



Military Despatches

Vol 49 July 2021

The Aces

The top fighter pilots of
World War I

Farewell Uncle Syd

We pay tribute to Uncle Syd
Ireland, the last South African
signaller of World War II

The Thunder

Poland's Special Forces unit, JW GROM

Anthony Beaucamp-Proctor

South Africa's leading fighter ace of World War I and
recipient of the Victoria Cross

For the military enthusiast



Military Despatches YouTube Channel



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Paratrooper Wings Quiz

Most military paratroopers are awarded their jump wings after they have qualified.

In this quiz we show you 15 different wings and you tell us where they are from.

Army Speak 101

The SADF had their own language. A mixture of English, Afrikaans, slang and techno-speak that few outside the military could hope to understand.

Most armies around the world also had their own slang terms. In this video we look at some of them.



New videos each week

We will be uploading new videos to our YouTube channel each week.

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Military Firearms Quiz

This quiz is all about military firearms. We show you 15 firearms, you tell us what they are.



Elite Military Units Quiz

Most military forces have an elite unit or regiment or a special forces component.

In this quiz we show you 15 and you tell us who they are and where they are from.



Who said that?

Throughout history military leaders and politicians have had some interesting things to say about war.

We give you 15 quotes, you tell us who made them.

Please remember to subscribe to our channel.

Feel free to leave a comment, and share this video.

CONTENTS

July 2021



Page 14



Special Forces - JW GROM

Features

6

Top Ten WWI Fighter Pilots

The Top Ten fighter aces of World War I.

18

A legend has passed on

On 29 May 2021 the last remaining South African signaller of World War II, Sergeant Sydney Thomas Ireland passed away at the age of 100. **Matt Tennyson** pays tribute to the remarkable 'Uncle Syd'.

20

Early repeating rifles

The advent of the repeating rifle was to change the face of warfare forever.

18



24

The Dicta Boelcke

In 1916 World War I German flying ace Oswald Boelcke was tasked to write a pamphlet on aerial combat tactics. The result was the 'Dicta Boelcke'.

26

Disobedient Heroes

In the military it is expected that you obey orders. Yet there are cases where there is a good reason to disobey those orders.

30

Battle of Britain - a few facts

The Battle of Britain lasted from 10 July – 31 October 1940 and was the first major military campaign in history to be fought entirely in the air. Here are a few facts about the battle that you may, or may not, have known.

36

Rank structure

This month we look at the rank structure of the Polish Army and the Polish Special Forces.

Quiz

55

Aircraft roundels

We show you 15, you tell us which country they are from.



Editor's Sitrep

It's July and we're into the second half of 2021. We're also been living under various forms of lockdown for more than a year now.

On Tuesday 8 June I went for the first of my two COVID vaccinations. Having registered on the official website as an 'over 60', I was told to wait for an SMS telling me where and when to go. Of course I heard nothing.

I decided to go to Lentegeur Hospital in Mitchell's Plain as a 'walk in'. I was pleasantly surprised with the experience.

I arrived at 10h00, was asked if I had already registered, was then asked a few questions, and took my seat in the line.

By 11h00 I had received my vaccination and was out of there, and this included a 15 minute observation period after getting the jab. Everything was well organised and efficient. I have to go back in July for my second shot.

What worries me, however, is the fact that to date only 3% of South Africans have received the vaccination. Take into account that we currently have a population of 58.56 million and you can imagine how long it is going to take before South Africa

achieves what is known as 'herd immunity'.

Another thing that concerns me is that it seems we're into a third wave of the virus and many people have become really lax when it comes to observing COVID precautions. They're not wearing masks, not sanitising, and gathering in large groups.

I've always wanted to depart this realm at the age of 99 when a jealous husband catches me in bed with his 21 year old wife and not because some inconsiderate pillock gave me COVID.

For the past two months I've been harping on about our new YouTube Channel and asking readers to please subscribe. The response, as usual, has been underwhelming.

Last month was the largest edition of Military Despatches (108 pages) since we began back in July 2017. This month we're back to a mere 84 pages. Since we began we've produced 3,710 pages of the magazine. No wonder I'm knackered.

Until next time.

Matt

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CONTENTS

Page 60



July in military history

Head-to-Head

38

Aircraft of the Battle of Britain

This month we take a look at some of the aircraft, both British and German, that took part in the Battle of Britain.

Famous Figures

44

Anthony Beauchamp-Proctor

South Africa's leading ace of World War I, credited with 54 aerial victories. He was awarded the Victoria Cross, Distinguished Service Order, Military Cross and bar.



Forged in Battle

48

Fokker Dr.1

Flown by the Red Baron, the Fokker triplane was forged in battle.

Battlefield

52

Fall Weiss

Stuka dive-bombers carry out the first mission of World War II during Case White.

Gaming

56

Tank Mechanic Simulator

Updated with six new vehicles. A really good simulator.

Movie Review

58

The Great Escape

A classic movie based on real life, one of the biggest POW escapes of World War II.

Book Review

59

As the crow flies

The story of Combat Group Alpha, later to become 31 Battalion, as told by Colonel Delville Linford.

Front Cover

An operator from Polish Special Forces unit JW GROM on manoeuvres in Poland. They are nicknamed "The Surgeons".



Top Ten World War I fighter aces

During World War I hundreds of pilots would go on to become 'aces'. This meant that they had claimed more than five victories in aerial combat. This month we look at the Top Ten aces of World War I.

On 17 December 1903 Orville Wright made the world's first powered flight. A flight that lasted a mere 12 seconds. Eight years later, in 1911, powered aircraft were used for the first time in war. This was by the Italians against the Turks near Tripoli.

It was during World War I that the use of aircraft became widespread. At first, aircraft were unarmed and employed for reconnaissance, serving basically as extensions of the eyes of the ground commander.

A desire to prevent enemy observation led to airplane pilots attacking other airplanes and balloons, initially with small arms carried in the cockpit.

It wasn't long before pilots started to fit machine guns to their aircraft. A single machine gun was usually fitted to the top wing of a biplane. They were difficult to reload and not very accurate.

