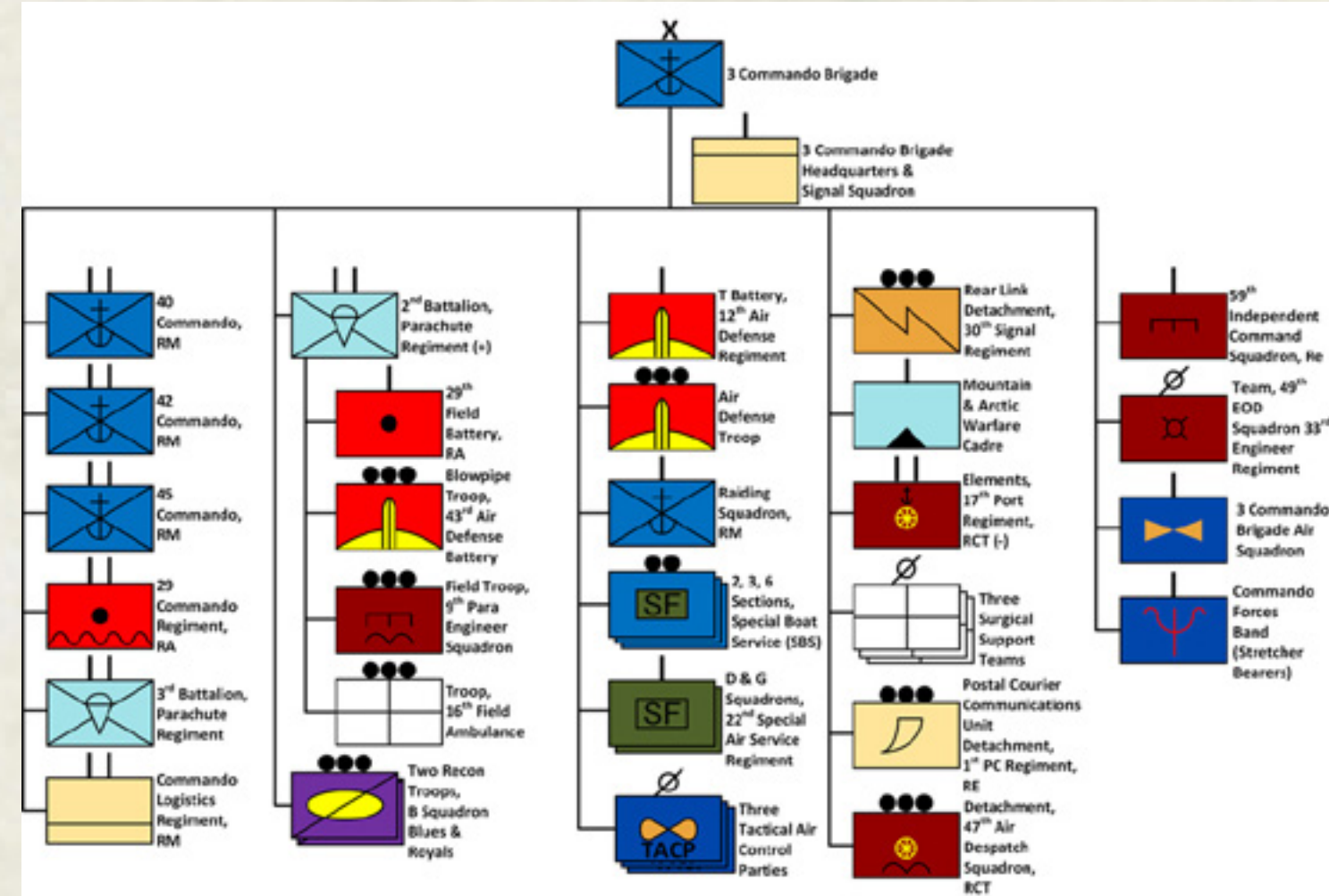
British Ground Forces

The British government had no contingency plan for an invasion of the islands, and the task force was rapidly put together from whatever vessels were available.

The nuclear-powered submarine Conqueror set sail from France on 4 April, whilst the two aircraft carriers Invincible and Hermes, in the company of escort vessels, left Portsmouth only a day later. On its return to Southampton from a world cruise on 7 April, the ocean liner SS Canberra was requisitioned and set sail two days later with 3 Commando Brigade aboard.

The ocean liner Queen Elizabeth 2 was also requisitioned and left Southampton on 12 May with 5th Infantry Brigade on board. The whole task force eventually comprised 127 ships: 43 Royal Navy vessels, 22 Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships and 62 merchant ships.

British Infantry Weapons Pistols



L9A1 Browning

The Browning Hi-Power is a single-action, semi-automatic handgun available in the 9mm and .40 S&W calibres. The British tended to use the 9mm calibre.

It weighs one kilogram and has a length of 197 mm. The semi-automatic pistol use a 13 or 15 round detachable box magazine and is effective up to 50 metres.



Submachine guns



Sterling Submachine Gun

The Sterling submachine gun remained in service with the British until 1994. During the Falklands War the British used the L2A3 Sterling, the L34A1 suppressed Sterling, and the L2A2 submachine gun.

The Sterling weighs 2.7 kilograms and has a length of 686

mm with the stock extended. It fired 9×19mm Parabellum cartridges up to an effective range of 200 metres. It could fire 550 rounds per minute from a standard 32-round box magazine.

Rifles

L1A1 Self-loading Rifle

The L1A1 Self-Loading Rifle is a British version of the FN FAL battle rifle produced by the Belgian armaments manufacturer FN Herstal.

It was the standard issue rifle for British troops during the Falklands War.

It weighs 4.337 kilograms empty and has a length of 1,143 mm. It fires 7.62×51mm NATO rounds and is effective up to 800 metres. It uses a 20 or 30-round box magazine and has a firing rate of 675-750 rounds per minute.



M16A1

The M16 family of military rifles was adapted from the ArmaLite AR-15 rifle for the United States military. It was a weapon favoured by the British Special Air Service (SAS).

It weighs 2.89 kg unloaded and has a length of 1,003 metres. It fires the 5.56×45 mm NATO round from a 20-round detachable box magazine. It has an effective range of 550 metres and its rate of fire is 45–60 rounds per minute on semi-automatic.



CAR-15

The Colt Automatic Rifle-15 Military Weapons System or CAR-15 was a family of AR-15 and M16 rifle-based firearms marketed by Colt in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The CAR-15 carbine was favoured by Special Forces units because it was lighter and shorter than the M16. It weighs 3.72 kg unloaded and has a length of only 853 mm.

It fires 5.56×45mm NATO rounds with a rate of fire of 700 to 900 rounds per minute. It uses a 20-round detachable box magazine and is effective to about 500 metres.



L42A1

The L42A1 was a British Army, Royal Marines and RAF Regiment sniper rifle chambered for the 7.62×51mm NATO cartridge.

It weighs 5.67 kg and has a length of 1,071 mm. This bolt-action rifle made use of a

10 round box magazine and was effective to 730 metres.

Support Weapons

M79 grenade launcher

The M79 grenade launcher is a single-shot, shoulder-fired, break-action grenade launcher that fires a 40×46mm grenade.

Weighing in at 2.93 kg loaded and with a length of 730 mm, it has an effective range of 350 metres.



M203 grenade launcher

The M203 is a single-shot 40mm under-barrel grenade launcher designed to attach to a rifle, usually the M16.

It weighs 1.36 kg unloaded and fires a 40×46mm SR grenade. has a length of 380 mm.

The effective range of 350 metres made the M203

a useful attachment to a rifle.



L4 Bren LMG

The Bren was converted to 7.62x51mm in the 1950s, and designated the L4.

L4 Brens can easily be identified by their straight magazine.

It weighs 8.68 kg unloaded and is 1,156 mm in length. It can fire 500–520 7.62x51mm NATO rounds per minute.

It has a 30-round detachable

box magazine and is effective up to 550 metres.

L7A2 GPMG

Nicknamed ‘Gimpy’, the L7A2 General Purpose Machine Gun is the British version of the Belgian FN MAG. It replaced the Vickers (in the medium role) and the Bren (in the light role).

It weighs 11.8 kg and is 1,263 mm in length. It uses the disintegrating M13 linked belt and fires 7.62x51mm NATO rounds. Its rate of fire is 650–1,000 rounds per minute. Its effective firing range is 800 metres when used with a bipod and 1,800 metres when used with a tripod.



L2A1 HMG

Used mainly for air defence, the L2A2 heavy machine gun is the British licence-built version of the Browning .50 calibre machine gun.

It weighs 38 kg or 58 kg with tripod and traverse and elevation mechanism. It is 1,654 mm in length.



The belt-fed weapon uses 12.7x99mm NATO rounds and can fire at a rate of 750-850 rounds per minute. It has an effective range of 1,800 metres.

L1A1

Rocket 66 mm HEAT L1A1 is the British name for the M72 LAW (Light Anti-Tank Weapon). It is a portable one-shot 66 mm unguided anti-tank weapon.

Besides being very effective against vehicles, both armoured and soft-skin, they are also effective against bunkers and strongpoints.

It weighs 2.5 kg and is 630 mm in length when unarmed. It has an effective firing range of 200 metres.



L14A1 Carl Gustav

The Carl-Gustaf recoilless rifle is an 84-mm man-portable reusable anti-tank weapon originally produced by Carl Gustafs Stads Gevärsfaktori in Sweden.

The Gustaf can be fired from the standing, kneeling, sitting or prone positions, and a bi-pod may be attached in front of the shoulder piece.

The weapon is normally operated by a two-man crew, a gunner who carries and fires the weapon and a loader, carrying two canisters for a total of four rounds of ammunition.

It weighs 14.2 kg and is 1,130 mm in length. It fires 84x246 mm R rockets at around six rounds per minutes. It has an effect range of 350 to 400 metres against moving vehicles and 500 metres against stationary targets.



MILAN ATGM

Consisting of two main components, the launcher and the missile, the MILAN system utilizes a semi-automatic command to line of sight (SACLOS) command guidance system.

It tracks the missile either by a tail-mounted infrared lamp or an electronic-flash lamp, depending on the model. Because it is guided by wire by an operator, the missile cannot be affected by radio jamming or flares.

It weighs 16.4 kg, is 1.2 metres in length and has an effective firing range of two kilometres.



L9A1 51 mm light mortar

The L9A1 51 mm light mortar was a man-portable platoon-level mortar system used by the British Army from the 1980s to 2007.

It weighed 6.275 kg and had a barrel length of 700 mm. Its effective firing range was 750 metres.

It was replaced by the Hirtenberger AG M6-895 60 mm Mortar.



L16 81mm mortar

The L16 81mm mortar was introduced in 1965–66, replacing the Ordnance ML 3 inch Mortar in UK service, where it is used by the British Army, the Royal Marines and the RAF Regiment.

It weighs 35.3 kg and has a barrel length of 1,280 mm. It is operated by a crew of three and has an effective firing range (with HE shells) of between 100 and 5,675 metres.

The rate of fire for the mortar is about 15 rounds per minute.



Blowpipe

The Shorts Blowpipe is a man-portable (MANPADS) surface-to-air missile that was in use with the British Army and Royal Marines from 1975.

First used during the Falklands War, it demonstrated poor performance with only two confirmed kills.

The complete system weighed 22 kg and it was 1.35 metres in length. Its effective firing range was between 0.5 to 3.5 km.

FIM-92 Stinger

The FIM-92 Stinger is a man-portable air-defence system (MANPADS) that operates as an infrared homing surface-to-air missile (SAM).

There are three main variants in use: the Stinger basic, STINGER-Passive Optical Seeker Technique (POST), and STINGER-Reprogrammable Microprocessor (RMP).

It weighs 15.19 kg and has a length of 1.52 metres. It has an outward targeting range of up to 4,800 metres and can engage low altitude enemy threats at up to 3,800 metres.



Argentinian Ground Forces

Argentina had eight complete infantry brigades: 4th Airborne Infantry Brigade in Córdoba; 5th Mountain Brigade in Tucumán; 9th Brigade in the Santa Cruz Province close to the Falklands; the well-equipped 6th and 8th Mountain Infantry Brigades along the Chilean border; 11th Brigade, (cold-adapted) in the extreme south; and 3rd (Jungle) and 7th (Jungle) Brigades facing Brazil and Uruguay.

The Argentine Army also had the 10th Mechanized Infantry Brigade in the capital guarding against a theoretical seaborne invasion along the Buenos Aires coastline. Two assumptions governed the deployment of the Argentine ground forces on the islands:

- the junta did not believe that the British would use military force to retake the islands, so the initial landing force had been withdrawn shortly after April 3, and was not reinforced until after the British recaptured South Georgia. The intent was to place a large number of troops onto the islands to dissuade the British from

Argentinian Infantry Weapons

Unlike the British forces, the Argentinians tended to use a larger variety of personal weapons, including small arms, submachine guns and even rifles.

This was because various units tended the favour different types of firearms. Many of the weapons that they used were exactly the same as the British were using.

any military action. As the Royal Navy had submarines patrolling the immediate area, reinforcements had to be airlifted in, which limited the heavy equipment that could be deployed.

- an attack was feared from Chile due to the ongoing Beagle Channel dispute. As Chile was marshalling troops close to its Southern Argentine border, the Argentinian High Command had to deploy their better trained forces to deter a Chilean attack. As a result, neither the mountain warfare regiments, nor the paratroop brigade were available. Furthermore, only a fifth of the cold-adapted marine infantry was sent to the islands. The majority of the troops deployed were from sub-tropical areas, the Argentine Mesopotamia region and Buenos Aires Province, and not trained for action in the terrain (they were trained to avoid snakes and sunstroke, not frostbite). These two incorrect assumptions led to inappropriate troops being sent to the islands.

Launched on 2 April 1984, Operation Rosario was the initial invasion of the Falkland Islands (*Las Malvinas*). This was carried out by Amphibious Task Group 40.1 under the command of Rear Admiral of the Marines Carlos Büsler. It consisted of:

84 men from the Amphibious Commandos Group.

15 frogmen from *Buzos Tácticos* (the special operations force of the Argentinian Navy).

2nd Marine Infantry Battalion.

A 25th Infantry Regiment Company.

Operation Georgias, the invasion of South Georgia, was launched the following day. It consisted of: 1st Marine Infantry Battalion.

14 frogmen from *Buzos Tácticos*.

At a later stage Argentina would commit more units to the fight, including units such as the 3rd (Jungle) Infantry Brigade, 10th Mechanised Infantry Brigade, 3rd Artillery Group, 4th Airborne Artillery Group, Reserva Z (Z Reserve), 5th Marine Infantry Battalion, miscellaneous army units, and the Gendarmería (Border Guards).

Pistols



Browning Hi-Power

This was the same weapon that the British were using, although the British named it the L9A1 Browning.

It weighs one kilogram and has a length of 197 mm. The semi-automatic pistol use a 13 or 15 round detachable box magazine and is effective up to 50 metres.

M1911A1 Colt

The M1911A1 is a single-action, semi-automatic, magazine-fed, recoil-operated pistol chambered for the .45 ACP cartridge.

It served as the standard-issue side-arm for the United States Armed Forces from 1911 to 1985.

It weighs 1,100 grams empty and has a length of 216 mm. It used a 7 or 8-round box magazine. *Sistema Colt Modelo 1927* was an M1911A1 made under license in Argentina.



Ballester-Molina

This was yet another Argentinian copy of the M1911A1 Colt.

It was, however, cheaper to produce than the *Sistema Colt Modelo 1927*.

Submachine Guns



PAM-1 and PAM-2

In 1954, a variant of the U.S. M3A1 submachine gun was designed at the Argentine FMAP (*Fábrica Militar de Armas Portátiles*) factory in the city of Rosario and put into production the following year as the P.A.M. 1.

It was in essence a 7/8 scale replica of the U.S. weapon in 9 mm Parabellum calibre, but was lighter and had a higher

rate of fire.

Problems with accidental discharges and accuracy with the P.A.M. 1 led to an improved selective-fire version with a grip safety on the magazine housing known as the P.A.M. 2, first introduced in 1963.

It weighed 6.31 kg and had a length of 740 mm with the stock extended. It fired 9×19mm Parabellum from a 30-round detachable box magazine. The rate of fire was 450 rounds per minute and it was accurate up to 91 metres.



FMK-3 submachine gun

The FMK-3 is a selective fire, blowback operated submachine gun of Argentine origin and was designed by *Fabricaciones Militares* in 1974. Around 30,000 were produced for the Argentine military by 1991.

It weighs 3.4 kg empty and has a length of 523 mm with the stock folded and 693 mm with the stock extended. It can fire 650 9×19mm Parabellum rounds at an effective range of 100 metres. It uses a 25, 32, or 40-round detachable box magazine.



Halcón ML-63

The ML-63 is a submachine gun manufactured by the Buenos Aires-based Halcon corporation.

The ML-63 is chambered in 9mm Parabellum and is fed from a 30-round magazine. The ML-63 also came with a fixed wooden stock.

It appears to be based primarily on the MAT-49 Submachine Gun and there is also a silenced variant.

A number of ML-63 submachine guns were found by the British during the Falklands War. It weighs 1,04 kg and is 91 mm in length. It fires at 600 rounds per minute and has an effective firing range of 100 metres.

Uzi

Designed by Israeli Army Major Uziel "Uzi" Gal, the Uzi has become a popular weapon around the world.

It weighs 3.5 kg and has a length of 470 mm with the folding stock collapsed and 640 mm with the stock extended.

The Argentinians favoured the 9×19mm Parabellum version of the weapon.

It fires 600 rounds per minute and has an effective firing range of 200 meters. It was normally used with a 20 or 25-round detachable box magazine.



L34A1 Sterling

Like their British opponents, the Argentinian Special Forces made use of the Sterling submachine gun.

The used the L34A1 which is a suppressed version of the weapon.