In 1915 French pilot Roland Garros and designer Raymond Saulnier fitted deflector plates to the back of the propeller of a Morane-Saulnier monoplane. It was the first example of an aircraft able to fire through its propeller, permitting Garros to score three victories in April 1915.

Dutch aircraft designer Anthony Fokker developed a successful gun synchronizer in 1915, resulting in German Leutnant Kurt Wintgens scoring the first known victory for a synchronized gun-equipped fighter aircraft, on July 1, 1915.

The Allies quickly developed their own synchronization gears, leading to the birth of aerial combat, more commonly known as dogfighting. Tactics for dogfighting evolved by trial and error. The German ace Oswald Boelcke created eight essential rules of dogfighting, the Dicta Boelcke.

Pilots often had little training before being deployed into combat. Some would have as little as 10 hours flying time. The average life expectancy of a pilot was a mere 21 days.

Yet there were pilots that not only survived, they also began to wrack up a steady count of aerial victories.

The term "ace" (now commonly flying ace) was first used by French newspapers during World War I, describing Adolphe Pégoud as *l'as* (the ace), after he downed five German aircraft.

When aircraft began to shoot or force down other aircraft, systems to count "air victories"

were subsequently developed. The American qualification of five victories eventually became the standard, even though other air services had previously used differing figures.

In this article we take a brief look at the top ten aces of World War I.



10. Donald MacLaren

Donald Roderick MacLaren DSO, MC & Bar, DFC was a Canadian World War I flying ace. He was credited with 54 victories and, after the war, helped found the Royal Canadian Air Force.

He joined the Royal Flying Corps and did his initial training at 90 Central Training School

at Armour Heights and then at Camp Borden in Ontario, then finally received further training in England at No. 43 Training School, Ternhill.

He was then transferred into No. 34 Training School for final fighter orientation on the Bristol Scout and Sopwith Camel, completing 9 hours solo on the Camel.

On 23 November 1917 he was sent to France where he joined No. 46 Squadron. His first air combat was in February 1918, where MacLaren successfully shot down a German fighter 'out of control'.

He was awarded the Military Cross for a sortie on 21 March 1918 in which he helped destroy a railway gun with his bombs, then shot down a balloon and two German LVG two-seaters.

In September he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. When the squadron commander was killed in a crash later in the year MacLaren was given command. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his leadership of the squadron in the last months of the war.

MacLaren finished the war with a Military Cross and bar, a Distinguished Flying Cross and the DSO. He was also awarded the French Legion of Honour and Croix de guerre.

He achieved 54 victories, despite the fact that his first dogfight wasn't until February 1918 and that he scored all his victories in only nine months.

He died on 4 July 1988 at the age of 95.



9. Erich Loewenhardt

Erich Loewenhardt was a German soldier and military aviator who fought in the First World War and became a fighter ace credited with 54 confirmed aerial victories.

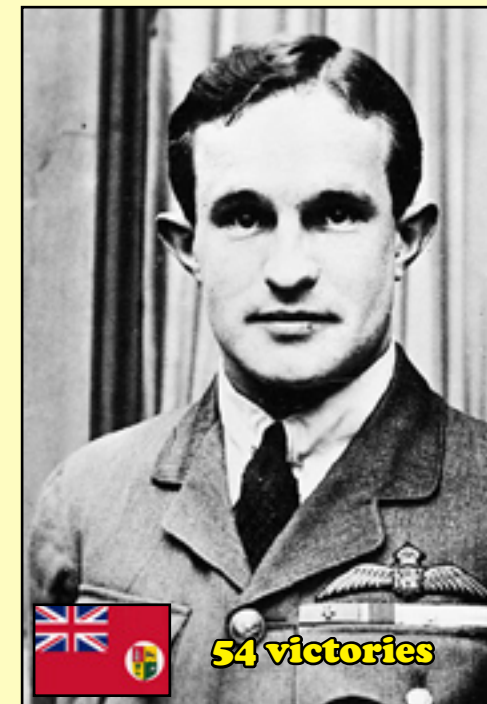
Originally enlisting in an infantry regiment even though he was only 17, he fought in the Battle of Tannenberg, winning a battlefield commission on 2 October 1914.

He would serve in the Carpathians and on the Italian Front before being medically discharged in mid-1915.

Following a five month recuperation, Loewenhardt joined the *Luftstreitkräfte* (Imperial German Air Service) in 1916. After serving as an aerial observer and reconnaissance pilot, he underwent advanced training to become a fighter pilot with Jagdstaffel 10 in March 1917.

Between 24 March 1917 and 10 August 1918, Loewenhardt shot down 45 enemy airplanes, as well as destroying nine ob-

servation balloons. Shortly after his final victory, he was killed in a collision with another German pilot on 10 August 1918. He was 21 years old.



8. Andrew Beauchamp-Proctor

Andrew Frederick Weatherby (Anthony) Beauchamp-Proctor, VC, DSO, MC & Bar, DFC was a South African that served in the South African Army, Royal Flying Corps, and Royal Air Force.

Not only was he South Africa's leading ace with 54 victories, he was also awarded the Victoria Cross.

He was studying engineering at University of Cape Town when the European war broke out. He took leave from his studies to join the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles. He served as a signalman in the German South-West Africa campaign.

In August 1915, he was demobilised with an honourable discharge. He promptly went to work with the South Afri-

can Field Telegraph and re-enrolled in university. He managed to complete his third year of college before re-enlisting, this time with the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), in March 1917.

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

He managed to learn to fly despite his wiry stature of 1.57 metres. His aircraft was altered to accommodate him; his seat was raised so he could have a better view from the cockpit and so he could reach controls. Blocks of wood were also fastened on his rudder bar so he could reach it.

He was not a gifted pilot. Beauchamp-Proctor's piloting skills can be judged by the fact he had three landing accidents before he ever shot down an enemy plane. While he was not particularly esteemed as a flier, he was a deadly shot.

On 22 June 1918, he was awarded the Military Cross. On 3 August, he was granted one of the first ever Distinguished Flying Crosses. On 2 November, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, followed by the Victoria Cross on 30 November. He scored all of his 54 victories in the SE5, becoming the most successful pilot in the type.

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

He was 26 years old.



57 victories

7. James McCudden

James Thomas Byford McCudden, VC, DSO & Bar, MC & Bar, MM was a British flying ace of the First World War and among the most highly decorated airmen in British military history.

Born in 1895 to a middle class family with military traditions, McCudden joined the Royal Engineers in 1910. Having an interest in mechanics he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) in 1913 at which time he first came into regular contact with aircraft. At the outbreak of war in 1914 he flew as an observer before training as a fighter pilot in 1916.

McCudden claimed his first victory in September 1916. He claimed his fifth victory - making him an ace - on 15 February 1917. For the next six months he served as an instructor and flew defensive patrols over London. He returned to the frontline in

summer 1917. That same year he dispatched a further 31 enemy aircraft while claiming multiple victories in one day on 11 occasions.

With his six British medals and one French, McCudden received more awards for gallantry than any other airman of British nationality serving in the First World War. He was also one of the longest serving. By 1918, in part due to a campaign by the Daily Mail newspaper, McCudden became one of the most famous airmen in the British Isles.

On 9 July 1918, McCudden was killed in a flying accident when his aircraft crashed following possible engine failure. He was 23. His rank at the time of his death was major, a significant achievement for a man who had begun his career in the RFC as an air mechanic.



60 victories

6. Raymond Collishaw

Raymond Collishaw, CB, DSO & Bar, OBE, DSC, DFC was a distinguished Canadian

fighter pilot, squadron leader, and commanding officer who served in the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) and later the Royal Air Force.

He was the highest scoring RNAS flying ace and the second highest scoring Canadian pilot of the First World War. He was noted as a great leader in the air, leading many of his own formations into battle.

After the Great War, he became a permanent commissioned officer in the Royal Air Force (RAF), seeing action against the Bolsheviks in 1919-20, and subsequently commanding various Air Service detachments.

During the Second World War, he commanded No. 204 Group (which later became the Desert Air Force) in North Africa, achieving great success against the numerically and technologically superior Italian Air Force. He was retired in 1943.

Collishaw died at the age of 82 on 28 September 1976.



61 victories

5. Mick Mannock

Edward Corringham "Mick" Mannock VC, DSO & Two Bars, MC & Bar was a British flying ace in the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Air Force during the First World War. Mannock was a pioneer of fighter aircraft tactics in aerial warfare.

At the time of his death he had amassed 61 aerial victories, making him the fifth highest scoring pilot of the war.

In 1914 Mannock was working as a telephone engineer in Turkey. After the Ottoman Empire's entry into the war on the side of the Central Powers he was interned. Mannock was badly treated and soon fell ill. Turkish authorities repatriated him to Britain believing him to be unfit for war service.

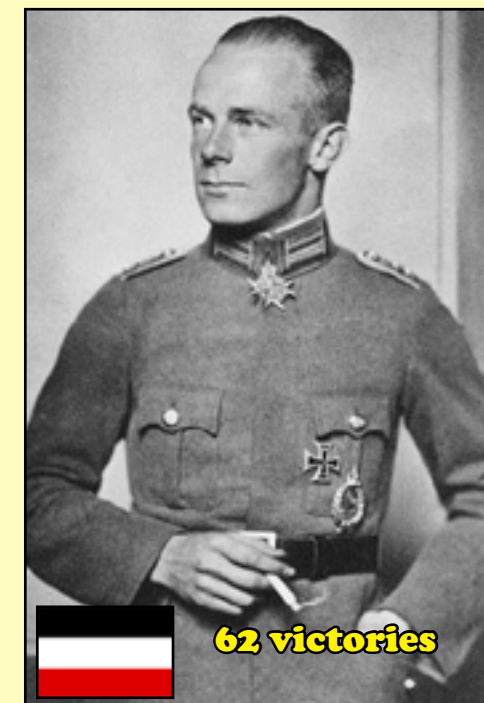
Mannock recovered and joined the Royal Engineers and then Royal Army Medical Corps. He moved services again and in 1916 joined Royal Flying Corps (RFC). After completing his training he was assigned to No. 40 Squadron RFC. Mannock went into combat on the Western Front participating three separate combat tours. After a slow start he began to prove himself as an exceptional pilot, scoring his first victory on 7 May 1917.

By February 1918 Mannock had achieved 16 victories and was appointed Flight Commander of No. 74 Squadron. He amassed 36 more victories from 12 April - 17 June 1918. After returning from leave Mannock was appointed commanding officer of No. 85 Squadron in July

1918, and scored nine more victories that month.

Days after warning fellow ace George McElroy about the hazards of flying low into ground fire, that fate befell Mannock and he was killed in action dog-fighting too close to the ground on 26 July 1918. He was 31 years old.

Mannock was among the most decorated men in the British Armed Forces. He was honoured with the Military Cross twice, was one of the rare three-time recipients of the Distinguished Service Order, and was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.



62 victories

4. Ernst Udet

Ernst Udet was a German pilot during World War I and a Luftwaffe *Generaloberst* (Colonel-General) during World War II.

Udet joined the Imperial German Air Service at the age of 19, and eventually became a notable flying ace of World War

I, scoring 62 confirmed victories by the end of his life. The highest scoring German fighter pilot to survive that war, and the second-highest scoring after Manfred von Richthofen, his commander in the Flying Circus, Udet rose to become a squadron commander under Richthofen, and later under Hermann Göring.

Udet spent the 1920s and early 1930s as a stunt pilot, international barnstormer, light aircraft manufacturer, and playboy.

In 1933, Udet joined the Nazi Party and became involved in the early development of the Luftwaffe, where he was appointed director of research and development.

Influential in the adoption of dive bombing techniques as well as the Stuka dive bomber, by 1939 Udet had risen to the post of Director-General of Equipment for the Luftwaffe.

The stress of the position and his distaste for administrative duties led to Udet developing alcoholism.

The launch of Operation Barbarossa, combined with issues with the Luftwaffe's needs for equipment outstripping Germany's production capacity and increasingly poor relations with the Nazi Party, caused Udet to commit suicide on 17 November 1941 by shooting himself in the head. He was 45 years old.

"Our defeat was caused by Udet," Hitler would claim. "That man concocted the most nonsensical state of affairs ever seen in the history of the Luftwaffe."