Like the British Sterling, it fired 9×19mm Parabellum rounds.



Rifles



FN FAL 50.41 & FN FAL 50.61

Like the British, the Argentinians used FN FAL assault rifle.

They, however, used two versions of the rifle. The FN FAL 50.41 had a solid plastic stock, while the FN FAL 50.61 had a folding stock.

It weighs 4.337 kilograms empty and has a length of 1,143 mm. It fires 7.62×51mm NATO rounds and is effective up to

800 metres. It uses a 20 or 30-round box magazine and has a firing rate of 675-750 rounds per minute.



M16A1

Like their British opposite numbers, the Argentinian Special Forces made use of the M16A1.

Beretta BM 59

The Beretta BM 59 is an Italian-made rifle based on the M1 Garand rifle, but chambered in 7.62×51mm NATO, and modified to use a detachable magazine.

It weighs 4.4 kg and is 1,095 mm in length. It fires the 7.62×51mm NATO round and uses a 20-round detachable box magazine. It fires at 750 rounds per minute.



M14

The M14 rifle is an American select-fire battle rifle that fires 7.62×51mm NATO ammunition.

It became the standard-issue rifle for the U.S. military in 1959 replacing the M1 Garand rifle in the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps.

The Argentinians used the M14 rifle fitted with a scope as a sniper's rifle. It weighs 4.1 kg empty and has a length of 1,126 mm. With a scope it has an effective firing range of 800+ metres and uses a 20-round detachable box magazine.

Support Weapons

FN Mag

Like the British, the Argentinians used the FN Mag as their primary support weapon.



Browning M2HB

When it came to heavy machine guns the Argentinians used the Browning M2HB.

This was basically the same weapon as the British L2A1 HMG.



M40 Recoilless rifle

The M40 recoilless rifle is a lightweight,[20] portable, crew-served 105 mm recoilless rifle made in the United States.

Intended primarily as an anti-tank weapon, it could also be employed in an anti-personnel role with the use of an anti-personnel flechette round. uses a 20-round detachable box magazine. It fires at 750 rounds per minute.

It weighs 209.5 kg and has a length of 3.04 metres. It fires

105×607mmR (HEAT, HEP, HEAP, Canister) ammunition and has an effective firing range of 1,350 metres.

Mortars

The Argentinians made use of FM 60 mm, FM 81 mm and FM 120 mm mortars during the Falklands War.



Blowpipe

The Shorts Blowpipe is a man-portable (MANPADS) surface-to-air missile was the standard Argentinian defence against aircraft.

Just like the British did, they found it was not a very effective weapon against aircraft.

Next Month

In the next issue of Military Despatches we will take a closer look at the air power used by both the British and the Argentinians during the Falklands War, as well as looking at the various weapons that they were armed with.



Heinrich Himmler

One of Hitler's most loyal sycophants and the architect of the Holocaust, he ruthlessly despatched those that stood in his way as he rose to a position of power second only to that of his Fuhrer. Yet at the end he would spectacularly betray his master.

Reichsführer of the Schutzstaffel and a leading member of the Nazi Party of Germany, Himmler was one of the most powerful men in Nazi Germany and one of the people most directly responsible for the Holocaust.

Heinrich Luitpold Himmler was born in Munich on 7 October 1900. He was the second of three sons born to Joseph Gebhard Himmler and Anna Maria Himmler.

His father, known as Gebhard, was a school teacher while his mother was a devout Roman Catholic.

He was named Heinrich after his godfather, Prince Heinrich of Bavaria, a member of the Bavarian royal family. The prince has been tutored by Gebhard.

While his family was not rich, they were well off and respected within the local community.

Himmler attended a grammar school in Landshut, where his father was the deputy headmaster. Himmler did well at school, although he struggled with sports and athletics.

He was a sickly boy and suffered from life-long stomach complaints and other ailments.

In his youth he trained with weights and exercised to become stronger.

From the age of ten he kept a diary and it shows that he took a keen interest in current events, duelling and the serious discussion of religion and sex.

Himmler the cadet

Himmler joined the Landshut Cadet Corps in 1915 and, through his father's connections

with the royal family, was accepted as an officer candidate. He enlisted with the reserve battalion of the 11th Bavarian Regiment in December 1917.

Himmler was keen to see action. His elder brother, Gebhard, served on the western front. He was awarded the Iron Cross and later promoted to lieutenant.

While Himmler was still in training, the war ended in November 1918, denying him the opportunity to become an officer or to see combat. He was discharged on 18 December and returned to Landshut.

He completed his grammar school education and, following a brief apprenticeship on a farm, studied agronomy at the Munich Technische Hochschule from 1919 to 1922.

During the unification of Germany in 1871 many regulations that discriminated against non-Christians - including Jews and other minority groups - had been eliminated.

Yet while the regulations may have been eliminated, anti-Semitism continued to exist and in fact thrive in Germany and other parts of Europe.

By the time he went to

university Himmler was anti-Semitic, but not exceptionally so. He remained a devout Catholic and spent most of his leisure time with members of his fencing fraternity.

During his second year at university, Himmler increased his attempts to pursue a military career. While he was not successful, he did extend his involvement in the paramilitary scene in Munich.

It was during this period that he first met Ernst Röhm. An early member of the Nazi Party and co-founder of the *Sturmabteilung* (Storm Battalion, SA), Röhm was a decorated combat veteran of World War I. This was something that Himmler admired.

At Röhm's suggestion, Himmler joined his anti-Semitic nationalist group, the *Bund Reichskriegsflagge* (Imperial War Flag Society).

His diary entries in 1922 show that Himmler was becoming more interested in the "Jewish question". His diary contained an increasing number of anti-Semitic remarks and recorded a number of discussions about Jews with his classmates.

His reading lists, as recorded in his diary, were dominated by anti-Semitic pamphlets, German myths, and occult tracts.

After the murder of Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau on 24 June, Himmler's political views veered towards the radical right, and he took part in demonstrations against the Treaty of Versailles. Hyperinflation was raging, and his par-

ents could no longer afford to educate all three sons. Disappointed by his failure to make a career in the military and his parents' inability to finance his doctoral studies, he was forced to take a low-paying office job after obtaining his agricultural diploma. He remained in this position until September 1923.

Himmler the Nazi activist

In August 1923, with the Party number 14,303, Heinrich Himmler became a member of the Nazi Party.

As a member of Röhm's paramilitary unit, Himmler was involved in the unsuccessful Beer Hall Putsch.

He was questioned by the police about his role in the putsch, but was not charged because of insufficient evidence. However, he lost his job, was unable to find employment as an agronomist, and had to move in with his parents in Munich. Frustrated by these failures, he became ever more irritable, aggressive, and opinionated, alienating both friends and family members.

During the following year he abandoned Catholicism, instead focusing on the occult and in anti-Semitism. Germanic mythology, reinforced by occult ideas, became a religion for him.

Initially Himmler was not all that impressed with Hitler. Not was he swept up in the cult of Führer worship. He did, however, regard him as useful for the party.

Following the disarray of

Hitler's arrest in the wake of the Beer Hall Putsch, Himmler took full advantage of the situation to consolidate and advance his own position in the party.

From mid-1924 he worked as a party secretary and propaganda assistant, travelling all over Bavaria and agitating on behalf of the party.

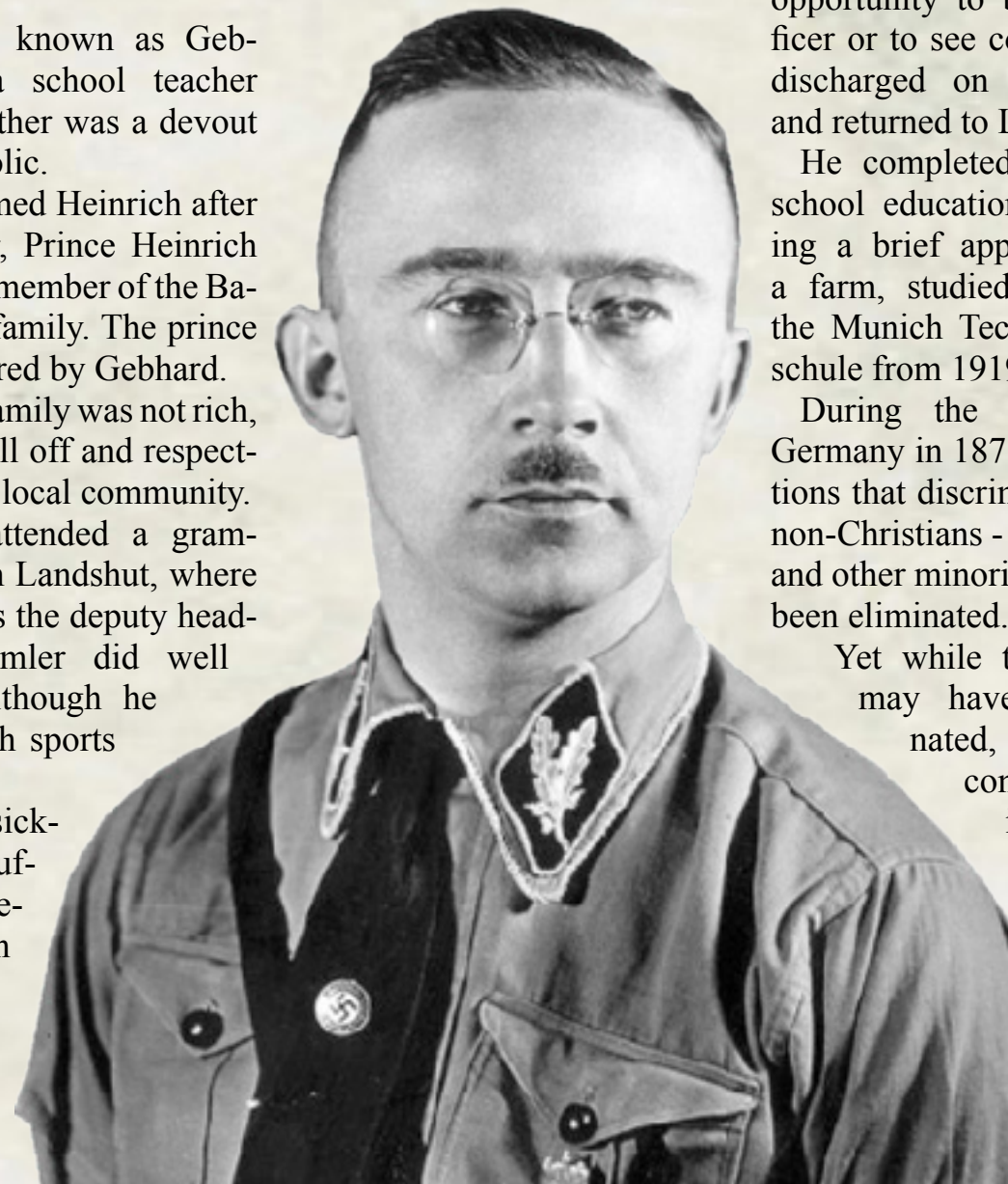
When the Nazi Party reformed under Hitler in 1925, Himmler was placed in charge of the party office in Lower Bavaria.

In 1925 Himmler joined the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) as an SS-Führer (SS-Leader); his SS number was 168. The SS, initially part of the much larger SA, was formed in 1923 for Hitler's personal protection, and was re-formed in 1925 as an elite unit of the SA.

Himmler's first leadership position in the SS was that of *SS-Gauführer* (district leader) in Lower Bavaria from 1926.

In September 1927, Himmler told Hitler of his vision to transform the SS into a loyal, powerful, racially pure elite unit. Convinced that Himmler was the man for the job, Hitler appointed him Deputy Reichsführer-SS, with the rank of *SS-Oberführer*.

Himmler met his future wife, Margarete Boden, in 1927. Seven years his senior, she was a nurse who shared his interest in herbal medicine and homoeopathy, and was part owner of a small private clinic. They were married in July 1928, and their only child, Gudrun, was born on 8 August 1929.



Himmler, Reichsführer-SS

Upon the resignation of SS commander Erhard Heiden in January 1929, Himmler assumed the position of Reichsführer-SS with Hitler's approval.

One of his first responsibilities was to organise SS participants at the Nuremberg Rally that September.

Over the next year, Himmler grew the SS from a force of about 290 men to about 3,000. By 1930 Himmler had persuaded Hitler to run the SS as a separate organisation, although it was officially still subordinate to the SA.

In the 1932 election, the Nazis won 37.3 percent of the vote and Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany. After the Reichstag building was set on fire only a month after Hitler was sworn in, Hitler forced President Paul von Hindenburg to sign the Reichstag Fire Decree, which suspended basic rights and allowed detention without trial.

Von Hindenburg died on 2 August 1934, and Hitler became both head of state and head of government under the title *Führer und Reichskanzler* (leader and chancellor). The Nazi Party's rise to power provided Himmler and the SS an unfettered opportunity to thrive.

By 1933, the SS numbered 52,000 members. Strict membership requirements ensured that all members were of Hitler's Aryan *Herrenvolk* ("Aryan master race"). Applicants were vetted for Nordic qualities. Naturally no-one was brave enough, or stupid enough, to tell Himmler that, by his own standards, he did not meet the requirements.



MEET AND GREET: Adolf Hitler (left) shakes hands with Heinrich Himmler, the Reichsführer-SS.

In 1931 he appointed Reinhard Heydrich chief of the new Ic Service (intelligence service), which was renamed the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD: Security Service) in 1932.

That same year, Hitler promoted Himmler to the rank of SS-Obergruppenführer, equal in rank to the senior SA commanders.

Hermann Göring had created a Prussian secret police force, the *Geheime Staatspolizei* or Gestapo in 1933. Its main task was to counteract the power of the SA. Control of the Gestapo was handed over to Himmler on 20 April 1934.

On 21 June 1934 Hitler decided that Röhm and the SA leadership had to be eliminated. In what became known as "The Night of the Long Knives", Röhm and between 80 and 200 members of the SA leadership were killed between 30 June and 2 July 1934. With the SA thus neutralised, the SS became an independent organisation answerable only to Hitler on 20 July 1934.

Himmler, World War II

When Hitler and his army chiefs asked for a pretext for the invasion of Poland in 1939, Himmler, Heydrich, and Heinrich Müller masterminded and carried out a false flag project code-named Operation Himmler.

German soldiers dressed in Polish uniforms undertook border skirmishes which deceptively suggested Polish aggression against Germany. The incidents were then used in Nazi propaganda to justify the invasion of Poland, the opening event of World War II.

At the beginning of the war against Poland, Hitler authorised the killing of Polish civilians, including Jews and ethnic Poles. The *Einsatzgruppen* (SS Special Action Squads) had originally been formed by Heydrich to secure government papers and offices in areas taken over by Germany before World War II.

Authorised by Hitler and under the direction of Himmler and Heydrich, the *Einsatzgruppen* units - now repurposed as



ROGUES GALLERY: Himmler, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, and other SS officials visiting Mauthausen concentration camp in 1941.

death squads - followed the Heer (army) into Poland, and by the end of 1939 they had murdered some 65,000 intellectuals and other civilians. Under Himmler's orders via the RSHA, these squads were also tasked with rounding up Jews and others for placement in ghettos and concentration camps.

When the German invaded Russia in 1941, they were closely followed by the *Einsatzgruppen* who were tasked with rounding up and killing Jews and others deemed undesirable by the Nazi state.

In addition, 2.8 million Soviet prisoners of war died of starvation, mistreatment or executions in just eight months of 1941-42.

As many as 500,000 Soviet prisoners of war died or were executed in Nazi concentration camps over the course of the war; most of them were shot or gassed.

By early 1941, following Himmler's orders, ten concen-

tration camps had been constructed in which inmates were subjected to forced labour. Jews from all over Germany and the occupied territories were deported to the camps or confined to ghettos.

As the Germans were pushed back from Moscow in December 1941, signalling that the expected quick defeat of the Soviet Union had failed to materialize, Hitler and other Nazi officials realised that mass deportations to the east would no longer be possible. As a result, instead of deportation, many Jews in Europe were destined for death.

Himmler and the Holocaust

After Germany had declared war on America in December 1941, Hitler finally resolved that the Jews of Europe were to be "exterminated."

Reinhard Heydrich arranged a meeting, held on 20 January 1942 at Wannsee, a suburb of Berlin. Attended by top Nazi officials, it was used to outline

the plans for the "final solution to the Jewish question".

Heydrich detailed how those Jews able to work would be worked to death; those unable to work would be killed outright. Heydrich calculated the number of Jews to be killed at 11 million, and told the attendees that Hitler had placed Himmler in charge of the plan.

Himmler took over leadership of the RSHA and stepped up the pace of the killing of Jews in *Aktion Reinhard* (Operation Reinhard), named in Heydrich's honour. Heydrich had been assassinated in Prague in an operation carried out by members of Czechoslovakia's army-in-exile who had been trained by the British Special Operations Executive. He ordered the Aktion Reinhard camps, the first extermination camps, to be constructed at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka.

Himmler was a main architect of the Holocaust, using his deep belief in the racist Nazi ideology to justify the murder of millions of victims.

Himmler, the beginning of the end

On 20 July 1944, a group of German army officers led by Claus von Stauffenberg and including some of the highest-ranked members of the German armed forces attempted to assassinate Hitler, but failed to do so.

Though Himmler was embarrassed by his failure to uncover the plot, it led to an increase in his powers and authority.

He formed a special commission that arrested over 5,000 suspected and known oppo-

nents of the regime. Hitler ordered brutal reprisals that resulted in the execution of more than 4,900 people.

On 6 June 1944 the Western Allies launched Operation Overlord, the amphibious invasion of northern France. In response Heeresgruppe Oberrhein (Army Group Upper Rhine) was formed to engage and stop the advancing Allies. In late 1944, Hitler appointed Himmler commander-in-chief of Army Group Upper Rhine.