72 victories

3. Billy Bishop

William Avery Bishop, VC, CB, DSO & Bar, MC, DFC, ED was a Canadian flying ace of the First World War.

He was officially credited with 72 victories, making him the top Canadian and British Empire ace of the war. He was an Air Marshal and a Victoria Cross recipient.

In 1911, Billy Bishop entered the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) in Kingston, Ontario, where his brother Worth had graduated in 1903.

At RMC, Bishop was known as "Bish" and "Bill". Bishop failed his first year at RMC, worked hard his second year but in his third year was caught cheating.

When the First World War broke out later in 1914, Bishop left RMC and joined The Mississauga Horse cavalry regiment. Bishop quickly became frustrated with the mud of the trenches and the lack of action.

In July 1915, after watching

an RFC aircraft return from a mission, Bishop said, "it's clean up there! I'll bet you don't get any mud or horse shit on you up there. If you die, at least it would be a clean death."

While in France in 1915 he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps. As there were no places available for pilots in the flight school, he chose to be an observer.

In September 1916 he was accepted for training as a pilot at the Central Flying School at Upavon on Salisbury Plain. In November 1916 after receiving his wings, Bishop was attached to No. 37 Squadron RFC at Sutton's Farm, Essex, flying the BE.2c.

He was officially appointed to flying officer duties on 8 December 1916. Bishop disliked flying at night over London, searching for German airships, and he soon requested a transfer to France.

On 17 March 1917, Bishop arrived at 60 Squadron at Fiescamp Farm near Arras, where he flew the Nieuport 17 fighter. At that time, the average life expectancy of a new pilot in that sector was 11 days, and German aces were shooting down British aircraft five to one.

Bishop's first patrol on 22 March was less than successful. He had trouble controlling his run-down aircraft, was nearly shot down by anti-aircraft fire, and became separated from his group.

On 24 March, after crash-landing his aircraft during a practice flight in front of General John

Higgins, Bishop was ordered to return to flight school at Upavon. Major Alan Scott, the new commander of 60 Squadron, convinced Higgins to let him stay until a replacement arrived.

The next day, Bishop claimed his first victory when his was one of four Nieuports that engaged three Albatros D.III Scouts near St Leger. General Higgins personally congratulated Bishop and rescinded his order to return to flight school.

On 30 March 1917, Bishop was named a flight commander with a temporary promotion to captain a few days later. On 31 March, he scored his second victory.

Bishop, in addition to the usual patrols with his squadron comrades, soon flew many unofficial "lone-wolf" missions deep into enemy territory, with the blessing of Major Scott. As a result, his total of enemy aircraft shot down increased rapidly. On 8 April, he scored his fifth victory and became an ace.

Bishop's no-holds-barred style of flying always had him "at the front of the pack," leading his pilots into battle over hostile territory. Bishop soon realized that this could eventually see him shot down; after one patrol, a mechanic counted 210 bullet holes in his aircraft.

His new method of using the surprise attack proved successful; he claimed 12 aircraft in April alone, winning the Military Cross for his participation in the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

The successes of Bishop was noticed by the Germans, and

they began referring to him as "Hell's Handmaiden". Ernst Udet called him "the greatest English scouting ace" and one Jasta had a bounty on his head.

On 30 April, Bishop survived an encounter with Jasta 11 and Manfred von Richthofen, the Red Baron. In May, Bishop received the Distinguished Service Order for shooting down two aircraft while being attacked by four others.

On 2 June 1917, Bishop flew a solo mission behind enemy lines to attack a German-held aerodrome, where he claimed that he shot down three aircraft that were taking off to attack him and destroyed several more on the ground.

For this feat, he was awarded the Victoria Cross (VC), although it has been suggested that he may have embellished his success. His VC (awarded 30 August 1917) was one of two awarded in violation of the warrant requiring witnesses (the other being the Unknown Soldier), and since the German records have been lost and the archived papers relating to the VC were lost as well, there is no way of confirming whether there were any witnesses.

It seems to have been common practice at this time to allow Bishop to claim victories without requiring confirmation or verification from other witnesses.

In January 1936, Bishop was appointed the first Canadian air vice-marshal. Shortly after the outbreak of war in 1939, he was promoted to the rank of Air

marshal in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

In January 1940 he was appointed Director of Recruiting for the Royal Canadian Air Force. He was so successful in this role that many applicants had to be turned away.

Bishop created a system for training pilots across Canada and became instrumental in setting up and promoting the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, which trained over 167,000 airmen in Canada during the Second World War.

By 1944 the stress of the war had taken a serious toll on Bishop's health, and he resigned his post in the RCAF to return to private enterprise in Montreal, Quebec, before retiring in 1952.

With the outbreak of the Korean War, Bishop again offered to return to his recruitment role, but he was in poor health and was politely refused by the RCAF. He died in his sleep on 11 September 1956, at the age of 62.



75 victories

2. René Fonck

Colonel René Paul Fonck was a French aviator who ended the First World War as the top Entente fighter ace and, when all succeeding aerial conflicts of the 20th and 21st centuries are also considered, Fonck still holds the title of “all-time Allied Ace of Aces”.

Although he had been interested in aviation from his youth, he was rejected for the air service when conscripted on 22 August 1914. Instead, he underwent five months basic training for the role of combat engineer; his training duties included first digging trenches near Épinal, and later bridge repairs on the Moselle River.

On 15 February 1915 he was finally accepted into basic training to learn how to fly. He trained at St. Cyr and then at Le Crotoy. He completed his pilot training in May 1915 and then flew Caudron G III observation aircraft with Escadrille C 47.

At age of 23, on 15 April 1917 (“Bloody April”), Fonck received a coveted invitation to join the famous Escadrille les Cigognes. Groupe de Combat 12, with its four escadrilles (or squadrons), was the world’s first fighter wing. The then leading French ace, Georges Guynemer, was serving at the time in one of its escadrilles, N3, and had just scored his 36th victory.

Known for his clinical professionalism, he applied mathematical principles to combat flying, and his engineering knowledge regarding the capa-

bilities of the aircraft he flew was unsurpassed by his fellow pilots.

Fonck took few chances, patiently stalking his intended victims from higher altitudes. He then used deflection shooting with deadly accuracy at close range, resulting in an astonishing economy of ammunition expended per kill. More often than not, a single burst of less than five rounds from his Vickers machine gun was sufficient.

His preferred method of aerial combat was not to engage into dogfights, but to carry out surgically merciless executions. He was also reputed to be able to spot enemy observation aircraft from very far away, where most other pilots would have perceived nothing.

By the end of the war, he had accounted for all but 36 of Escadrille SPA.103’s 111 claimed victories. Unlike many leading French aces, Fonck’s score contained only three shared victories.

Also unlike most aces, he remained unwounded; indeed, only a single enemy bullet had ever hit his aircraft. He had also forgone the most hazardous air-to-air combat: he shot down no observation balloons.

Yet for all his skill and success, Fonck never captured the hearts of the French public as Guynemer had. Fonck was ascetic and withdrawn. Instead of drinking or socializing with the other pilots, he planned his flying missions and tactics, ironed his uniforms, and stayed physically fit through callisthenics.

He seemed to overcompensate for his shyness by constantly mentioning his exploits. As a result, he seemed distant, arrogant, even abrasive. His comrades respected his skills, but even one of his few friends, Marcel Haegelen, considered him a braggart and shameless self-promoter.

Fonck may have resented the fact that Guynemer remained more popular in the French press even after he surpassed him in victories. Fonck also seemed to lack insight into the effect his personality had upon his image or career.

However he and he alone carried the flag of the French Air Force at the victory parade on the Champs-Élysées.

His inter-war contact with the likes of former World War I foe Hermann Göring and Ernst Udet cast a shadow upon Fonck’s reputation during the German occupation of France, as did allegations of collaboration with the Nazis and the Vichy regime.

After the war, a French police inquiry about his supposed collaboration with the Vichy regime completely cleared Fonck. The conclusion was that his loyalty was proved by his close contacts with recognised resistance leaders such as Alfred Heurtaux during the war.

He died of a stroke in his Paris apartment, Rue du Cirque, at the age of 59.



1. Manfred von Richthofen

Manfred Albrecht Freiherr von Richthofen, known in English as Baron von Richthofen, and most famously as the “Red Baron”, was a fighter pilot with the German Air Force during World War I. He is considered the ace-of-aces of the war, being officially credited with 80 air combat victories.

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

He quickly distinguished himself as a fighter pilot, and during 1917 became the leader of Jasta 11 also known as the Red Squadron and later on he led the larger fighter wing Jagdgeschwader 1, better known as “The Flying Circus” or “Richthofen’s Circus” because of the bright colours of its aircraft, and perhaps also because of the way the unit was transferred from

one area of Allied air activity to another – moving like a travelling circus, and frequently setting up in tents on improvised airfields. By 1918, Richthofen was regarded as a national hero in Germany, and respected by his enemies.

Von Richthofen led by example and force of will rather than by inspiration. He was often described as distant, unemotional, and rather humourless, though some colleagues contended otherwise.

He was cordial to officers and enlisted men alike; indeed, he urged his pilots to remain on good terms with the mechanics who maintained their aircraft.

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

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

He regained his vision in time to ease the aircraft out of a spin and execute a forced landing in a field in friendly territory. The injury required multiple operations to remove bone splinters from the impact area. The Red Baron returned to active service against doctor’s orders on 25 July.

By 1918, von Richthofen had become such a legend that it

was feared that his death would be a blow to the morale of the German people. He refused to accept a ground job after his wound, stating that “every poor fellow in the trenches must do his duty” and that he would therefore continue to fly in combat.

Von Richthofen received a fatal wound just after 11:00 am on 21 April 1918 while flying over Morlancourt Ridge near the Somme River. A single .303 bullet hit von Richthofen through the chest, severely damaging his heart and lungs.

His plane crashed in a field on a hill near the Bray-Corbier road, just north of the village of Vaux-sur-Somme, in a sector defended by the Australian Imperial Force (AIF).

There has been much debate over who fired the shot that killed the Red Baron. The RAF credited Canadian pilot Captain Arthur “Roy” Brown with shooting down the Red Baron, but it is now generally agreed by historians, doctors, and ballistics experts that Richthofen was actually killed by an AA machine gunner, Sergeant Cedric Popkin, firing from the ground.

In common with most Allied air officers, No. 3 Squadron AFC’s commanding officer Major David Blake, who was responsible for Richthofen’s body, regarded the Red Baron with great respect, and he organised a full military funeral, to be conducted by the personnel of No. 3 Squadron Australian Flying Corps. Von Richthofen was 25 when he died.

Special Forces - JW GROM

Part twenty-seven of a series that looks at Special Forces around the world. This month we feature the Polish Armed Forces' JW GROM

Jednostka Wojskowa GROM is one of Poland's premier special missions units. GROM operators gained the nickname of "The Surgeons" due to their extensive medical training and knowledge and their surgical ability to coordinate and execute special operations.

GROM was originally modelled on NATO's tier one special operations units such as the US Army's 1st SFOD-D (Delta Force), the US Navy's SEAL Team Six (DEVGRU), the British Army's SAS, and Canadian JTF2.

The unit's other name is Jednostka Wojskowa 2305 (Military Unit No. 2305). GROM operators gained the nickname of "The Surgeons" due to their

extensive medical training and knowledge and their surgical ability to coordinate and execute special operations.

Early History

GROM, which stands for *Grupa Reagowania Operacyjno-Manewrowego* (Group (for) Operational Maneuvering Response), which also means "thunder", is one of the five special operation forces units of the Polish Armed Forces.

It was officially activated on July 13, 1990. It is deployed in

a variety of special operations and unconventional warfare roles, including anti-terrorist operations and projection of force behind enemy lines.

The unit was named after the Silent Unseen (*Cichociemni Spadochroniarze Armii Krajowej*) – Poland's elite World War II special-operations unit.

In the 1970s and 1980s, there were several formations of special forces units within Poland, but these were either trained in purely military tasks (sabotage, disruption of communications and such) or in purely counter-terrorist roles.

After the Polish embassy in Bern was taken over by a group of four Polish emigrants calling themselves

Polish Revolutionary Home Army in 1982, General Edwin Rozłubirski proposed that a clandestine military unit be established to counter the threat from terrorism and other unconventional threats.