On 26 September 1944 Hitler ordered Himmler to create special army units, the Volkssturm ("People's Storm" or "People's Army"). All males aged sixteen to sixty were eligible for conscription into this militia.

By October 1944, children as young as fourteen were being enlisted. Because of severe shortages in weapons and equipment and lack of training, members of the Volkssturm were poorly prepared for combat, and about 175,000 of them lost their lives in the final months of the war.

The *Heeresgruppe Weichsel* (Army Group Vistula) had been hastily formed to stop the Soviet Red Army's advance. On 25 January 1945, in spite of Himmler's lack of military experience, Hitler appointed him as commander.

In early 1945 Himmler could see that the writing was on the wall. The German war effort was on the verge of collapse and Himmler's relationship with Hitler had deteriorated. Himmler decided that it was time to negotiate an independent peace settlement.

His masseur, Felix Kersten,

who had moved to Sweden, acted as an intermediary in negotiations with Count Folke Bernadotte, head of the Swedish Red Cross. Letters were exchanged between the two men, and direct meetings were arranged by Walter Schellenberg of the RSHA.

Himmler and Hitler met for the last time in Berlin on Hitler's birthday, 20 April 1945. Once again Himmler swore unswerving loyalty to Hitler.

At a military briefing on that day, Hitler stated that he would not leave Berlin, in spite of Soviet advances. Along with Göring, Himmler quickly left the city after the briefing.

On 23 April, Himmler met directly with Bernadotte at the Swedish consulate in Lübeck. Representing himself as the provisional leader of Germany, he claimed that Hitler would be dead within the next few days. Hoping that the British and Americans would fight the Soviets alongside what remained of the Wehrmacht, Himmler asked Bernadotte to inform General Dwight Eisenhower that Germany wished to surrender to the West. Bernadotte asked Himmler to put his proposal in writing, and Himmler obliged.

Meanwhile, Göring had sent a telegram, a few hours earlier, asking Hitler for permission to assume leadership of the Reich - an act that Hitler, under the prodding of Martin Bormann, interpreted as a demand to step down or face a coup.

On 27 April, Himmler's SS representative at Hitler's HQ in Berlin, Hermann Fegelein, was caught in civilian clothes preparing to desert; he was arrested and brought back to the



NEAR THE END: By early 1945 Himmler realised that Germany had lost the war. This photo was taken about a month before Hitler committed suicide.

Führerbunker.

On the evening of 28 April, the BBC broadcast a Reuters news report about Himmler's attempted negotiations with the western Allies.

Hitler, who had long considered Himmler to be second only to Joseph Goebbels in loyalty (he called Himmler "the loyal Heinrich"), flew into a rage at this apparent betrayal. Hitler told those who were still with him in the bunker complex that Himmler's act was the worst treachery he had ever known and ordered his arrest. Fegelein was court-martialed and shot.

By this time, the Soviets had advanced to the Potsdamerplatz, only 300 metres from the Reich Chancellery, and were preparing to storm the Chancellery.

This report, combined with Himmler's treachery, prompted Hitler to write his last will and testament. In the testament, completed on 29 April - one day pri-



THE END: Heinrich Himmler lies dead after committing suicide with a potassium cyanide pill.

or to his suicide - Hitler declared both Himmler and Göring to be traitors. He stripped Himmler of all of his party and state offices and expelled him from the Nazi Party.

Himmler, the end

Himmler came to the grim realisation that the Allies were not interested in negotiating with him. In fact he had been declared a war criminal.

Rejected by his former comrades and hunted by the Allies, Himmler decided that it was time to go into hiding. He had not really prepared for it, but he had equipped himself with a forged Wehrmacht paybook under the name of Sergeant Heinrich Hitzinger.

He shaved his moustache off, removed his glasses, and wore a patch over one eye. With a small band of companions,

he headed south on 11 May to Friedrichskoog, without a final destination in mind. They continued on to Neuhaus, where the group split up.

On 21 May, Himmler and two aides were stopped and detained at a checkpoint set up by former Soviet POWs. Over the following two days, he was moved around to several camps and was brought to the British 31st Civilian Interrogation Camp near Lüneburg, on 23 May 1945.

Not suspecting for a minute who he had in his custody, the duty officer, Captain Thomas Selvester, began a routine interrogation of the prisoner.

For some reason Himmler admitted who he was. Perhaps he thought he would receive preferential treatment. Captain Selvester had the prisoner searched before he was taken to

the headquarters of the Second British Army in Lüneburg.

Medical officer Doctor Wells conducted a medical exam on Himmler. However, when the doctor tried to examine the inside of Himmler's mouth he was reluctant to open it. Himmler jerked his head away and then bit into a hidden potassium cyanide pill before collapsing to the ground.

Within 15 minutes Heinrich Luitpold Himmler, the man who had been responsible for millions of deaths, was dead. He was 44 years old.

Shortly afterward, Himmler's body was buried in an unmarked grave near Lüneburg. The grave's exact location remains unknown to this day.

SS Symbolism

Himmler was interested in mysticism and the occult from an early age and he viewed the SS as an "order" along the lines of the Teutonic Knights.

When members of the SS were sworn in, they had to take an oath. "I vow to you, Adolf Hitler, as Führer and chancellor of the German Reich, loyalty and bravery. I vow to you and to the leaders that you set for me, absolute allegiance until death. So help me God"

The *SS-Ehrenring* ("SS Honour Ring"), unofficially called *Totenkopfring* ("Death's Head Ring"), was an award of Heinrich Himmler's Schutzstaffel (SS). It was not a state decoration, but rather a personal gift bestowed by Himmler. The SS Honour Sword and SS Honour Dagger were similar awards.

T34 Tank

Introduced in 1940, the Soviet T34 medium tank was described by German general Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist as "the finest tank in the world". It was a weapon Forged in Battle.

With an unprecedented combination of firepower, mobility, protection and ruggedness, the Soviet T-34 medium tank has often been credited as being the most effective, efficient and influential tank design of the Second World War.

When first encountered in 1941, German general Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist called it "the finest tank in the world".

None other than Heinz Guderian affirmed the T-34's "vast superiority" over existing German armour of the period.

It was the most produced tank of the war, as well as the second most produced tanks of all time (after its successor, the T-54/55 series) with more than 80,000 being produced.

It also suffered the most tank losses of all time, with 44,900 being lost during the war.

It was the mainstay of Soviet

armoured forces during World War II and its design allowed it to be continuously upgraded to meet the constantly evolving needs of the Eastern Front.

Its development led directly to the T-54 and T-55 series of tanks, which in turn evolved into the later T-62, T-72, and T-90 tanks that form the armoured mainstay of many modern armies.

As the war went on, the T-34 became not only more capable, but also quicker and cheaper to produce.

Origins

A few years before Adolph Hitler set his sights to the east and launched *Unternehmen Barbarossa*, the Soviets were already involved in a few wars of their

own.

During the Battle of Lake Khasan in July 1938 and the Battles of Khalkhin Gol in 1939, an undeclared border war with Japan on the frontier with occupied Manchuria, the Soviets deployed numerous tanks against the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA).

The Soviet tank models were

the T-26 infantry tank and the BT series of fast tanks. The T-26 was slow-moving, designed to keep pace with infantry on the ground. The BT tanks were cavalry tanks: fast-moving and light, designed for manoeuvre warfare.

Both were Soviet developments of foreign designs from the early 1930s; the T-26 was based on the British Vickers 6-Ton, and the BT tanks were based on a design from American engineer J. Walter Christie.

Both tanks used petrol engines which, while common in

tank designs of the time, often burst into flames when hit by IJA tank-killer teams using Molotov cocktails. They were even vulnerable to the low velocity 37 mm gun of the Japanese Type 95 tank.

The use of riveted armour led to a problem called "spalling", whereby the impact of enemy shells, even if they failed to disable the tank or kill the crew on their own, would cause the rivets to break off and become projectiles inside the tank.

In 1937 it was assigned to Red Army engineer Mikhail Koshkin to lead a new team to design a replacement for the BT tanks.

The prototype tank, designated A-20, had 20 mm of armour, a 45 mm gun, and the new Model V-2-34 engine, using less-flammable diesel fuel in a V12 configuration designed by Konstantin Chelpan.

A second prototype, the A-32, was developed. It

had 32 mm of frontal armour, a L-10 7.62 mm gun, and the same Model V-2-34 diesel engine.

An even heavier version of the A-32, with 45 mm of front armour, wider tracks, and a newer L-11 7.62 mm gun, was approved for production as the T-34.

Production

The T-34 posed new challenges for Soviet industry. It had heavier armour than any medium tank produced to date, and there were problems with defective armour plates.

Due to their expense and short supply, radios could only be fitted to company commanders' tanks. The rest of the crews in each company used flags to communicate.

Another problem was the L-11 gun. It did not live up to expectations, so the Grabin Design Bureau at Gorky Factory N.92 designed the superior F-34 76.2 mm gun.

Production of this first T-34 series - the Model 1940 - totalled only about 400, before production was switched to the Model 1941, with the F-34 gun, 9-RS radio



set (also installed on the SU-100), and even thicker armour.

Subassemblies for the T-34 originated at several plants: Kharkiv Diesel Factory N.75 supplied the model V-2-34 engine, Leningrad Kirovsky Factory made the original L-11 gun, and the Dinamo Factory in Moscow produced electrical components. Tanks were initially built at KhPZ N.183, in early 1941 at the Stalingrad Tractor Factory (STZ), and starting in July at Krasnoye Sormovo Factory N.112 in Gorky.

After the Germans launched Operation Barbarossa on 22 June 1941, the Wehrmacht's rapid advances forced the evacuation and relocation of Soviet



THE FINAL PUSH: A T-34/76 in action in the suburbs of Berlin in April 1945.

tank factories eastwards of the Ural Mountains, an undertaking of immense scale and haste that presented enormous logistic difficulties and was extremely punishing to the workers involved.

Just weeks before the Germans surrounded Leningrad, the Kirovsky Factory moved with the Kharkiv Diesel Factory to the Stalin Tractor Factory in Chelyabinsk, soon to be nicknamed *Tankograd* (Tank City).

Soviet designers were aware of design deficiencies in the tank, but most of the desired remedies would have slowed tank production and so were not implemented: the only changes allowed on the production lines through to 1944 were those to make production simpler and cheaper.

Over a period of two years the production cost of the T-34 was reduced from 269,500 roubles in 1941, to 193,00, and then 135,00. This was achieved by a simple solution - underpay the factory workers, and over-

work them. After all, they were treated as little more than slave labour.

Besides cutting costs, production time was also cut in half by the end of 1942, despite the fact that most of the skilled factory workers had been sent to the front lines. They were replaced by a workforce that included 50% women, 15% boys, and 15% invalids and old men.

In 1943, T-34 production had reached an average of 1,300 per month; this was the equivalent of three full-strength Panzer divisions.

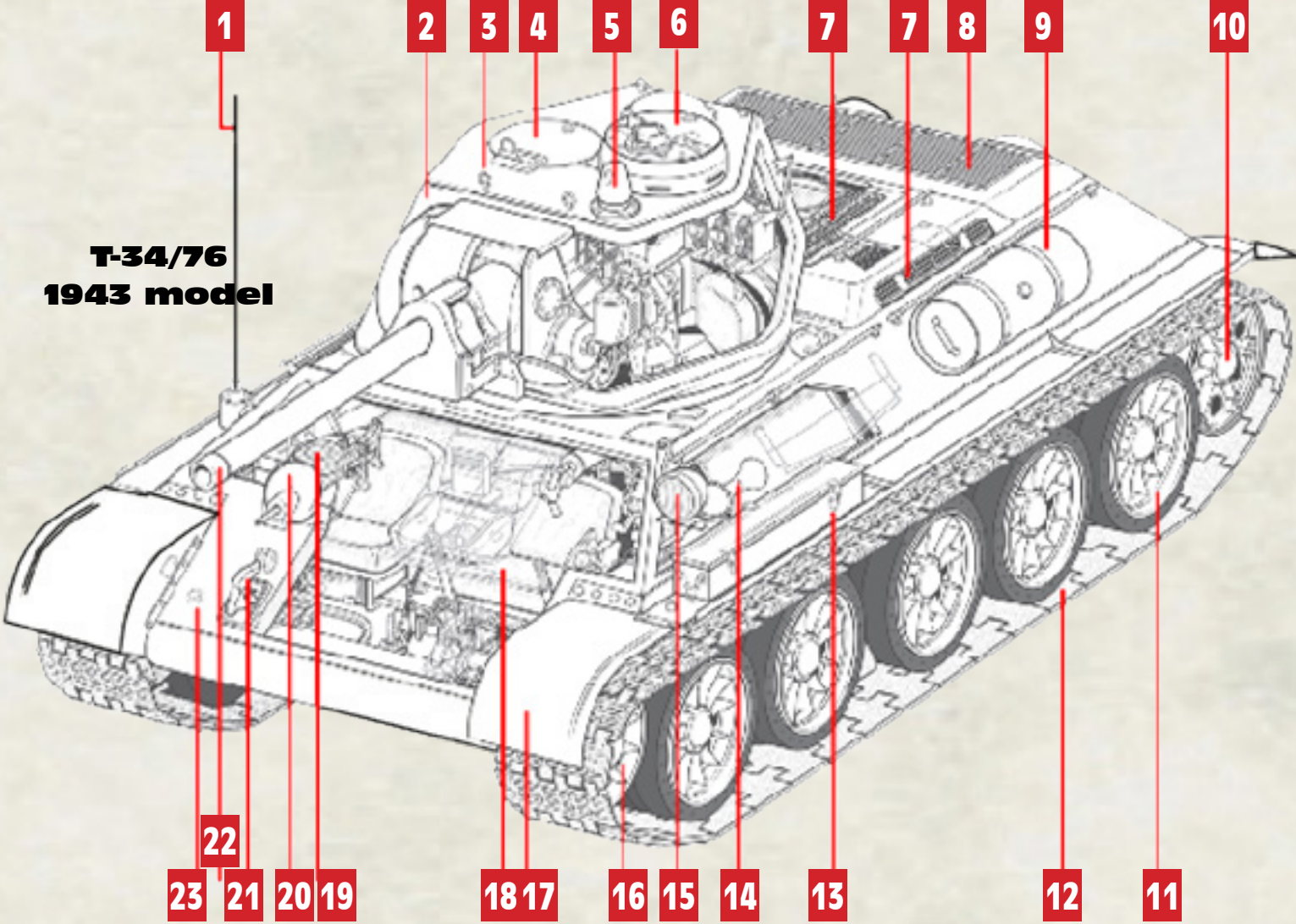
Overview

The T-34 had well-sloped armour, a relatively powerful engine and wide tracks.

The initial T-34 version had a powerful 76.2 mm gun, and is often called the T-34/76.

In 1944, a second major version began production, the T-34-85, with a larger 85 mm gun intended to deal with newer German tanks.

The T-34 was an even match for the German medium tank,



1. Radio aerial.
2. Cast turret.
3. Lifting eye (x4).
4. Gunner's hatch.
5. Viewing periscope.
6. Commander's cupola.
7. Air louvres.
8. Engine grille.

9. Fuel tank.
10. Idler wheel.
11. Road wheel.
12. Cast manganese steel tracks.
13. Tool box.
14. Horn.
15. Headlight.
16. Drive sprocket.

17. Mudguard.
18. Driver's seat.
19. 7,62 mm DGT machine gun.
20. Machine gun mantlet.
21. Combined towing and lifting hooks.
22. L11 76,2 mm F-34 gun.
23. Glacis plate.

the Panzer IV. It was, however, no match for the Panzer V (Panther), which was technically a medium tank, or the Panzer VI (Tiger I).

The heavily sloped armour of the T-34 offered far more protection than the armour thickness alone would indicate.

The F-34 76.2 mm gun that was fitted on the majority of T-34s until the beginning of 1944 was able to penetrate any German tank's armour at normal combat ranges. When firing

APCR shells, it could pierce 92 mm of armour at 500 m.

The problem with the gun were that the sights and range finding were rather crude. Especially when compared to those of their German foes. This effected both their accuracy and ability to engage at long ranges.

During the winters of 1941-42 and 1942-43, the T-34 had a marked advantage over German tanks. The German Panzer IV used an inferior leaf-spring suspension and narrow tracks

that were unsuitable for snow and mud. With its coil-spring Christie suspension and wider tracks, the T-34 could handle the conditions without becoming bogged down.

Another advantage of the T-34 was the Model V-2-34 38.8 L V12 Diesel engine. It could handle harsh weather conditions far better than the German Maybach engine, which would often freeze in extreme cold.

Yet the T-34 did suffer a number of disadvantages over the

T-34 Model 1941

Weight: 26.5 tonnes
Length: 6.68 m
Width: 3.00 m
Height: 2.45 m
Crew: 4
Hull front armour: 47 mm
Hull side: 40 mm
Hull rear: 45 mm
Hull top: 20 mm
Hull bottom: 15 mm
Turret front armour: 60 mm
Turret side: 52 mm
Turret rear: 30 mm
Turret top: 16 mm
Main armament: F-34 76.2 mm tank gun
Secondary armament: 2 x 7.62 mm DT machine guns
Engine: Model V-2-34 38.8 L V12 Diesel engine 500 hp (370 kW)
Ground clearance: 0.4 m
Operational range: 250-300 km
Speed: 53 km/h

German armour. The Russians used a four man crew with the T-34, while the Germans used a five man crew. This meant that with the Russian tanks, the tank commander also acted as the gunner.

The German tanks had a dedicated tank commander. He was able to spot targets and indicate them to the gunner. He would also tell the loader what type of ammunition to load (i.e. AP or HE rounds). The Germans could typically get off three rounds for every one fired by the T-34.

Another problem was the lack of radio communication in the Russian armour. Only the company commander's tank was fitted with a radio.

All German tanks were fitted with radios, which meant that they could adapt their tactics and were more fluid on the battlefield.