This proposal, however, was initially rejected by the Peo-

ple's Army of Poland.

In 1989, many Jews were allowed to emigrate from the Soviet Union to Israel. Poland was one of the handful of countries that provided aid in the form of organization for the operation, later dubbed Operation Bridge (*Operacja Most*).

After two Polish diplomats were shot in Beirut, Lt. Col. Sławomir Petelicki was sent to Lebanon to secure the transfer of civilians and the Polish diplomatic outposts.

Upon his return to Poland, he presented his plan for the creation of a special military unit to the Ministry of Interior, a force that would be trained in special operations to be deployed in the defence of Polish citizens in situations

similar to the one in Lebanon. Petelicki's ideas were well received, and on June 13, 1990, GROM was formally established as JW 2305.

Sławomir Petelicki was chosen as the first commander of the newly formed unit. As a Polish intelligence officer from Służba Bezpieczeństwa specializing in sabotage and subversion, he seemed perfectly suited to oversee the unit's initial formation. He gathered around himself a group of like-minded and professional soldiers, functionaries and set about choosing soldiers that would be fit for special operations.

Due to the high risks involved in special service, it was decided that all men should be from professional service. The first batch of recruits all came from a variety of already-existing special units within the Polish Armed Forces. Among these were:

- 1 Batalion Szturmowy from



Lubliniec (then known as 1 Pulk Specjalny Komandosów and now known as JW Komandosów)

- 48, 56 and 62 Kompania Specjalna
- 6 Brygada Desantowo-Szturmowa
- Polish Navy divers
- Anti-terrorist units of the Policja
- Mechanised Warfare Officer School in Wrocław
- Reconnaissance units of Polish Armed Forces (PAF)

Out of the possible recruits, only a small group passed the training.

Many of these initial instructors were trained by the Special Forces of the United States and the United Kingdom. Currently, Jednostka Wojskowa GROM is co-operating with similar units of other NATO countries.

During its formative first few years, JW 2305 remained completely secret and hidden from the public.

It was first reported to the press in 1992 and became known to the public in 1994, after their first major military operation in Haiti.

Before October 1, 1999, JW 2305 was subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, after which time command was transferred to the Minister of National Defence, until 2007.

Since 2007 JW GROM is under the command of Dowódca Wojsk Specjalnych (Commander of Polish Special Forces).

War on terror

A 40-man GROM element deployed to Afghanistan in early 2002.

For the 2003 invasion of Iraq,

GROM formed the part of the core of the Naval Special Operations Task Group, along with US Navy SEALs, British Royal Marines and attached US Psy Ops and civil affairs teams.

On March 20, 2003, US Marines from 1st F.A.S.T. Company and GROM operators assaulted the KAAOT Oil Terminals, whilst US Marines from 1st F.A.S.T. Company and US Navy SEALs from SEAL Team 8 and 10 seized the MABOT oil terminal, both terminals were seized with no casualties and explosives which were found on the terminals were made safe by GROM and SEAL operators.

A mixed team of 35 GROM operators and 20 US Navy SEALs from SEAL Team 5 seized the Mukatayin hydroelectric dam, 57 miles north-east of Baghdad. Iraqi troops guarding the dam surrendered without a fight, there were no casualties to the team (with the exception of one GROM soldier, who broke an ankle during the insertion from a US Air Force MH-53J Pave Low helicopter).

SEAL and GROM units continued to cooperate throughout the rest of the invasion phase, with raids and anti-sniper missions in Baghdad.

Following the invasion, GROM operators formed the core of Task Unit Thunder, as an element of CJSOTF-AP (Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Arabian Peninsula), providing a Tier-1 counterterrorism unit for the task force.

Along with Task Unit Raider (consisting of Det One operators), both units became the task



force's primary direct action assets, operating in conjunction on multiple occasions.

A GROM sniper aided Det One's in its first "real" mission - a close target reconnaissance operation - in which the sniper apprehended the target, (a suspected insurgent sniper).

GROM's early success in Iraq made it a valuable contributor to CJSOTF-AP. In September 2004, US Navy SEAL sniper Chris Kyle was temporarily assigned to GROM's Combat Team B in Baghdad for a week.

The CIA reportedly found GROM snipers useful due to their low rules of engagement threshold.

In 2007, US Army Special Forces and Polish GROM conducted Operation Jackal against insurgents in Diwaniyah.

In 2007, GROM and JW Komandosów were deployed to Kandahar (after earlier successful tours of Iraq operating alongside US Navy SEALs) under direct US Command.

They weren't restricted by any national caveats-the only

restriction placed on them was regarding cross-border operations into Pakistan. Along with Direct Action successes, they were considered very effective in training and mentoring Afghan National Police units.

Training

Candidates applying to serve in JW GROM have to pass psychological and durability tests, along with the so-called truth test, a physically and psychologically exhausting field test designed to filter out the weaker applicants.

GROM operators are known to train with the best special operation units in the world. These include the US army's Delta Force, US Navy's Seal

Team 6, British SAS, Australia's SASR, Canada's Joint Task Force 2 and Germany's *Kommando Spezialkräfte*.

The training of GROM soldiers includes a variety of disciplines. All of them undergo the same specialized training in anti-terrorism and special operations, as well as frogman, sniping, and parachuting.

In four-man teams, each soldier must be prepared to assume the respective responsibilities of his colleagues, should it become necessary.

JW GROM receives basic special operations training from the Swedish Navy's Special Command for Tactical Operations based in Karlskrona, Sweden's primary Naval Base.

Approximately 75% of GROM personnel are trained as medics or paramedics.

In addition, each group is supported by several professional physicians. GROM soldiers are trained in capture or kill methods.

Organisation

Command and support staff in Warsaw.

- A Squadron (ZBA) – Land Element located in Warsaw
- B Squadron (ZBB) – Maritime Element located in Gdańsk
- C Squadron (ZBC) – Specialty unknown located in Warsaw
- Logistic and security unit located in Warsaw.