Combat History

When German invaded Russia in 1941, the existence of the T-34 proved a psychological shock to German soldiers, who had expected to face an inferior enemy.

The T-34 was superior to any tank the Germans then had in service. Initially, the Wehrmacht had great difficulty destroying T-34s in combat, as standard German anti-tank weaponry proved ineffective against its heavy, sloped armour.

Despite this, the Soviet corps

equipped with these new tanks lost most of them within weeks. The combat statistics for 1941 show that the Soviets lost an average of over seven tanks for every German tank lost.

The problem for the Germans was that the Soviets were building tanks faster than the Germans could knock them out.

In 1944 a new version of the T-34, the T-34/85, was produced. Armed with a 85 mm ZiS-S-53 gun, it could penetrate the side armour of the Tiger I from a distance of 800

meters and the turret side from a distance of 600 meters. It was still not enough to match the Tiger, as a Tiger could destroy the T-34 from a distance of 1,500 to 2,000 meters, but it was a noticeable improvement.

During the Korean War (1950-53) the Soviets supplied 120 T-34/85 tanks to the North Koreans.

One of the last modern conflicts which saw the extensive combat deployment of the T-34/85 was the Angolan Civil War. In 1975, the Soviet Union

shipped eighty T-34-85s to Angola as part of its support for the ongoing Cuban military intervention there.

Today 11 countries still use the T-34/85.

Soviet Tank Aces

It is not easy to obtain accurate statistics regarding individual Soviet tank aces because Russia was more concerned about overall statistics rather than individual ones.

However the following five people are commonly regarded

as the Soviet Union's top tank aces of World War II.

- 1st Lt. Lavrinenko Dmi-triy Fyodorovich, 4th [1st Guards] tank brigade -52 kills.
- Lt. M. Kuchenko, 10th Guards tank corps - 32 kills.
- N. Moiseyev, 6th Guards tank brigade - 31 kills.
- Captain N. Dyachenko, 10th Guards tank corps - 31 kills.
- Captain Samohin Konstan-tin Mihaylovich, 4th [1st Guards] tank brigade - 30+ kills.



On 30 April 1989 six armed men stormed the Iranian Embassy in London, taking 26 people hostage. A small group of elite soldiers were put on standby. Six days later this group launched an assault as the entire world watched.

The Iranian Embassy was situated on Princes Gate, South Kensington, London. On Wednesday 30 April 1980 at 11h30 the building was stormed by six heavily armed men.

The men were members of the Democratic Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of Arabistan (DRFLA), Iranian Arabs protesting for the establishment of an autonomous Arab state in the southern region of the Iranian province of Khūzestān.

Police Constable (PC) Trevor Lock of the Metropolitan Police's Diplomatic Protection Group (DPG) was on duty at the time. He was quickly overpowered, but he managed to press the panic button on his radio.

Lock was armed with a concealed Smith & Wesson .38 calibre revolver. Although he was searched, the weapon was not discovered.

A total of 26 people, mostly embassy staff, but also a number of visitors, were taken hostage. This included PC Lock. Also among the hostages were two BBC journalists. Simeon "Sim" Harris and Chris Cramer were at the embassy attempting to obtain visas to visit Iran.

Day 1 - 30 April 1980

Almost immediately after the first reports of gunfire were reported, seven DPG officers were on the scene. They surrounded the building but had to retreat when a gunman appeared at a window and threatened to open fire.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Dellow arrived half an hour later and took command of the situation.

Dellow coordinated the police response, which included the deployment of D11, the Metropolitan Police's marksmen and officers with specialist surveillance equipment.

Police negotiators made contact with Oan Ali Mohammed, the leader of the group. Contact was made via a field telephone passed through one of the embassy windows.

Oan demanded the release of 91 Arabs held in prisons in Khūzestān, and threatened to blow up the embassy and the hostages if this were not done by noon on 1 May.

A large number of journalists and television crews were on the scene quickly and they were moved into a holding area to the west of the front of the embassy.

The British government's emergency committee COBRA (Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms) was assembled. COBRA is made up of ministers, civil servants and expert advisers, including representatives from the police and the armed forces. The meeting was chaired by William Whitelaw, the Home Secretary, as Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister, was unavailable.

The gunmen released their first hostage, embassy press officer Frieda Mozaffarian, at 16h30. She had been unwell since the start of the siege and the other hostages convinced Oan that she was pregnant and needed medical treatment.

Margaret Thatcher, kept apprised of the situation by Whitelaw, determined that British law would be applied to the embassy, despite the Vienna Convention, under which the embassy is considered Iranian soil.

Day 2 - 1 May 1980

While the COBRA meetings continued through the night, two teams were dispatched from the Special Air Service (SAS) near Hereford.

The teams were from B Squadron, with specialists from other squadrons. They were under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Michael Rose, the officer commanding 22 SAS Regiment.

They set up at a holding area in Regent's Park Barracks. At 03h30 one of the SAS teams moved into the building next door to the embassy. They were briefed on Colonel Rose's "immediate action" plan, to be implemented should the SAS be required to storm the building before a more sophisticated plan could be formed.

Early on the morning of 1 May, the gunmen ordered one of the hostages to telephone the BBC's new's desk.

Oan took the receiver and spoke directly to a BBC journalist, identifying who they were and stating the non-Iranian hostages would not be harmed.

Not long after that the police cut the phone lines to the embassy, leaving the field telephone as the only means of communication.

BBC journalist Chris Cramer became ill and his colleague, Sim Harris, was taken to the field telephone and told to negotiate for a doctor. The police refused.

Most of the morning was taken up with negotiations before Cramer was released at 11h15. He was rushed to hospital in an ambulance, accompanied by police officers sent to question

him.

As the noon deadline approached the police negotiated for a new deadline of 14h00. They were convinced the gunmen did not have the capability to carry out their threat of blowing the building up.

The police allowed the 14h00 deadline to pass. Later that afternoon Oan altered his demands, now requesting that the British media broadcast a statement of their grievances and for ambassadors of three Arab countries to negotiate the group's safe passage out of the UK once the statement had been broadcast.

At about 20h00, Oan became agitated by noises coming from the Ethiopian Embassy next door. PC Lock was asked to identify the sounds. He claimed that it was probably mice in the walls.

The sounds were actually technicians drilling holes in the wall to implant listening devices. COBRA decided to create a distraction and instructed British Gas to commence drilling in an adjacent road, under the guise of repairing a gas leak.

The drilling further agitated the gunmen, and instead British Airports Authority, owner of London Heathrow Airport, was told to instruct approaching aircraft to fly over the embassy at low altitude.

Day 3 - 2 May 1980

At 09h30 Oan appeared at a first-floor window and demanded access to the telex system, which had been cut along with the phone lines.

The police refused and Oan threatened to kill Abdul Fazi Ezzati, the cultural attaché.



Oan then demanded to speak to somebody from the BBC who knew Sim Harris.

The police agreed and produced Tony Crabb, managing director of BBC Television News and Harris's boss.

Oan repeated his earlier demands for safe passage out of the UK, to be negotiated by three ambassadors from Arab countries to Crabb from the first-floor window, and instructed that they should be broadcast along with a statement of the hostage-takers' aims by the BBC.

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office informally approached the embassies of Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria and Qatar to ask if their ambassadors would be willing to talk to the hostage-takers. The Jordanian ambassador immediately refused and the other five said they would consult their governments.

While the BBC did broadcast the statement that evening, Oan was not happy with it. He claimed that it was truncated and incorrect.

Meanwhile SAS plans to en-

ter the embassy by battering the front door and ground-floor windows were quickly scrapped when it was discovered that the embassy's front door was reinforced by a steel security door, and that the windows on the ground floor and first floor were fitted with armoured glass.

Day 4 - 3 May 1980

Oan, angered by the BBC's incorrect reporting of his demands the previous evening, contacted the police negotiators shortly after 06h00 and accused the authorities of deceiving him. He demanded to speak with an Arab ambassador, but the negotiator on duty claimed that talks were still being arranged by the Foreign Office.

Oan saw through the delaying tactic and threatened that a hostage would be killed unless Tony Crabb was brought back to the embassy.

Crabb did not arrive at the embassy until 15h30, nearly ten hours after Oan demanded his presence. Oan then relayed another statement to Crabb via Mustapha Karkouti, a journalist also being held hostage in the embassy.

The police guaranteed that the statement would be broadcast on the BBC's next news bulletin, in exchange for the release of two hostages.

The hostages decided amongst themselves that the two to be released would be Hiyeck Kanji and Ali-Guil Ghanzafar; the former as she was pregnant and the latter for no other reason than his loud snoring, which kept the other hostages awake at night and irritated the terrorists.



GO: Having abseiled down from the roof, an SAS team enters the embassy.

Later in the evening, at approximately 23h00, an SAS team reconnoitred the roof of the embassy. They discovered a skylight, and succeeded in unlocking it for potential use as an access point, should they later be required to storm the building. They also attached ropes to the chimneys to allow soldiers to abseil down the building and gain access through the windows if necessary.

Day 5 - 4 May 1980

Throughout the day the Foreign Office were in talks with diplomats from Arabian countries in an effort to get them to talk to the hostage-takers. The talks ended in a stalemate.

Karkouti, the journalist, became increasingly ill throughout the day and by the evening was feverish. This led to speculation that the police had spiked the food that had been sent into the embassy.

While the police had consid-

ered this option, it was not done on the advice of a doctor who dismissed it as "impracticable".

The SAS officers involved in the operation, including Brigadier Peter de la Billière, Director Special Forces; Lieutenant Colonel Mike Rose, Commander of 22 SAS; and Major Hector Gullan, commander of the team that would undertake any raid, spent the day refining their plans for an assault.

Day 6 - 5 May 1980

PC Lock was woken by Oan at dawn. Oan was convinced that there was an intruder in the building and sent Lock to investigate. No-one was found.

Later that morning Oan told Lock to examine a bulge in the wall separating the Iranian embassy from the Ethiopian embassy next door.

The bulge was actually caused by the removal of bricks to allow and assault team to break through the wall, and to



SAS CRW Kit

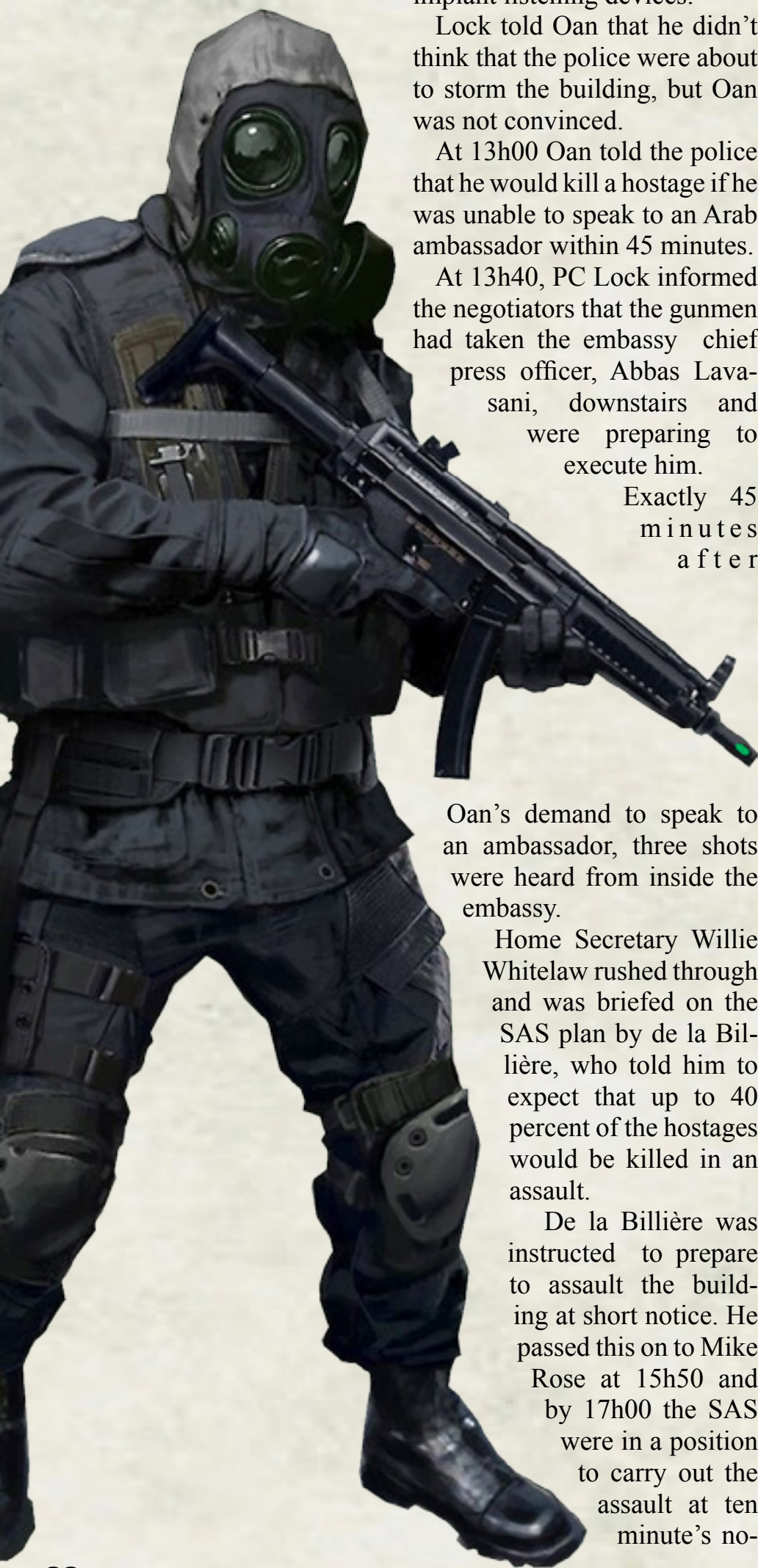
1. Nomex III Assault Suit.
2. AC200 Kevlar Assault Helmet.
3. AC900 Kevlar Assault Helmet.
4. Avon SF10 Respirator.
5. Nomex Hood.
6. Nomex Gloves.
7. Assault Vest.
8. PE Assault Belt.
9. GQ Abseil Harness.
10. Adidas GSG9 Assault Boots.
11. MBITR Radio.
12. Earpiece/Throat Mike.
13. Calumite Light Sticks.
14. Aircrew Knife.
15. Leatherman Tool.
16. Cable Ties.
17. Claymore Clacker.
18. Rope Bag (Leg).
19. 11 mm Abseil Rope.
20. Petzl Descender.
21. Stun Grenade.
22. CS Gas Grenade.
23. H&K MP5K.
24. H&K MP5A5.
25. H&K MP5SD6.
26. Remington 870.
27. Browning L9A1.

Nomex is a registered trademark for flame-resistant meta-aramid material developed in the early 1960s by DuPont.

They also wear Nomex underwear, which the SAS nickname 'Vindaloo', a hot Indian curry dish.

The Remington 870 shotgun is loaded with breaching rounds, used to blow a door off its hinges.

The H&K submachine guns will normally have a torch and laser sight attached.



implant listening devices.

Lock told Oan that he didn't think that the police were about to storm the building, but Oan was not convinced.

At 13h00 Oan told the police that he would kill a hostage if he was unable to speak to an Arab ambassador within 45 minutes.

At 13h40, PC Lock informed the negotiators that the gunmen had taken the embassy chief press officer, Abbas Lavasani, downstairs and were preparing to execute him.

Exactly 45 minutes after

Oan's demand to speak to an ambassador, three shots were heard from inside the embassy.

Home Secretary Willie Whitelaw rushed through and was briefed on the SAS plan by de la Billière, who told him to expect that up to 40 percent of the hostages would be killed in an assault.

De la Billière was instructed to prepare to assault the building at short notice. He passed this on to Mike Rose at 15h50 and by 17h00 the SAS were in a position to carry out the assault at ten minute's no-

tice.

The police had recruited an imam from a local mosque at 18h20 and asked him to talk to the gunmen.

While the imam was talking to Oan via the field telephone, another three shots rang out. Oan announce that another hostage has been killed and that the rest would die in 30 minutes unless his demands were met.

Police believed that two hostages had been killed, although only Lavasani had been shot.

Lavasani's body was dumped out of the front door and was recovered by the police.

Sir David McNee, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, contacted the Home Secretary to request approval to hand control of the operation over to the British Army, under the provisions of Military Aid to the Civil Power.

This request was relayed by Whitelaw to Margaret Thatcher would immediately agreed.

At 19h07, John Dellow signed over control of the operation to Lieutenant Colonel Mike Rose, authorising Rose to order an assault at his discretion.

The police negotiators began stalling Oan, offering concessions in order to distract him and prevent him from killing further hostages. At the same time the SAS made their final preparations.

The Assault

Two SAS teams, Red Team and Blue Tea, were ordered to begin their simultaneous assaults at 19h23.

While snipers provided cover, 32 men stormed the embassy. Each assault team had a set area

to cover. They were not to stray beyond these, to avoid friendly fire incidents.

At the 'Go' signal men burst in through the French windows at the rear of the building while others came in through a skylight on the roof while abseil teams reached the floors in between.

Not everything went off smoothly. The staff sergeant leading the abseiling team became entangled in his rope. Some of the hostages were not where the SAS expected. One of the entry rooms turned out to have been barricaded shut, and a soldier had to leave through the window and re-enter across the balcony to get around the blockage. Stun grenades ignited fires, which quickly spread.

The staff sergeant, still hung

up in his rope, was severely burnt. A second wave of abseilers cut him free and he fell to the balcony floor below. He stood up and followed the rest of his team into the building.

The aggressive plan paid off. Taken by surprise the gunmen were only able to kill one of their hostages before being gunned down, most in a hail of bullets from several SAS troops at once.

Two of the gunmen were taken alive, but as they were passed hastily from man to man down the stairs, the SAS realised that one of them was clutching a grenade. He was flung to the ground and shot dead before he could pull the pin.

The success was aided by PC Lock. Realising that the assault had begun, Lock knocked the

terrorist leader to the ground and grappled with him. Despite suffering from the effects of CS gas, Lock kept the terrorist from firing his gun, then rolled clear at a shout from the SAS, who shot the terrorist before he could fire.

PC Lock was later awarded the George Medal, the United Kingdom's second-highest civil honour, as well as the Freedom of the City of London.

Most of the raid, which lasted for 17 minutes, was watched live on television. It made the SAS a household name.

Many Special Forces units around the world would go on to base their weapons, equipment and tactics on those of the Special Air Service.

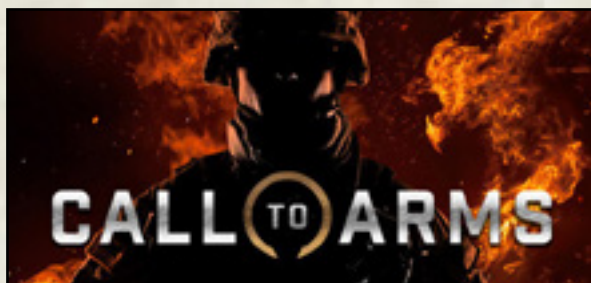
The Sunday Breakfast Zone



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



Matt O'Brien *hears the sound of the trumpet and the howling of the dogs of war as he hurries to answer the Call to Arms. Although his team mates often feel that it would be better if he had stayed at home.*

Okay I admit it. Even though I'm now in my mid-60s I still enjoy gaming as much as I did when I was still a kid.

At a fairly young age I became interested in chess, which I guess you could call one of the first war games.

I also became interested in board games. And not traditional games such as Cluedo and Monopoly, but rather war games.

And, in case you're wondering, I was not some sort of nerd that sat indoors everyday playing games. As a teen I played rugby, cricket and hurling. Gaelic hurling is an Irish sport that can be regarded as a cross between rugby, soccer, hockey and murder.

Yet I still enjoyed playing games. Back in those days we did not have computers so if you wanted to play games, they were traditional board games.

I remember than one of the games I was hooked on was Squad Leader. It was made by Avalon Hill in 1977. It was an excellent game and I also obtained the add-on games that came out later - Cross of Iron, Crescendo of Doom, and GI: Anvil of Victory.

Forty-four years later and I still have all four of these games

in their original boxes.

The PC or Personal Computer and game consoles were to change the face of gaming. These days the number of games available is mind blowing.

There are games that cover almost any topic you can think of. There is even a game called 'Thief Simulator' where you get to break into people's homes, steal stuff, and then sell it. Although in South Africa this is probably not regarded as a game but more of a training tool.

I must confess to owning a cupboard full of games.

I play a vast array of games and my favourites tend to be simulation type games. Especially military strategy or simulation games, many of which I have reviewed right here in Military Despatches.

So I am always on the look out for military simulation games that I feel our readers may be interested in.

Now I know that gaming is not everyone's cup of tea. Then again, I have a glass which has an inscription that reads, "I'd rather be someone's shot of whiskey than everyone's cup of tea."

So, on to this month's review. It's a game that was developed

and published by Digitalmindsoft back in 2015. It's called "Call to Arms."

Call to Arms offers an innovative mix of real-time strategy and 3rd, as well as 1st person controls. Set in the time of modern warfare, the game offers realistically modelled vehicles and heavy weaponry, as well as dozens of firearms and customizations.

What I enjoy about the game is that its a combination of simulation and real-time strategy (RTS).

In other words you can control several dozen units at the same time, moving them and giving them orders. This is the RTS component of the game.

And while on the subject of moving squads and giving them orders, this is vital to doing well in the game. Be sure to make use of cover when moving them.

There is a lot you can do in the RTS mode. For example you could tell a squad or squads to set up an ambush. Choose a killing ground, have them plant claymores, take up position, and wait for the enemy.

Decide what weapons and equipment your squads or individuals in the squad will carry, including the type of ammunition they will use.

At any stage you can choose



to switch over to simulation mode. Select any of your individual soldiers or vehicles and control them in 3rd person or 1st person mode.

It fun to take control of an IFV or a tank. Even more fun is to take control of a helicopter gunship.

There are numerous maps and scenarios that you can play either in single player, online against other players, or online co-op where you and a partner go up against the AI (Artificial Intelligence).

Maps cover areas such as open areas, rural areas, factories and towns. What I do enjoy is the fact that cover can be destroyed. I've often seen games where someone takes cover behind a thin wooden wall and you can't touch them. This is not the case with Call to Arms. A well placed RPG rocket or a HE round from a tank will sort out most buildings.

Something else that I appre-

ciate about Call to Arms is that they allow modding support both via the Steam Workshop and other external modding websites.

There are a number of good mods out there that will offer additional units, maps, scenarios and weapons.

More good news is that they will soon be releasing Call to Arms - Gates of Hell: Ostfront. This sets the game on the Eastern Front during World War II, so it will be great for those that enjoy this era.

To play the game you will need a 64-bit processor with either Windows 7, 8 or 10. You will also need 4 GB RAM memory and a graphics card that can support DirectX Version 11 and 40 GB of available hard drive space.

If you're going to play online, either P vs P or co-op, then you're going to need a broadband Internet connection.

All in all, Call to Arms is a

fun game to play and, with the ability to set up your own custom scenarios, it's a game that will keep you busy for a long time.

So I would have no hesitation in recommended this game.



Publisher - Digitalmindsoft

Genre - Simulation/RTS

Score 7/10

Price - R105 (on Steam)



Movie Review

American Sniper

Released: 2014

Running time: 132 minutes

Directed by: Clint Eastwood

Released in 2014, American Sniper is an American biographical war drama film directed by Clint Eastwood and written by Jason Hall.

It is loosely based on the memoir *American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History* (2012) by Chris Kyle, with Scott McEwen and Jim DeFelice.

The film follows the life of Kyle, who became the deadliest marksman in U.S. military history with 255 kills from four tours in the Iraq War, 160 of which were officially confirmed by the Department of Defence.

While Kyle was celebrated for his military successes, his tours of duty took a heavy toll on his personal and family life.

Growing up in Texas, Chris Kyle (Bradley Cooper) is taught by his father how to shoot a rifle and hunt deer. Years later, Kyle has become a ranch hand and rodeo cowboy, and returns home early, to find his girlfriend in bed with another man.

After telling her to leave, he is mulling it over with his brother when he sees news coverage of the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings and decides to enlist in the Navy. He qualifies for special training and becomes a U.S. Navy SEALs sniper.

Kyle meets Taya Studebaker (Sienna Miller) at a bar, and the two soon marry. He is sent to Iraq

after the September 11 attacks. His first kills are a woman and boy who attacked U.S. Marines with a Russian made RKG-3 anti-tank grenade. Kyle is visibly upset by the experience but later earns the nickname "Legend" for his many kills.

Assigned to hunt for the al-Qaeda leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Kyle is pinned down by a sniper using a Romanian PSL sniper rifle. This sniper goes by the name Mustafa and is an Olympic Games medalist from Syria. Meanwhile, the insurgents issue a bounty on Kyle.

When he returns home to a newborn daughter after his second tour, Kyle becomes increasingly distant from his family. On Kyle's third tour, Mustafa seriously injures a unit member, Ryan "Biggles" Job, and the unit is evacuated back to base. When they decide to return to the field and continue the mission, another SEAL, Marc Lee, is killed by gunfire.

Guilt compels Kyle to undertake a fourth tour, and Taya tells him that she may not be there when he returns.

On this tour he finally kills Mustafa with a shot from 1,920 metres. During his escape he is wounded and almost left behind.

After Kyle gets back, on edge and unable to adjust fully to civilian life, he is asked by a Veterans Affairs psychiatrist if he is haunted by all the things he did

in war. When he replies that it is "all the guys [he] couldn't save" that haunt him, the psychiatrist encourages him to help severely wounded veterans in the VA hospital. After that Kyle gradually begins to adjust to home life.

Years later, on February 2, 2013, Kyle says goodbye to his wife and family as he leaves in good spirits to spend time with a veteran at a shooting range. An on-screen subtitle reveals: "Chris Kyle was killed that day by a veteran he was trying to help", followed by archive footage of crowds standing along the highway for his funeral procession.

You can catch American Sniper on Netflix.



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

The Elite

The Rhodesian Special Air Service, one of the most formidable fighting forces in the world, operated almost exclusively across the borders during the long bitter bush war, undertaking deep-penetration missions against insurgents being harboured inside neighbouring Mozambique and Zambia.

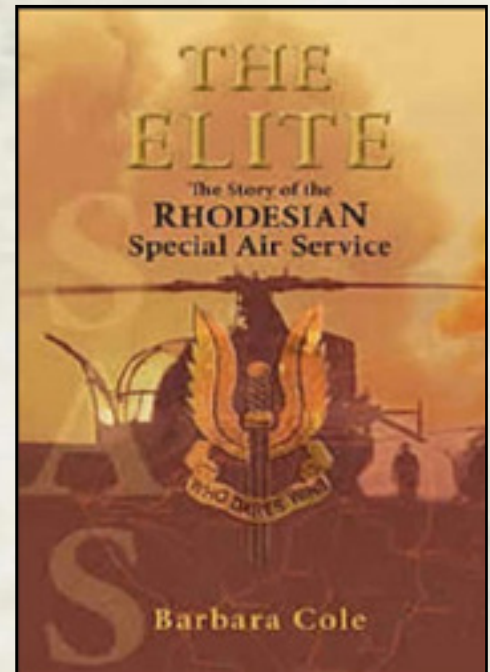
There were missions into Botswana too, and at one stage, SAS men were operating without benefit of passports in all three neighbouring territories at the same time.

The writer takes the reader from the early days in the Western Desert to the formation of the Rhodesian SAS for service in Malaya, then back to Africa where the action spans the days of the Federation, the UDI era

and finally the decolonization of Rhodesia by the British in 1980.

This is the first book to detail the secret exploits of this elite regiment and it has been based on rare first-hand interviews with operators themselves. Some of their exploits may seem far-fetched, even impossible, but then, truth is often stranger than fiction. It is a history of high adventure and daring, courage and humanism, be it driving through the streets of a neighbouring capital, knocking out trains, bridges and installation or swooping out of the morning skies then, with the ability to hit hard and fast, attacking and taking their leave, the devastation complete, the mission accomplished.

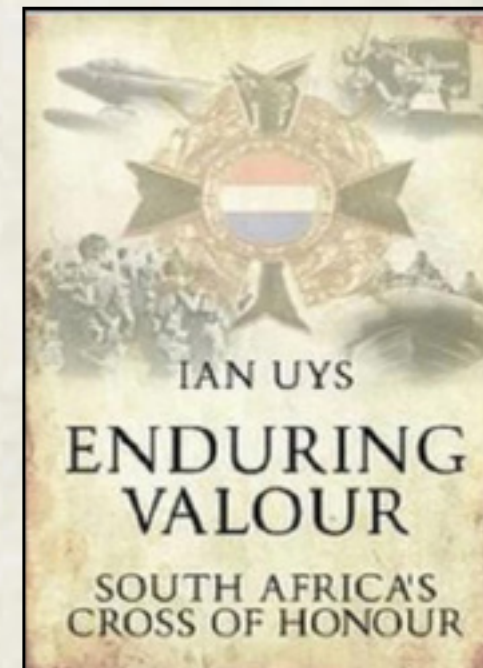
This edition - originally published in the mid-1980s and long



since out of print - is presented in a modern, attractive, upgraded format and contains pictures previously not seen in colour.

Paperback: 512 pages

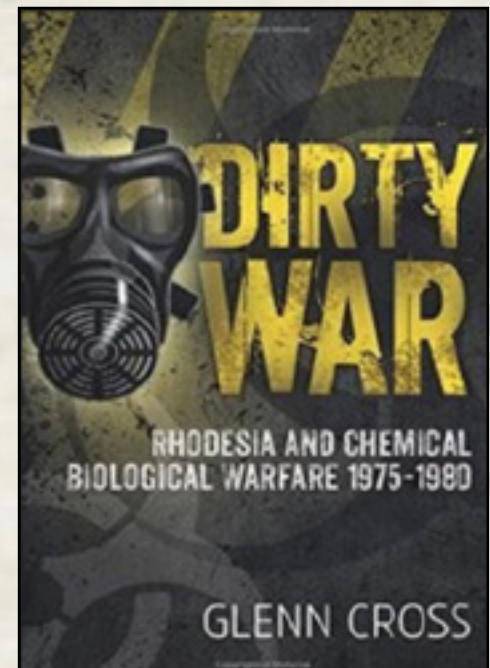
Cost: R495



Enduring Valour
R275



Winds of Destruction
R450



Dirty War
R550

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

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

1 April

- **1865** - During the American Civil War, Confederate troops of General George Pickett were defeated and cut off at Five Forks, Virginia. This sealed the fate of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's armies at Petersburg and Richmond and hastened the end of the war.
- **1893** - USN establishes the rate of Chief Petty Officer.
- **1913** - South African Police (SAP) is founded.
- **1922** - The South African Naval Service is founded. With the ships the Protea, Sonneblom and Immortelle it formed the nucleus of a South African navy.
- **1933** - Heinrich Himmler becomes Police Commander of Germany.
- **1943** - Japanese aircraft attack the Russell Islands.
- **1945** - Okinawa: 60,000 U.S. soldiers and Marines land, on Easter Sunday.
- **1945** - US First & Ninth Armies meet to form the Ruhr pocket.
- **1954** - The US Army forms its first helicopter battalion at Fort Bragg.
- **1955** - The Greek nationalist EOKA movement makes several bomb attacks against British facilities in Cyprus.
- **1960** - France detonates her second atom bomb, in the Sahara.
- **1967** - JARIC, voted best support unit of the SA Air Force 2003, is established as a section of the Central Phototechnical Establishment (CPE), initially based at AFB Swartkop.
- **1977** - An unsuccessful military coup is staged in Chad.
- **1985** - Rifleman Daniel Aupini from 201 Battalion SWATF was killed when struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 22.
- **1985** - Rifleman D. Haupindi from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 21.
- **1986** - Special Constable Andrek Mwandinovanhu from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.
- **1989** - South Africa reports major clashes with guerrillas in Namibia on eve of ceasefire.
- **1989** - Five members from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in Action. The casualties were: Special Constable George Dawid (24). Special Constable Mathais Lukas (29). Special Constable Uutafehe Rjipo-

sa (27). Special Constable Daniel Sakaria (28). Special Constable Zaako Uaapulatena (25).

- **1994** - Soldiers roll into Natal to quell unrest threatening the national election.
- **1997** - The strike crafts SAS Kobie Coetzee, P.W. Botha and Frederic Creswell are renamed SAS Job Maseko, SAS Shaka and SAS Adam Kok on the occasion of the Navy's 75th anniversary.
- **2002** - The South African Navy (SAN) is 80 years old.
- **2003** - USMC Task Force Tarawa secures An Nasiriyah in Iraq after a hot week-long fight.

2 April

- **1879** - Relief of British garrison besieged by Zulus at Eshowe.
- **1879** - The battle of Gingindlovu during the Anglo-Zulu War takes place. The British defeat Cetshwayo and the kraal is destroyed.
- **1904** - Herero tribesmen near Okaharui, German West Africa (now Namibia) defeat German forces under Major Von Glasenapp.
- **1916** - German Zeppelins bomb a distillery in Rosyth, causing a flood of fine whiskey.
- **1917** - US President Wilson asks Congress to declare war against Germany.
- **1941** - German Afrika Korps, commanded by General

Erwin Rommel, take Agedabia and Zuetania, Libya.

- **1941** - Nazi occupiers disband the Dutch Boy Scouts.
- **1943** - Allied air raid on Tunis causes considerable damage just before Axis troops start their final withdrawal from Tunisia.
- **1952** - The United States posthumously awards SA Cheetah Squadron pilot, Lieutenant R.M. du Plooy, with the Silver Star for "gallantry in action". Du Plooy was killed the previous year in the Korean War.
- **1957** - The Union Jack is lowered and British occupation of Simon's Town comes to an end after 143 years. South Africa takes formal possession of the historic base.
- **1978** - Rifleman Carvalho Esals from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action in Southern Angola during a contact with enemy forces near Omalappapa. He was 26.
- **1981** - Lance Corporal Ean Andrew Chapman Pettit from H Company, 1 Parachute Battalion was accidentally killed after he and his section were extracted from a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. Their Buffel Troop carrier overturned while travelling at high speed and he was thrown out and crushed by the vehicle when it rolled onto him. He was 19.
- **1982** - The beginning of the Falkland Islands War as troops from Argentina invaded and occupied the British colony located near the tip of South America. The British retaliated and defeated the Argentineans on June 15, 1982, after ten weeks of combat, with about 1,000 lives lost.
- **1983** - Gunner Lodewyk Jozef Engelbrecht from 4 Artillery Regiment attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion during operations against SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in the Tsumeb area. He was 19.
- **1984** - Gunner Alfred Lokington Tomes from 17 Field Regiment was critically wounded during a contact with the enemy forces in Southern Angola on 29 Mar 1984. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he succumbed to his wounds on 2 April 1984. He was 27.
- **1984** - Four South Africans and a British national charged with illegally ex-

porting military equipment to South Africa.

- **1987** - A US State Department report says Israel, France and Italy have continued to maintain and upgrade a major weapons systems for South Africa since the 1977 UN arms embargo was imposed.
- **1987** - Rifleman Domingos Cassela from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action in a contact with enemy forces near Evale in Southern Angola during Operation Kakebeen. He was 27.
- **1987** - Rifleman N. Ngombe from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 23.
- **1988** - 2nd Lieutenant Jacobus Hendrick Diedericks from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 24.
- **1988** - Two 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 Kandjunga Tenaseu (27). Special Sergeant Usebiu Ndemwimba (29).
- **1989** - Rifleman Marius van der Merwe from 32 Battalion was Reported Missing while on patrol near Buffalo. He went for a swim amongst the



Erwin Rommel

reeds and it is thought that he was taken by a crocodile. He remains unaccounted for and has no known grave. He was 21.