Weapons used by GROM



Glock 17



Heckler & Koch HK416



FN F2000 Tactical



Steyr AUG



Steyr AUG



Heckler & Koch PSG1

A legend has passed on

On 29 May 2021 the last remaining South African signaller of World War II, Sergeant Sydney Thomas Ireland passed away at the age of 100. **Matt Tennyson** pays tribute to the remarkable 'Uncle Syd'.

First met Sydney Ireland at the Italian Club in Cape Town on 1 May 2016. A bit of a strange place to meet as neither of us was Italian.

At the time he was one of the three surviving members of the 3 Brigade Signal Company Reunion Association. The other two were Major Charles Holloway and Signaller Eddie Mills.

At the end of World War II Charles Holloway decided to start a reunion of the members of the Cape Town based 3 Brigade Signal Company.

Every year they would get together for an AGM and lunch. This tradition carried on for the next 70 years.

Eventually, when there were only three surviving members, they decided to call it a day. But their legacy and tradition were set to live on.

With the encouragement of 71 Signal Unit, originally 3 Brigade Signal Squadron, established on 1 May 1946, and the South African Signals Association, which was established on 2 December 2000 as an initiative by Lieutenant Colonel Robbie Roberts, then officer commanding of 71 Signal Unit, the 3 Signal Company Reunion Association's tradition would continue.

On 1 May 2016 the Signals Association hosted an event which took the form

of the last AGM and luncheon of the 3rd Brigade Signal Company Reunion Association and simultaneously 'transferred' the 70 year old tradition to the Signals Association as the next generation of Signallers.

I was there to film the event. This led to me helping Robbie Roberts set up the Signals Association website and produce a quarterly newsletter called 'Jimmy's Own'.

It was also the start of my association with Sydney Ireland, who was better known as 'Uncle Syd'.

At every military veterans gathering or parade, Uncle Syd would always be there. He always had a smile on his face and a warm greeting.

After these events I would

love nothing more than to sit and chat with Uncle Syd.

Sydney Thomas Ireland was born on 9 March 1921 on a dairy farm in the Parow district. 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.

During World War II he served as a wireless operator in Kenya, Abyssinia, British Somalia and Egypt. He spent much time in Cairo and Alexandria and took part in the Battle of El Alamein.

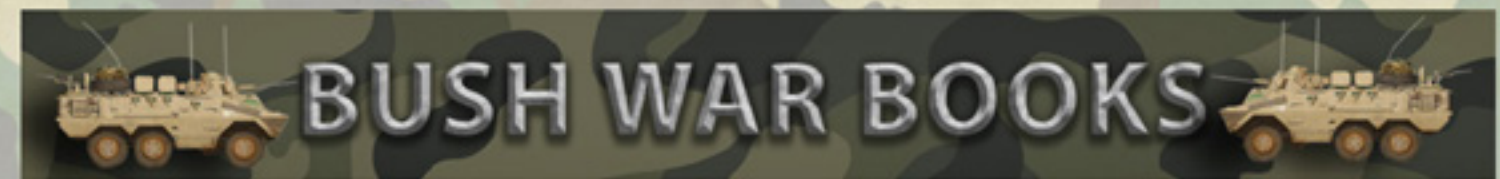
He would become the last remaining member of 3 Signal Company and the last South African signaller of World War II.

On 9 March Uncle Syd celebrated his 100th birthday. The March issue of Jimmy's Own was dedicated to him. Unfortunately, due to COVID regulations, we were unable to give Uncle Syd the type of celebration that he so richly deserved.

On Saturday 29 May at 15h00 Uncle Syd passed away at Huis Luckhof where he resided. It was 50 days after he had celebrated his 100th birthday.

A soldier, signaller, gentleman and a legend has left us, bringing to a close the end of an era.

We are sure that all of you will join us when we say, Rest in peace Uncle Syd. We will remember you.



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"

Early repeating rifles

The advent of the repeating rifle was to change the face of warfare forever.

The development of the unitary cartridge in the mid-19th century paved the way for the “repeater” rifle. This new weapon fed ammunition from a magazine to the breech as part of a single action that emptied the used cartridge case from the chamber, cocked the action, and readied the gun to fire.

The first repeaters were mostly American, and used an underlever design. Europeans, however, were familiar with

the bolt action from single-shot Mauser and von Dreyse rifles of the 1870s, and came to prefer it in repeating guns.

They considered the bolt action not only easier

to use in a prone position, but also safer - because when the bolt was turned, the action was locked by lugs connecting with other parts in the receiver.



Colt Revolving Rifle Model 1855



LeMat Revolver Rifle



Mauser Model 71/84



Spencer Rifle



Spencer Carbine Model 1865



Lee-Netford Mark I



Henry Model 1860



Schmidt-Rubin M1889



Winchester Carbine Model 1866



Lebel MLE 1886/93

Colt Revolving Rifle Model 1855

Date 1855
Origin US
Weight 3.45 kg
Barrel 68.2 cm
Calibre .56 in

The 1855 was the third model of the Colt Manufacturing Company’s 1838 revolving rifle. It made a considerable impact, even though the loading procedure of the five-chambered cylinder was cumbersome.

LeMat Revolver Rifle

Date 1872
Origin France/US
Weight 2.2 kg
Barrel 62.8 cm
Calibre 44 in and 16-bore

Based on a similar pistol, the LeMat Revolver Rifle had two barrels. The lower, charged with shot, acted as the axis pin for the nine-chambered cylinder, which was charged with ball cartridges.

Mauser Model 71/84

Date 1884
Origin Germany
Weight 4.6 kg
Barrel 83 cm
Calibre 11 × 60 mm Rim-fire

Peter Paul Mauser made many attempts to turn the single-shot bolt-action M1871 rifle into a repeater. The Model 71/84 suffered from weaknesses in the design of its magazine.

Spencer Rifle

Date 1863
Origin US
Weight 4.55 kg
Barrel 72 cm
Calibre .52 in

The Spencer, which had a tubular seven-round magazine in the butt stock, was the world’s first practical military repeater. It was adopted by the Union Army in the American Civil War.

Spencer Carbine Model 1865

Date 1865
Origin US
Weight 3.7 kg
Barrel 51 cm
Calibre .50 in

For this model, Christopher Spencer amended the design of his original repeater rifle and carbine to eliminate minor faults. The 1865 carbine had six-groove rifling. It was also made under contract by the Burnside Rifle Company.