- 1989 - Ten members of the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) Units were killed during a number of contacts with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. The casualties were: Special Warrant Officer Leonard Benjamin (34) Sergeant Sarel Hercules van Tonder (25). Special Sergeant Daniel Teteiko (25). Constable Johannes Jacobus Badenhorst (24). Constable Leon Thorne (21). Special Constable Nambahu Abiatal (27). Special Constable Joseph Andreas (29). Special Constable Thomas Johannes (26). Special Constable Filippus Joseph (24). Special Constable Muyunga Kakonyi (28). Special Constable Fernando Tyipoya (25). Special Constable Aktofel Silvanus (26).

3 April

- 1865 - The Confederate capital of Richmond surrendered to Union forces after the withdrawal of General Robert E. Lee's troops.
- 1900 - The battle of Mostertshoek, near Reddersburg, takes place. The beginning of a two-day battle between General De Wet's forces (400 men, no artillery) and British encamped behind stone breastworks on the

heights of Mostertshoek. De Wet sends a note to the British demanding their surrender and claims to have three Krupp guns and reinforcements on the way.

- 1900 - General P.A. Cronje and his wife, with Colonel Adorf Schiel and about 1,000 Republican prisoners of war, sails from Cape Town for St Helena.
- 1941 - The British forces evacuate Benghazi, major seaport of north-eastern Libya, in the face of the German advance. Date given as 7 April 1941 in another source.
- 1942 - Bataan: Japanese launch a major offensive.
- 1944 - British bombers attack the German battleship 'Tirpitz' in Norwegian waters.
- 1945 - USSR renounces April '41 non-aggression pact with Japan.
- 1974 - Ordinary Seaman Leonard Arthur Farmer from SAS Saldanha was accidentally killed during basic training while doing pole PT. He had to hold the pole behind his head and do press-ups. The pole slipped and fell on his head, severely injuring him. He died a short while later. He was 18.
- 1977 - Rifleman Carel Hendrik Kotze from the South Coast Commando was accidentally killed during training manoeuvres at Umtentweni. He was 32.
- 1978 - Rifleman Steven Dennis Oscar Pearson from 5 SAI Died of Wounds re-

ceived when his patrol was ambushed by SWAPO/PLAN insurgents.

- 1981 - Rifleman Hendrik Kasper Jordaan from SWA SPES Unit SWATF was Killed in Action while attached to 53 Battalion out on a patrol north of Etale. When returning to base, the patrol crossed Oom Willie se pad and one of the horses detonated an Anti-Tank mine, killing him instantly. He was 20.
- 1982 - Rifleman Lourens Maritz Bieldt from Infantry School was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned approximately 20 km outside Oshakati. He was 21.
- 1982 - Captain Michael Norman Amos Giani from Army Intelligence, attached to 72 Motorised Brigade, was killed in a military vehicle accident at Muldersdrift. He was 30.
- 1982 - Security Council demands Argentina withdraw from the Falkland Islands.
- 1985 - Rifleman Heilia Mikael from 101 Battalion SWATF was accidentally killed in Southern Angola when a Casspir Armoured Vehicle drove over him while he was sleeping. He was 19.
- 1985 - Special Constable Johannes Tjiposa from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.

- 1986 - Lance Corporal Jan Hendrik Labuschagne from the Technical Service Corps was killed when struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 23.
- 1989 - Constable Daniel Johannes Jacobus Fourie from Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was killed in action. He was 25.

4 April

- 1884 - Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto was born in Nagaoko, Honshu.
- 1900 - The battles of Reddersburg, where the Boers under Gen. De Wet defeat the Royal Irish Rifles, and Mostertshoek, take place. British surrender at Mostert's Hoek. Boer forces capture nearly 500 Lee-Metford rifles.
- 1902 - Second Anglo-Boer War. The siege of Okiep in Namaqualand starts as Gen. Smuts demands the surrender of the town but is curtly rejected by Col. W.A.D.



Isoroku Yamamoto

Shelton, commander of the British forces.

- 1940 - Katyn Forest: The Soviets begin mass executions of Polish military officers, police officials, and intellectuals, about 20,000 die over several weeks.
- 1941 - Rommel takes Benghazi.
- 1943 - The US 4th Marine Division is established at San Diego.
- 1945 - Heavy fighting begins in southern Okinawa.
- 1945 - Hungary liberated from Nazi occupation.
- 1949 - Twelve nations signed the treaty creating NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The nations united for common military defense against the threat of expansion by Soviet Russia into Western Europe.
- 1961 - UN troops defending an airfield in Katanga province, Congo (now Democratic Republic of Congo), are attacked by 'mobs'.
- 1978 - Barend Hendrik Janse van Rensburg (Ben) (80), founder of the War Museum in Bloemfontein, dies.
- 1978 - Two members of SWA SPES accidentally drowned in the Olifants River near Doornkop. They were: Rifleman Wayne Darrell Norman Meyers (18). Rifleman Marius van Zyl (20).
- 1980 - ANC insurgents launch a rifle, rocket and grenade attack on Booyens Po-

lice Station, Johannesburg. Pamphlets are scattered demanding the release of Walter Sisulu from Robben Island.

- 1986 - Second Lieutenant Izak Johan Lourens from 911 Battalion SWATF died in the Opuwa Hospital after contracting Meningitis & Malaria. He was 19.
- 1986 - Corporal Alfonso Alberto from 32 Battalion died from causes unknown. He was 27.
- 1987 - Corporal Fernandez Andre from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces near Evale in Southern Angola during Operation Kakebeen. He was 26.
- 1988 - SADF Gaborone raid kills four.
- 1989 - Corporal Hermann Carstens from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during fierce fighting with a numerically superior force of heavily armed SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near Eenhana. He was 20.
- 1989 - Three members from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike, SWATF were Killed in Action during fierce fighting in Northern Owamboland as 101 Battalion Romeo Mike and Koevoetelements continued to intercept and engage large groups of very heavily armed SWAPO/PLAN insurgents crossing into Owamboland from Southern Angola. The casualties in this contact were: Rifleman E. Anunyela. (26).

- Rifleman J. Mandume (24). Rifleman N. Kapentse (23).
- **1989** - Lieutenant Christiaan Phillipus Els from 1 Special Service Battalion Died in Hospital at Ruacana from Wounds sustained during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near Ongandjera on 03 April 1989. He was 20.

5 April

- **1900** - Combat-General Georges-Henri Anne Marie Victor Compte de Villebois-Mareuil, a former commander in the French Foreign Legion, makes a valiant last stand against the British at Boshof and is killed. He tried to attack the nearby railway with a force of 75 foreign volunteers (mostly French and Dutch) and eleven burghers but was trapped by General Lord Methuen and a force of over 750, assisted by four field-guns. De Villebois-Mareuil's men attempt to escape whilst he makes his stand but are captured.
- **1916** - Battle of El Hanna: Unsuccessful British attempt to break the Turkish siege of Kut.
- **1939** - Germany: "Aryan" youth ordered to join the *Hitlerjugend*.
- **1942** - Eighty-six South Africans survive a Japanese attack on the HMS Cornwall near the coast of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).
- **1948** - As riots rage around Cairo, the Egyptian army kills twenty-five civilians.
- **1964** - Douglas MacArthur dies at the age of 84.
- **1979** - Special Constable Wilino Shamoketa 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.
- **1979** - Captain Martin Charles Silberbauer from 85 Combat Flying School was killed during a training exercise at the Roodewal Bombing Range near Pietersburg when his Dassault Mirage IID2Z struck the ground while trying to recover after carrying out a practice rocket attack. He was 28.
- **1983** - Private Patrick Cornelius Engel from 16 Maintenance Unit was killed when his Withings recovery vehicle collided into the rear of a stationary vehicle at Oshivello. He was 19.
- **1984** - Rifleman Joseph Sindimba from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 23.
- **1986** - A bomb exploded at a popular discotheque frequented by American military personnel in West Berlin, killing two U.S. soldiers and a Turkish woman. American intelligence analysts attributed the attack to Muammar Qaddafi of Libya. Nine days later, President Ronald Reagan ordered a retaliatory

- air strike against Libya.
- **1988** - Special Constable Uakandjangu Tjiumbu 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.
- **1996** - Heavy fighting in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, leaves seventeen dead.

6 April

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General Lord Methuen buries Combat-General De Villebois-Mareuil with full military honours. 1500 men of the Loyal North Lancshires form the Guard of Honour.
- **1916** - German parliament approves unrestricted submarine warfare
- **1917** - Following a vote by Congress approving a declaration of war, the U.S. entered World War I in Europe.
- **1939** - Great Britain & Poland sign military pact.
- **1941** - The SA Brigade enters Addis Ababa during World War II.
- **1941** - Germans bomb Belgrad, 17,000 reportedly die.
- **1943** - The British and US armies link up in Africa.
- **1944** - The Supreme Allied Commander cancels all further military leaves throughout the British Isles, in preparation for D-Day.
- **1977** - Rifleman S. Henrique

- from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 29.
- **1981** - Rifleman Petrus Jacobus Venter from SWA SPES Unit SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut Line. He was 23.
- **1982** - Rifleman Hymje Landsman from 8 SAI was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident in Eastern Kavan-goland. He was 19.
- **1983** - Corporal I.S. Kamunoko from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.
- **1984** - The elite republican guard mounts an unsuccessful coup against President Paul Biya of Cameroon.
- **1987** - Private Russell Joseph Brissett from 1 Medical Battalion Group was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident in Mamelodi during Operation Xenon. He was 23.



Paul Biya

- **1996** - Thousands of Liberians flee their homes amid fierce fighting between government troops and members of an ethnic faction.
- ## 7 April
- **1917** - US Navy takes over all wireless stations for the duration of World War I.
 - **1945** - The Japanese battleship Yamato is sunk by American carrier-based bombers and torpedo bombers with the loss of most of her crew.
 - **1966** - US recovers lost H-bomb from sea off Palomares, Spain.
 - **1984** - Rifleman Daniel Stephanus Venter from 1 Parachute Battalion was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion during anti-insurgent operations just north of the Cut-line. He was 22.
 - **1985** - Special Sergeant Sakaria Naholo 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.
 - **1985** - Rifleman Willem Jacobus Du Randt from 3 SAI Oscar Company (Mortars) was Reported Missing after being attacked by a crocodile approximately 1km below the Epupa Falls where he and others in his

section were swimming. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 20.

- **1989** - Soviet submarine 'K-278 Komsomolets' sinks after a fire in the Norwegian Sea, 42 die.
- **1994** - Rampaging troops kill Rwanda's acting premier and eleven Belgian UN soldiers and civil war erupts in Rwanda, a day after a mysterious plane crash claimed the lives of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi.
- **1997** - Government soldiers in Lubumbashi, Zaire's second largest city lay down their arms and join the cause of rebels advancing on the city.

8 April

- **1940** - Royal Navy destroyer HMS Glowworm is sunk after a gallant fight with the German heavy cruiser Admiral Hipper.
- **1945** - Okinawa: Marines probe Japanese lines on the Motobu Peninsula.
- **1950** - Unarmed US Navy patrol plane is shot down over the Baltic Sea by Soviet aircraft.
- **1958** - Corporal Francois Willem Bornman from 4th Field Regiment died from injuries received in a collision between a car and a train at the Meyer Street level crossing at Potchefstroom. He was 22.
- **1980** - Lieutenant Christo Stephan Grundling from 2 Field Engineer Regiment

was killed in a military vehicle accident at Impala Base. He was 20.

- **1980** - Rifleman Lesley Andrew Scholtz from 3 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Kavangoland. He was 20.
- **1981** - Omar Bradley, the "Soldier's General," last US 5-star officer, dies at the age of 88.
- **1986** - Two members from 101 Battalion were Killed in Action during a Contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. They were: Corporal Noag Kavari (23). Rifleman Joao Domingos (26).
- **1988** - Staff Sergeant Marius Horn from 5 SAI was killed while returning in a convoy from Eshowe. He was 27.
- **1988** - Lance Corporal Carlos Thomas Moon from the South African Cape Corps was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 21.
- **1997** - Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko declares a nationwide state of emergency in response to rebel advances.

9 April

- **1868** - After over 500,000 American deaths, the Civil War effectively ended as General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant in the village of Appomattox Court House. The surrender occurred in the

home of Wilmer McLean. Terms of the surrender, written by General Grant, allowed Confederates to keep their horses and return home. Officers were allowed to keep their swords and side arms.

- **1917** - After a massive mine explosion, Canadian troops storm Vimy Ridge, initiating the Battle of Arras.
- **1940** - Germany invades Denmark, which promptly surrenders.
- **1940** - Germany invades Norway.
- **1944** - Japan offers to mediate peace between Germany and Russia.
- **1945** - RAF sinks Pocket Battleship Admiral Scheer in port.
- **1945** - Wilhelm Canaris, German admiral and chief of the *Abwehr*, the German military intelligence service, was executed in Flossenbürg concentration camp for high treason on the orders of Adolf Hitler.
- **1965** - Lance Corporal Johannes Burger from the South African Corps of Military Police was killed at Fochville when his motorcycle was involved in a collision with a vehicle while he was doing military convoy duty. He was 33.
- **1969** - Candidate Officer Marthinus Jacobus Hendrik Krugel from 4 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed near Leslie during a routine training flight. He was 22.

• **1976** - Corporal Michael Barnett from 2nd Battalion, Regiment Bloemspruit was killed when the bus he was driving was involved in a head-on collision with a civilian vehicle approximately 100km from Grootfontein. He was transporting school children from Grootfontein back to Rundu at the time of the accident. He was 22.

- **1977** - Rifleman Graham Werner Hempstead from 8 SAI was killed in a non-operational military vehicle accident in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1978** - Candidate Officer Fred Johan Forster from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was accidentally shot and killed at Katima Mulilo while participating in a "live fire" shooting exercise. He was 20.
- **1981** - Private Jacob Johannes Kotze from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Tsumeb. He was 19.
- **1984** - Trooper Jacobus Francois Engels from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 19.
- **1987** - Corporal Charles Pierre Du Plessis from Walvis Bay Command was accidentally killed when he was crushed between two vehicles at Walvis Bay. He was 27.
- **1997** - Rebels in Zaire conquer Lubumbashi, second

largest city in the country.

- **1999** - Members of his own Presidential Guard gun down Niger's president, Ibrahim Bare Mainassara.
- **2003** - Corporal Edward Chin, US Marine Corps, plants the US and Free Iraq flags on the statue of Saddam Hussein in Firdos Square, Baghdad, which is then pulled down.

10 April

- **1918** - Near Toul, in eastern France, the 104th Infantry begins four days determined defense against a German assault, to become the first American regiment to be awarded the *Croix de guerre*.
- **1940** - First Battle of Narvik: Royal Navy destroyers defeat German destroyers, two of which are lost.
- **1942** - During World War II in the Pacific, the Bataan Death March began as American and Filipino prisoners were forced on a six-day march from an airfield on Bataan to a camp near Cabanatuan. Some 76,000 Allied POWs including 12,000 Americans



Omar Bradley

were forced to walk 60 miles under a blazing sun without food or water to the POW camp, resulting in over 5,000 American deaths.

- **1945** - The Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald was liberated by U.S. troops.
- **1972** - The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxic Weapons and their Destruction, to which SA is a party, is signed in Moscow, London and Washington.
- **1975** - Sergeant Nicolaas Johannes Steyn from the Technical Service Corps, attached to the Rundu Military Base was killed instantly while travelling between Rundu and Katima Mulilo when, approximately 20km from Rundu, the rear tyre on his vehicle burst, causing the vehicle to leave the road and overturn. He was 27.
- **1978** - Rifleman S.M. Chicoto from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 27.
- **1982** - Major Helmuth Adolf Kessler from 1 South West Africa Air Command Squadron SWATF was Killed in Action during Operation Yahoo while flying in support of Koevoet anti-insurgent operations in the Elundu area. He was 52.
- **1982** - Special Constable

Shitelgipo Hamukwaya 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.

- **1983** - Rifleman John Kern-eels Samson from the South African Cape Corps died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained. He was 19.
- **1985** - Rifleman Douw Gerbrand Du Plessis from 4 Reconnaissance Regiment accidentally drowned during a training exercise. He was 19.
- **1986** - Petty Officer Desmond John Pekeur from SAS Wingfield was killed near Schmidtsdrift when the rear tyre of his Landrover burst causing the vehicle to overturn. He was 29.
- **1991** - Though the government refused to comply with the ANC ultimatum issued on 5 April, defence minister Magnus Malan offers to resign if it is in the interests of SA or the SADF. He also announces the firing of Civilian Co-operation Bureau (CCB) head, Joe Verster and twenty-seven other members of the CCB.
- **1993** - Chris Hani, the leader of the South African Communist Party and chief of staff of *uMkhonto we Sizwe*, the armed wing of the African National Congress, is gunned down as he steps out of his car in the driveway of

his Boksburg home.

11 April

- **1838** - Zulu warriors ambush Petrus Lafras (Piet) Uys and his men at Italeini. Uys, his son Dirkie and seven of his followers are killed in battle.
- **1898** - US President McKinley asks for Declaration of War against Spain.
- **1902** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General Kemp, in charge of the Lemmer, Du Toit, Liebenberg, Celliers, and Potgieter commandos (approximately 2,600 burghers), suffers a defeat at Roodewal, Transvaal, after attacking a British force of 11,000 men. Cmdt Potgieter and fifty burghers are killed.
- **1942** - Burma: Japanese begin a major offensive against the British.
- **1956** - France sends 200,000 reservists to Algeria.
- **1961** - Trial of Adolf Eichman begins in Israel.
- **1979** - Signaller Gerhardus Johannes Jacobus Senekal from Grootfontein Headquarters Signal Unit, attached to 52 Battalion was critically wounded while sitting on his bed at the Unit. He was 19.
- **1980** - Rifleman John Edward McEwan from 5 SAI was Killed after suffering a gunshot wound accidentally inflicted while attached to Alpha Company, 5 SAI. He was 18.
- **1982** - Sapper Brian Robert Gibbs from 2 Field Engineer Regiment attached to

the Army Battle School was killed instantly at Olifantshoek after receiving multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental rifle grenade explosion. He was 19.

- **1982** - Special Constable Pedro Sakaria from the SWA Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO Insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 28.
- **1986** - Special Constable Matias Vilho from the SWA Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO Insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.
- **1990** - Angolan Government agrees to begin peace talks with rebel group Unita in Portugal.
- **1991** - Major Robert Michael Turner from 85 Combat Flying School was killed after his Atlas MB326KM Impala Mk II suffered engine failure while on final approach to land at AFB Pietersburg. He ejected from the aircraft too late and directly into trees that killed him instantly. He was 34.

12 April

- **1861** - The American Civil War began as Confederate troops under the command of General Pierre Beauregard opened fire at 04:30 on Fort Sumter in Charleston,

South Carolina.

- **1902** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Peace negotiations commence in Pretoria between delegations of the Boer Republics and General Lord Kitchener and Alfred Milner. An initial request by the Boers to retain their independence is met with incredulity.
- **1945** - Okinawa: 150 kamikaze attack the Allied fleet, sinking one destroyer.
- **1966** - First B-52 raids on North Vietnam.
- **1972** - Private Willem Ockert van den Heever from North West Command Headquarters was killed in a military vehicle accident at Kroonstad. He was 19.
- **1972** - Sergeant Martin Christoffel Klue from the Army Service Corps, attached 4 Artillery Regiment Headquarters was killed after being knocked down by a civilian vehicle while standing by the roadside when their convoy stopped for a rest break while travelling between Bloemfontein and Potchefstroom. He was 46.
- **1975** - Atlas Corporation completes deliveries to the South African Air Force (SAAF) of a first series of Impala MK-2 jet fighters.
- **1978** - Gunner William Arthur Wienand from 10 Anti-Aircraft Regiment was killed when his Unimog vehicle overturned in Kavanogoland. He was 18.
- **1979** - Corporal Willem Johannes de Beer from 3 SAI,

attached to 2 Special Service Battalion was accidentally killed in Zeerust after being knocked down by a civilian bus while on a weekend pass. He was 19.

- **1979** - Prime Minister P.W. Botha announces that three members of the staff of the United States Embassy in South Africa have been given a week to leave the country. They have photographed sensitive military installations by a secret camera installed in a diplomatic aircraft.
- **1986** - Rifleman Kefas Kalenga Dala from 32 Battalion died from Meningitis in the hospital at Buffalo. He was 24.

13 April

- **1846** - Xhosa tribesmen attack British forces at Burn's Hill in the Amatola, in the War of the Axe.
- **1868** - British forces under Robert Napier capture Magdala in Ethiopia.
- **1906** - Battle of Ovumbo: The Herero defeat the Germans.
- **1940** - Second Battle of Narvik: Royal Navy battleship

Warspite and accompanying destroyers sink eight German destroyers.

- **1941** - Heavy German attack on Tobruk.
- **1942** - Burma: the British Burma Corps breaks.
- **1943** - Katyn: Nazis find graves of 13,000 Polish officers killed by Soviets.
- **1945** - Soviets capture Vienna.
- **1950** - The Arab League signs a mutual defence treaty in Cairo.
- **1960** - France becomes fourth nuclear power, with an atomic bomb test in the Sahara.
- **1974** - Two members of 11 Squadron SAAF were Killed when their Cessna 185D crashed shortly after take-off from Mpalela Island in Eastern Caprivi during a ration re-supply flight for the South African Police. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant (Pilot) Jacobus Hendrik Louw Bonthuys (23). Private Johan Hugo Human (19).
- **1975** - A military coup in Chad overthrows President Ngarta Tombaloaye, who is killed. Felix Malloum takes over at the head of a seven-member junta.
- **1976** - Corporal Anton Leon Broodryk from 1 Parachute Battalion Died of Wounds received in a landmine explosion in Southern Angola while on patrol near the Cutline. He was 20.

• **1976** - Captain Granville Duvenhage from Benoni Commando suffered a fatal heart attack while on duty at Leydsdorp and died shortly afterwards. He was 26.

- **1976** - Rifleman Eugene Medhurst from 5 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 19.
- **1979** - Corporal Rian Rix from 11 Commando Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near Okatope Base south of Ondangwa. This was his last patrol before going home from the Border. He was 18.
- **1979** - An attempt is made by Rhodesian forces to kill guerrilla leader Joshua Nkomo.
- **1982** - Rifleman Eugene James Ashford from 8 SAI was accidentally shot dead during live firing exercises at Riemvasmaak. He was 18.
- **1983** - A Defence Amendment Bill provides for an alternative form of national service for conscientious objectors, who oppose military service on religious grounds. The offer is not extended to objectors motivated by political values.
- **1987** - Private Frederick Wayne Childsmith from the Provost School was killed while standing in a "Ride Safe" zone on his way back from Weekend pass after completion of Basic Training when he was run over by an South African Police ve-



PW Botha

hicle driven by an underage scholar (the Senior Police Superintendent's son) who was not authorised to drive the vehicle. He was 18.

- 1988 - Captain H Pienaar from the South African Infantry Corps, attached to Group 70 Headquarters at Katima Mulilo was killed instantly after suffering fatal head injuries while driving to Windhoek to attend an Information/Intelligence Conference. He was 25.

14 April

- 1900 - Second Anglo-Boer War: The first Boer prisoners of war arrive at St Helena, on board of the Milwaukee.
- 1902 - Second Anglo-Boer War: Cmdt Jan H. Theron, Danie Theron's successor as commander of Theron's Scouts, dies of gastric fever in the Calvinia district, Namaqualand.
- 1914 - The first air attack on a warship: Mexican revolutionary pilot Gustavo Adolfo Salinas Camiña bombs the Federalista gunboat 'Guerro', at Topolobampo, Mexico, causing slight damage.
- 1940 - British and French troops land in Norway to help fight Germans.
- 1943 - The German Fifth Panzer Army under General Gustav von Vaerst begins to evacuate from Tunis. Rommel departed on 9 March.
- 1945 - Tokyo fire bomb raids: B-29s damage Imperial Palace.
- 1953 - Viet Minh offensive

in Laos.

- 1983 - Rifleman Barend Christoffel Dippenaar from the Infantry School was killed in a private vehicle accident on the Clocolan - Ladybrand road. He was 21.
- 1986 - U.S. warplanes, on orders from President Ronald Reagan, bombed the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi in retaliation for the April 5th terrorist bombing of a discotheque in West Berlin in which two American soldiers were killed.
- 1994 - Dissident soldiers shoot dead Lesotho's deputy prime minister and seize four cabinet ministers in a mutiny over a planned government probe into the army.

15 April

- 1936 - Italian forces occupy the Abyssinian town of Dessye, having advanced 201 kilometres in five days.
- 1942 - George VI awards the George Cross to the people of Malta.
- 1943 - US code breakers discover Admiral Yamamoto will visit the Solomon Islands.
- 1945 - British Army liberates Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.
- 1952 - First test flight of a prototype B-52.
- 1982 - Rifleman Brian Richard Buttland from the South African Cape Corps, attached to the Army Catering Corps died in hospital after contracting malaria in the Operational Area. He was

25.

- 1982 - Eight SADF and SWATF members attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group were Killed in Action when their Ratel was ambushed and knocked out by RPG-7 anti-tank rockets near Tsintsabis by a group of heavily armed SWAPO/PLAN insurgents during Ops Yahoo. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Daniele Rudolf van der Westhuizen (49). Corporal Maartin Jacobus van Jaarsveld (20). Lance Corporal Johannes Jacobus van den Berg (20). Rifleman Leonard Patrick Hough (20). Rifleman Marius Petersen (19). Rifleman Johan Hendrik Potgieter (30). Rifleman Barend Jacobus Wolfaardt (19). Rifleman Jan Kouswab (40).
- 1983 - Nine recruits from 202 Battalion SWATF were murdered by SWAPO/PLAN Special Forces Typhoon Unit members in a Kraal in Northern Owamboland. The casualties were: Rifleman T. Sikwaya (18). Rifleman A. Mushambe (19). Rifleman V. Muyota (19). Rifleman T.K. Mukwambi (20). Rifleman M. Matamu (19). Rifleman V. Tobias (21). Rifleman L. Sindere (20). Rifleman F. Shikusho (20). Rifleman J. Muyevu (19).
- 1985 - South Africa's Foreign Minister announces that South African troop withdrawal from Angola is to be completed within a week.
- 1986 - US attempts an air

strike at Colonel Muammar Kadhafi's home in Libya in the biggest US air strike since the Vietnam War. Libya claims forty people have been killed. The US says the raids are in response to an explosion at a Berlin discotheque in which two Americans were killed on 5 April.

- 1990 - Rifleman Stoney van Wyk from the Cape Regiment was Killed in Action after being shot dead by persons unknown while on foot patrol during anti-riot operations in a township in Mpu-mulanga. He was 24.

16 April

- 1916 - The French Army forms the *Escadrille Americaine*.
- 1938 - Britain recognizes the Italian annexation of Abyssinia.
- 1944 - US begins planning "Operation Olympic" - the invasion of Japan.
- 1945 - US troops enter Nuremberg.
- 1947 - Rudolf Höss, 45, German SS commandant of Auschwitz, is hanged in Poland.



Ronald Reagan

- 1971 - Major Jan Wilhelm Arnhem Loubser from 1 Maintenance Unit was accidentally killed in a train accident at Kimberley. He was 42.
- 1981 - Two members from Infantry School were killed in a private vehicle accident on the National Highway near Richmond while on weekend pass. The casualties were: Corporal Cornelius Johannes Potgieter (19). Rifleman Jacobus Albertus Cilliers (18).
- 1982 - Rifleman Jan Daniels Gerhardus Du Toit from 1 SAI, attached to 61 Mech Battalion was Killed in Action during Ops Yahoo when he detonated a landmine during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 18.
- 1998 - The military commander of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Khalil al-Wazir, is assassinated in Tunisia. Israeli gunmen are blamed.

17 April

- 1838 - Zulu warriors near the Tugela River overwhelm Robert Biggar, leader of a force of about seventeen Englishmen, twenty Khoi with guns and about fifteen hundred Africans from around Port Natal. Thirteen of the English and most of their African followers are killed.

- 1916 - General Jan Christiaan Smuts, in charge of British, South African and Indian troops in Kenya, finally has the Germans on the run. Colonel Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck's troops (3,000 Europeans and 11,000 Askari) had heavily outnumbered the British East African Rifles.
- 1941 - Yugoslavia surrenders to the Germans.
- 1942 - Germans begin to destroy the Sobibor Concentration Camp.
- 1945 - Mussolini flees from Salo, heading for Milan.
- 1961 - A U.S.-backed attempt to overthrow Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba failed disastrously in what became known as the Bay of Pigs fiasco.
- 1975 - Khmer Rouge capture Phnom Penh, initiating a reign of terror.
- 1980 - Sergeant Carel Petrus Greyling HC from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident in the Eastern Caprivi. He was 33.
- 1981 - Corporal Clive Fisher from the Infantry School was killed in a private vehicle accident on the National road near Mossel Bay. He was 21.
- 1982 - Rifleman Derek Jurgens Deysel from 5 SAI was accidentally killed at the Jozini Training Base when he was struck by a bullet resulting from the accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 20.
- 1983 - General Mark W

Clark, dies at the age of 87.

- **1984** - Rifleman Johann Christiaan Rheeder from the Infantry School was killed in a private vehicle accident on the Beaufort West - Richmond road. He was 19.
- **1984** - Two members from 7 SAI were killed at Nehone in Southern Angola after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental rifle grenade explosion. The casualties were: Corporal Phillipus Botha (20). Rifleman Cecil Rhodes Dippenaar (19).
- **1994** - Lance Corporal W.Z. Matwa from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was accidentally killed during operations connected with Operation Jumbo. He was 22.

18 April

- **1934** - The U.S. Army ends use of sabers as a combat weapon for the cavalry.
- **1942** - The first air raid on mainland Japan during World War II occurred as General James Doolittle led a squadron of B-25 bombers taking off from the carrier Hornet to bomb Tokyo and three other cities. Damage was minimal, but the raid boosted Allied morale following years of unchecked Japanese military advances.
- **1983** - Two members from the SWA Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland.

boland. They were: Special Sergeant Jacob Saulo (34). Special Constable Thimotheus Maritina (25).

- **1988** - Lance Corporal Piet-er Gerhardus Viljoen Du Toit from the South African Medical Corps, attached to 201 Battalion SWATF was killed in action. He was 19.
- **1988** - Major Lucas Frederick Lotter, the 53 Battalion SWATF Intelligence Officer, was Killed in Action in Southern Angola just north of Alpha Tower early / mid-evening while following enemy spoor. He was 29.
- **1988** - Rifleman Alberto Nunes Dinu from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 29.
- **1989** - Lance Corporal Bernardus Lambertus Saayman from 110 Air Commando Squadron SAAF was killed while participating in a 2-day Commando Camp when his Cessna 182 flew into high ground in the Montague Mountains east of Robertson. He was 39.

19 April

- **1775** - At dawn in Massachusetts, about 70 armed militiamen stood face to face on Lexington Green with a British advance guard unit. An unordered 'shot heard around the world' began the American Revolution. A volley of British rifle fire was followed by a charge with bayonets leaving eight Americans dead and ten

wounded.

- **1906** - Bambatha Rebellion: Over 7,000 British troops are called out to quell Zulu aggression in Natal.
- **1915** - World War I: West Africa. Combined Anglo-French forces take Mandera, Cameroon.
- **1919** - Britain sends more troops to Egypt to help quell nationalistic unrest.
- **1941** - US Marines begin construction of an airfield on Wake Island.
- **1943** - Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto staged an armed revolt against Nazi SS troops attempting to forcibly deport them to death camps.
- **1960** - The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) is founded in Windhoek with Sam Nujoma as leader.
- **1961** - Portuguese forces are reinforced for continuing conflict against the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA, Popular Liberation Movement of Angola) based near Luanda.
- **1976** - Guerrillas launch two separate raids in the far south of Rhodesia near the Transvaal border, killing three Easter holidaymakers from South Africa and blowing up a Rhodesian Railways train and part of the track on the Rutenga link to Beit Bridge.
- **1980** - Rifleman Jacobus Petrus Koekemoer from 7 SAI was killed after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds in a mortar bomb explosion during a live firing exercise

in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.

- **1981** - Rifleman Karel Johan Cronje from 5 SAI was based at Okalongo and had been feeling ill for approximately two weeks. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital after being diagnosed with cerebral malaria. He succumbed not long after admission. He was 19.
- **1984** - Rifleman Frank Corrie from the South African Cape Corps was killed after being struck by a bullet resulting from the accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 21.
- **1985** - Special Warrant Officer Alfons Kumulo 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 37.
- **1988** - Corporal Edward Clive Yeo from the South African Engineer Corps was attached to 101 Battalion SWATF. He was Killed in Action while disarming an

enemy anti-tank mine that was booby-trapped with an anti-lifting device. He was 20.

- **1990** - Truce ends the Nicaraguan Civil War.

20 April

- **1889** - Adolf Hitler was born in Braunau am Inn, Austria on this day.
- **1934** - Heinrich Himmler becomes head of the Prussian secret police.
- **1941** - German bombers raid Athens.
- **1945** - Okinawa: U.S. forces capture Motobu Heights, in the north.
- **1947** - Peleliu: 27 Japanese troops surrender, 18 months after World War II ended.
- **1976** - Two members from Regiment President Steyn and one member of the South African Police were killed when their Eland Armoured Car was involved in a head-on collision with a South African Police vehicle at Ruacana. They were: Staff Sergeant Leon Blaauw (21). Trooper Denis Aden Naude (22). SAP Constable Coenraad Hermanus Dreyer (21).
- **1979** - Lieutenant Commander Dennis Mallalieu from the Simonstown Naval Base died after suffering a fatal heart attack while at the Base. He was 57.
- **1980** - Rifleman Simon Stumbo from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed

in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 18.

- **1981** - Leading Seaman Peter James Henderson from SAS Inkonkoni accidentally drowned in Durban during a naval training exercise. He was 22.
- **1982** - Rifleman Gerhardus Petrus Cornelius Hattingh from 1 SAI, attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was killed at Tsumeb when a Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicle accidentally drove over him. He was 20.
- **1982** - Sergeant Frederick Albertus Francois Claasen from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) Died of Wounds received on 10 April 1982 during Operation Yahoo. He was 25.
- **1987** - Rifleman Wilson Adams from the South African Cape Corps was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier while he was standing guard at the Van Der Stel Shooting Range. He was 17.

21 April

- **1836** - The Battle of San Jacinto between Texans led by Sam Houston and Mexican forces led by Santa Anna took place near present day Houston. The Texans decisively defeated the Mexican forces thereby achieving independence.
- **1918** - During World War I, the Red Baron (Manfred von Richthofen) was shot down



Adolf Hitler

and killed during the Battle of the Somme. He was credited with 80 kills in less than two years, flying a red Fokker triplane. British pilots recovered his body and buried him with full military honours.

- **1941** - Greece surrenders to Nazi Germany.
- **1945** - Red Army reaches the outskirts of Berlin.
- **1956** - A military pact between Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen is finalised.
- **1966** - Two members of 17 Squadron and three passengers were drowned when their Alouette III, Serial No. 65 suffered engine failure and crashed into the sea off Terrace Bay, South West Africa. They Air Force casualties were: Lieutenant Tobias Johannes Winterbach (22). Air Corporal Henry George Morton (21).
- **1967** - Military coup in Greece.
- **1977** - Corporal Heinrich Rudolph Bigalke from 3 SAI was killed when his military vehicle overturned 20km from Rundu. He was 19.
- **1978** - Private Barry Craig Rieder from SWA SPES Unit SWATF was accidentally killed at Oshivello during a night practice ambush. He was 20.
- **1983** - Glen Joseph Fleischer from 3 SAI was found dead at Potchefstroom with a gunshot wound to the head, apparently self-inflicted as no foul play was suspected. He was 18.

- **1987** - Two members of the SADF were killed when their military vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with a civilian vehicle at Rundu. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Clifton David Kilroe (21). Rifleman Hans Harold Scheepers (25).
- **1992** - Three members of the South African Medical Corps Training Centre were killed in a Military Vehicle Accident on the Potchefstroom to Westonaria Road. They were: Lance Corporal Efstratios Kladis (18). Private Bradley John Gordon (19). Private Roelof Frederick Malan (19).

22 April

- **1915** - Second Battle of Ypres: Germany introduces poison gas.
- **1941** - World War II: Tripoli comes under bombardment by British warships.
- **1944** - Hitler & Mussolini confer at Berchtesgarden.
- **1945** - Soviet and Polish troops liberate the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, near Oranienburg in Brandenburg, which held many political leaders from Captive Nations and special military prisoners.
- **1961** - French army rebels seize Algiers.
- **1976** - Three members from the Regiment Christiaan Beyers were Killed in Action when their patrol was ambushed by a numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents while they

were escorting a work team, busy on the Ruacana to Ovamboland pipeline, back to Etale Base. The casualties were: Lieutenant Douglas Gerald Hinds (20). Rifleman Johannes Roelof Fouche (26). Rifleman Jozua Francois Naude (21).

- **1983** - Corporal Jan de Klerk Botha from 5 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 20.
- **1988** - Lance Corporal Steven Charles Trollip from the 2nd Battalion Regiment De La Rey drowned after falling into a crocodile infested river near Skukuza in the Kruger National Park while on patrol. He was 26.
- **1990** - Nigeria's ruling generals crushed a six-hour rebellion by junior officers.

23 April

- **1873** - Ashanti War breaks out in Africa.
- **1911** - French, Algerian, and Senegalese troops are to be sent to help put down the tribesmen revolt in Morocco. However, Germany has protested that France will be breaking the terms of the 1906 Algerias accords on Moroccan independence.
- **1918** - The Zeebrugge Raid: At heavy cost the Royal Navy & Royal Marines earn eight Victoria Crosses blocking the harbour exit
- **1925** - Rebel leader Abdel Krim's troops enter French Morocco.

- **1945** - Allies in Italy reach the Po River.
- **1979** - Rifleman Alfredo Manuel Tchizondo from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 26.
- **1980** - Soviet sub catches fire off Japan, nine die.
- **1982** - Rifleman Noe Vasco from 32 Battalion was killed when he was accidentally run over by a military vehicle at Buffalo Base. He was 32.
- **1984** - Rifleman Johannes Kankara from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1987** - Rifleman Kobus Christopher Du Preez from the South African Cape Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident on the Ben Rossouw Highway at Kuilsriver. He was 18.
- **1988** - Three members of 102 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action in Southern Angola, South West of Tchi-

pa when their Romeo Mike Teams were ambushed by a superior force of SWAPO/PLAN and FAPLA troops. The casualties were: Lance Corporal I. Handura (23). Rifleman K. Kapulke (19). Rifleman U. Mbinge (20).

24 April

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: A dynamite factory, which forms part of the Begbie Engineering Workshop, Johannesburg, is destroyed in an explosion. The destruction is blamed on British sabotage.
- **1916** - The Irish "Easter Rebellion" begins.
- **1942** - Japanese troops advance on all fronts in Burma.
- **1954** - Security forces round up more than 10,000 men in the biggest anti-Mau Mau operation since the state of emergency was declared in Kenya eighteen months ago.
- **1969** - US B-52s drop 3,000 tons of bombs on VC positions inside Cambodia.
- **1975** - Under an amendment to the Defence Act the definition of superior officer is changed with the effect that White and Black members

of the Defence Force will have equal status.

- **1980** - "Desert One": US operation to save 52 hostages in Iran, fails, eight die.
- **1982** - One member from 5 SAI and one member from 101 Battalion SWATF were killed when the Buffel Troop carrier in which they were traveling overturned near Eenhana in Northern Owamboland. The Casualties were: Rifleman Glen Bjorn Du Plooy (21). Rifleman Ronald Andreas (26).

25 April

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Relief of Jammersberg Drift: The relief columns under Generals Hart and Barbazon arrive at Wepener. General De Wet returns to his primary goal of disrupting British supply lines.
- **1902** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General Jan Christiaan Smuts surrenders to the British under a flag of truce. Deneys Reitz who agrees to act as Smuts' orderly joins him. However, on discovering that orderlies are not treated as officers, Reitz is instantly promoted to chief-of-staff.
- **1915** - Gallipoli Campaign: 78,000 British & ANZAC troops undertake an amphibious landing
- **1941** - General Erwin Rommel's Deutsches Afrika Korps forces the British out of Halfaya Pass, just south-east of Sollum, and back to the Buq Buq-Sofafi line in



Manfred von Richtofen

- Egypt.
 - **1945** - The Red Army completely surrounds Berlin.
 - **1945** - US & Soviet forces meet at Torgau on the Elbe River.
 - **1961** - Fourth nuclear bomb test by France in the Sahara.
 - **1977** - The Chief of Staff (Operations) says that the development of South Africa's defence has made the country completely self-sufficient from an arms point of view.
 - **1978** - Private Alan David Dixon from 16 Maintenance Unit at Grootfontein was killed just outside the town of Rundu when his Magirus Deutz truck, loaded with supplies for the 32 Battalion element stationed at Nkurenkuru, overturned when the vehicles front tyre suffered a blow-out, causing him to lose control of the vehicle. He was 19.
 - **1980** - Lieutenant Peter Henry Hollis from 8 Squadron was Reported Missing in Action over Southern Angola while flying an Impala Mk II. His body was later recovered. He was 25.
 - **1980** - Sapper Adeo Marais from the School of Engineers was killed instantly in an accidental explosion at the Units ammunition store. He was 17.
 - **1981** - Corporal Barend Frederick Burger from the South African Catering Corps was killed in a military vehicle Accident at Elandsfontein. He was 20.
- 26 April**
- **1679** - The Castle of Good Hope, oldest and most historic building in SA, is completed.
 - **1936** - Italian troops assemble for an attack on Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
 - **1937** - During the Spanish Civil War, the ancient town of Guernica was attacked by German warplanes. After destroying the town in a three hour bombing raid, the planes machine-gunned fleeing civilians.
 - **1941** - East Africa: The Abyssinian fortress of Dessie, roughly half-way between Addis Ababa and Amba Alagi, is captured by General Alan Cunningham's South African divisions.
 - **1941** - North Africa: Following the fall of the Halfaya Pass, three columns of Rommel's Deutsches Afrika Korps have crossed the border from Libya to Egypt.
 - **1943** - North Africa: Access to the Tunisian plain is open to the Allies following the capture of Longstop Hill.
 - **1944** - Allied troops begin concentrating at assembly areas in Britain for D-Day.
 - **1961** - French Army rebels once again try to take power in Algeria.
 - **1966** - Lieutenant Herman Alan Day from 1 Squadron was killed when his Canadair CL13B Sabre crashed near Pilansberg during a routine training flight. He was 24.

- **1975** - Corporal John Cornelius Hanekom from 5 Military Works Unit was accidentally drowned while swimming at Rundu. He was 27.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Gert Gotlieb Gouche from 1 Parachute Battalion was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Kombat near Grootfontein. He was 20.
- **1982** - Rifleman Dawid Lukas from SWA SPES Unit, SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop carrier overturned in Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1982** - The Falklands War: Argentine forces on South Georgia surrender to the British.
- **1983** - Rifleman Thomas Andrew Ross from 1 SWA Spes Unit, SWATF was Killed in Action in Northern Owamboland when he accidentally detonated a booby-trap in an enemy weapons cache that his patrol had located. He was 20.
- **1994** - Rifleman Shadrack Vusi Mnisi from 121 Battalion was shot dead by persons unknown while on foot patrol during anti-crime operations at Loskop in KZN. He was 33.

27 April

- **1940** - Himmler orders establishment of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp.
- **1941** - German troops occupy Athens.
- **1945** - Italian partisans

- capture Mussolini and Clara Petacci, near Lake Como.
- **1984** - Corporal Reginald Patrick Briggs from 1 SWA SPES Unit, SWATF was critically injured when his Buffel Troop Carrier was involved in a collision with civilian vehicle on the Ondangwa-Oshivello road causing the Buffel to overturn. He was 20.
- **1984** - Rifleman Glen Scott Maitland Clark from 5 SAI contracted malaria while on operations in South Eastern Angola and was admitted to the Rundu Sickbay where he unfortunately died. He was 21.
- **1987** - Special Constable Stefanus Willem Kanhende 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.

28 April

- **1919** - The League of Nations is established, with General Jan Smuts and Prime Minister Louis Botha as the two



Muhammad Ali

- representatives of the Union of South Africa. Smuts played an important role in the drafting of the Covenant of the League.
- **1945** - Twenty-three years of Fascist rule in Italy ended abruptly as Italian partisans shot former Dictator Benito Mussolini. Other leaders of the Fascist Party and friends of Mussolini were also killed along with his mistress, Clara Petacci. Their bodies were then hung upside down and pelted with stones by jeering crowds in Milan.
- **1956** - The French leave Vietnam.
- **1966** - Seven guerrillas are killed in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) at Sinoya in the first engagement of the bush war.
- **1967** - Muhammad Ali refuses induction into the US Army.
- **1971** - Samuel Lee Gravely, Jr., is promoted to rear admiral; the first black admiral in the US Navy.
- **1975** - Signaler Josef Jacobus Mare' from 2 Signal Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 18.
- **1982** - Corporal Marcus Anthony Harris-Dewey from 701 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 20.
- **1984** - Rifleman Phillip Fou-

rie van Vuuren from 4 SAI was accidentally killed outside Amsterdam when Ratel 22C drove into the rear of Ratel 22B in conditions of extremely poor visibility during a sandstorm. He was 19.

- **1998** - Nigeria's former deputy leader, General Oladipyo Diya, and five others are sentenced to death by firing squad for plotting to overthrow military leader General Sani Abacha.

29 April

- **1781** - French fleet under Admiral Suffren prevents Britain from seizing Cape of Good Hope.
- **1916** - The Irish "Easter Rebellion" ends.
- **1918** - Germany's main offensive on the Western Front in World War I ends.
- **1945** - German representatives in Italy surrender during World War II.
- **1945** - The SA 6th Division crosses Brenta River and is then redirected to Milan in Italy in World War II.
- **1945** - US troops liberate the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau.
- **1946** - Tokyo: 28 former Japanese leaders indicted as war criminals.
- **1970** - US & South Vietnamese troops invade Cambodia.
- **1975** - Last US personnel pull out of Vietnam.
- **1978** - Two members from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment were accidentally killed at Fort Rev, the Special Forces

base at Air Force Base Ondangwa, when an explosive device they were preparing for an external operation, detonated prematurely. The casualties were: Warrant Officer Class 1 Johannes Lambertus Conradie HC VRM (34). Corporal Cecil James Eayrs (23).

- **1980** - Rifleman S.D. Ernesto from 5 Recce Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces while on operations in Southern Angola. He was 25.
- **1980** - Rifleman Albertus Johannes Oosthuizen from 1 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident in Bloemfontein. He was 19.
- **1983** - Rifleman Tjaart Jacobs from 6 SAI was accidentally killed when a bunker wall collapsed on top of him. He was 20.
- **1984** - Rifleman Antonio Paulus from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 26.
- **1987** - Lance Corporal Paul Douglas Elliot Hayes from the South African Medical Services College, was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 20.

30 April

- **1881** - France invades Tunisia from Algeria on a pretext, and later establishes a protectorate.
- **1828** - King Shaka is murdered by his brothers.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer

War: The ZAR's fourth and last Creusot 'Long Tom' is dynamited before falling into British hands, only 200 metres from the charging enemy.

- **1902** - Second Anglo-Boer War: An official report states that British columns have completely or partially destroyed 158 farms and an unknown number of Black villages.
- **1936** - The Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, is lost to the Italians.
- **1942** - British troops evacuate Mandalay in Burma.
- **1943** - Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp for Jews established.
- **1945** - Red Army liberates the Ravensbruck concentration camp.
- **1945** - The Red Banner is raised over the Reichstag Building in Berlin.
- **1945** - Adolf Hitler (56) commits suicide in his bunker.
- **1979** - Private Martinus Johannes Schroeder from the Technical Service Corps was critically injured in a private vehicle accident between



Vrede and Standerton on 09 March 1979. He succumbed to his injuries in 1 Mil Hospital on 30 April 1979. He was 19.

- **1980** - Terrorists seize the Iranian Embassy in London.
- **1982** - Rifleman Eddie James Barnard from 4 SAI was critically wounded by a fellow soldier while on duty in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1983** - Sergeant B. Mukosho from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 27.
- **1987** - Three members from 5 Maintenance Unit were killed in a military vehicle accident at Ondangwa. The casualties were: Private Booie Julies (21). Private Nicolaas Koopman (18). Private Esau Oosthuizen (19).
- **1991** - A military coup is executed in Lesotho.
- **1996** - In Liberia, shells and gunfire rip through central Monrovia and a diplomatic enclave. US Marines shoot and kill three Liberians firing toward the US Embassy.



Nicknames

1. Arleigh Burke, U.S. Navy destroyer commander. He was known as 31-Knot Burke.
2. Edwin Hughes, last survivor of the Charge of the Light Brigade.
3. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr., United States Army general (the nickname he preferred over "Stormin' Norman")
4. Michael Collins, Irish general.
5. Michael Wittmann, WW II German tank ace.
6. John J. Pershing, U.S. Army World War I general.
7. Gerd von Rundstedt, German Army field marshal.
8. Herbert Hasler, WW II Royal Marines officer.
9. George S. Patton, Jr., American general in World War II (a nickname he rejected).
10. Frederick S. Roberts, British field marshal.
11. Adolf Hitler (a derogatory nickname given to him by Field Marshal Erich von Manstein).



12. Arthur T. Harris, British Air Chief Marshal during the Second World War.
13. Frederick A. M. Browning, Second World War British airborne general.
14. Omar Bradley, U.S. general
15. Harry Harbord Morant, Australian Boer War soldier and convicted war criminal.
16. Erich Hartmann, WW II German fighter ace, highest scoring ace of the war.
17. Field Marshal Erwin Rommel.
18. Adolf Galland, German fighter ace of World War II and *General der Jagdflieger*.
19. Dwight D. Eisenhower, U.S. general and later President of the United States.
20. Koos de la Rey, Boer general.
21. Napoleon Bonaparte.
22. Mike Hoare, British officer and mercenary leader.
23. Karl Dönitz, German admiral.

24. Adolph G. Malan, South African fighter ace in the RAF in the Second World War.
25. Heinz Guderian, World War II German panzer general.
26. Otto Kretschmer, World War II German ace submarine commander.
27. Thomas J. Jackson, Confederate general.
28. Sir Douglas Bader - Second World War RAF ace.
29. Simo Häyhä, Finnish Sniper during the Winter War.
30. William J. Donovan, Army major general and first director of the Office of Strategic Services.



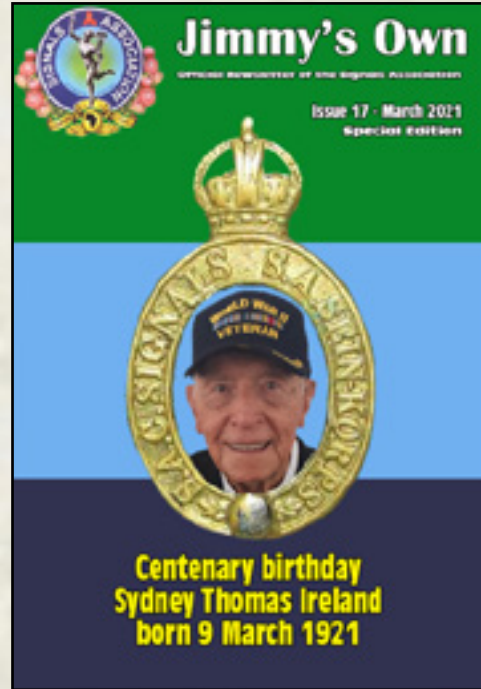


Happy 100th Birthday Uncle Syd.

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
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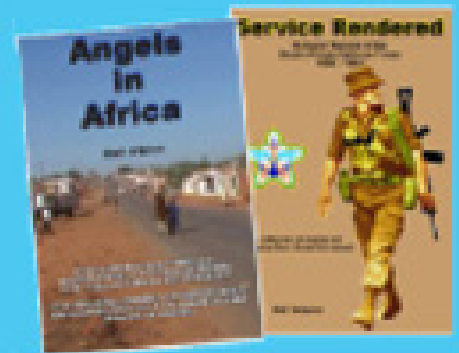
Online Magazines

Flip book magazines with pages that can be turned.



E-books

Produced in any electronic format required.



2D & 3D Animation

Produced in any video format.



Video Production

Scripting, storyboard, filming and editing done to any video format required. We also do aerial and underwater video and stills.



Still Photography

If you're thinking digital media then think Hipe Media.