Lee-Metford Mark I

Date 1888
Origin UK
Weight 4.3 kg
Barrel 76.7 cm
Calibre .303 in (black powder)

The Lee-Metford Mark I had an enclosed bolt action and a box magazine, designed by James Lee, and anti-fouling rifling, developed by William Metford. The Mark II followed in 1890.

Henry Model 1860

Date 1860
Origin US
Weight 4 kg
Barrel 51 cm
Calibre .44 in Rim-fire

In Tyler Henry’s repeating rifle, an under-lever ejected a spent round, chambered a new one, and left the action cocked. A two-piece bolt joined by a toggle-joint locked the action.

Schmidt-Rubin M1889

Date 1889
Origin Switzerland
Weight 4.45 kg
Barrel 78 cm
Calibre 7.5 x 55 mm

Colonel Rudolf Schmidt of the Swiss Army developed a straight-pull bolt-action rifle with a 12-round box magazine. It remained in service, though slightly modified, until 1931.

Winchester Carbine Model 1866

Date 1866
Origin US
Weight 4.2 kg
Barrel 58.5 cm
Calibre .44 Rim-fire

A modified Henry Model 1860, the 1866 allowed the reloading - even part-full - of a magazine via a port on the receiver. This doubled the rate of fire to 30 rounds per minute.

Lebel MLE 1886/93

Date 1893
Origin France
Weight 4.3 kg
Barrel 80 cm
Calibre 8 mm x 50R

The Lebel MLE 1886 was the first rifle to fire a small-calibre, jacketed bullet propelled by smokeless powder. This modified version followed in 1893.

Prior to the advent of the repeater rifle, reloading a rifle was a time consuming process. A properly trained group of regular infantry soldiers was able to load and fire four rounds per minute from a musket. Now imagine trying to reload a musket while facing an infantry bayonet charge or, even worse, a cavalry charge. It was not uncommon in situations like this for the line

to break and rout. During the American War of Independence irregular troops would be lucky if they managed to get off two rounds before breaking. Compare this to a rifle such as the Winchester Carbine that was able to fire up to 30 rounds per minute. This meant that a trained company of 100 men would be able to lay down 3,000 rounds of fire per minute.

People often ask me how I feel about my invention being used to kill people every day and the AK being a common weapon of ethnic conflicts. I want to make it clear that I created my assault rifle to protect my country. You can blame politicians for its spreading out of control on a global scale.

Mikhail Kalashnikov

Memorable Order of Tin Hats

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.



Warrior's Gate Virtual Tour

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

Virtual Tour

Photo gallery

History

Ceremonial

Message from the Vice-Chairman

Message from the custodian

The Dicta Boelcke

In 1916 World War I German flying ace Oswald Boelcke was tasked to write a pamphlet on aerial combat tactics. The result was the 'Dicta Boelcke'.

By 1915 the aircraft had become recognised as a weapon of war. They were used for observation and reconnaissance, as well as for bombing missions. Certain aircraft, however, were being developed almost exclusively as fighter aircraft.

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

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

This lead has been followed in most other languages, an exception being Russian, in which the fighter is called "*istrebitel*", meaning "exterminator".

During the first part of the war, there was no established tactical doctrine for air-to-air combat.

During this period of pioneering aerial warfare, the British Royal Flying Corps air effort could be summed up by, "Attack everything". The French *Aeronautique Militaire* was concentrating its efforts on building up its bomber force.

Pilots who shot down five or

more fighters became known as aces. One such pilot was Oswald Boelcke. During mid-May 1915, he began to fly one of the original fighter aircraft equipped with a synchronized gun. As he began to shoot down opposing French and British airplanes, he became one of the first German fighter aces.

Boelcke was tasked by Colonel Hermann von der Lieth-Thomsen with writing a pamphlet on aerial tactics. Completed in June 1916, it was distributed throughout the German Army's Air Service (*Die Fliegertruppen des Deutschen Kaiserreiches*). It would be almost two years before the French and British followed suit with their own tactical guides.

Often flying with Max Immelmann, Boelcke gained experience in the new realm of aerial combat as he discovered the utility of having a wingman, of massing fighter planes for increased fighting power, and of flying loose formations allowing individual pilots tactical independence.

Based on his successful combat experiences, he used his training as a professional soldier and his powers as an analytic thinker to design tactics for the use of aircraft in battle.

Boelcke tried to interest Immelmann in devising a tactical

doctrine for fighters, to no avail. In mid-1916, Boelcke codified his tactics in the Dicta Boelcke, which was the world's first tactical manual for an air force.

During early 1916, Boelcke wrote a brochure entitled "Experiences of Air Fighting", giving tips for attacking any one of three types of opposing aircraft. This was not unique; a few other fliers in the war were sharing such combat tips with one another on a personal level.

After Immelmann's death, Boelcke was withdrawn from combat on 27 June 1916, while he was the war's leading ace, and assigned to *Fliegertruppe* (Flying Troops) headquarters. His reassignment was in line

with the German military doctrine of *auftragstaktik*, or order tactics: The belief that the junior officer on the battlefield best knows the tactics needed there.

As part of his staff duties re-vamping the *Fliegertruppe* into the *Luftstreitkräfte* (Air Force) in early October 1916, Boelcke wrote the Dicta, which was then distributed throughout the *Luftstreitkräfte* as the world's first tactical manual.

Spurred by the example of the Dicta, many of the world's military air forces would eventually develop their own tactical manuals, codified as tactics, techniques, and procedures.

The Dicta Boelcke

1. Try to secure advantages before attacking. If possible, keep the sun behind you.
2. Always carry through an attack when you have started it.
3. Fire only at close range, and only when your opponent is properly in your sights.

4. Always keep your eye on your opponent, and never let yourself be deceived by ruses.
5. In any form of attack it is essential to assail your enemy from behind.
6. If your opponent dives on you, do not try to evade his onslaught, but fly to meet it.
7. When over the enemy's lines never forget your own line of retreat.
8. For the *Staffel* (squadron): Attack on principle in groups of four or six. When the fight breaks up into a series of single combats, take care that several do not go for the same opponent.

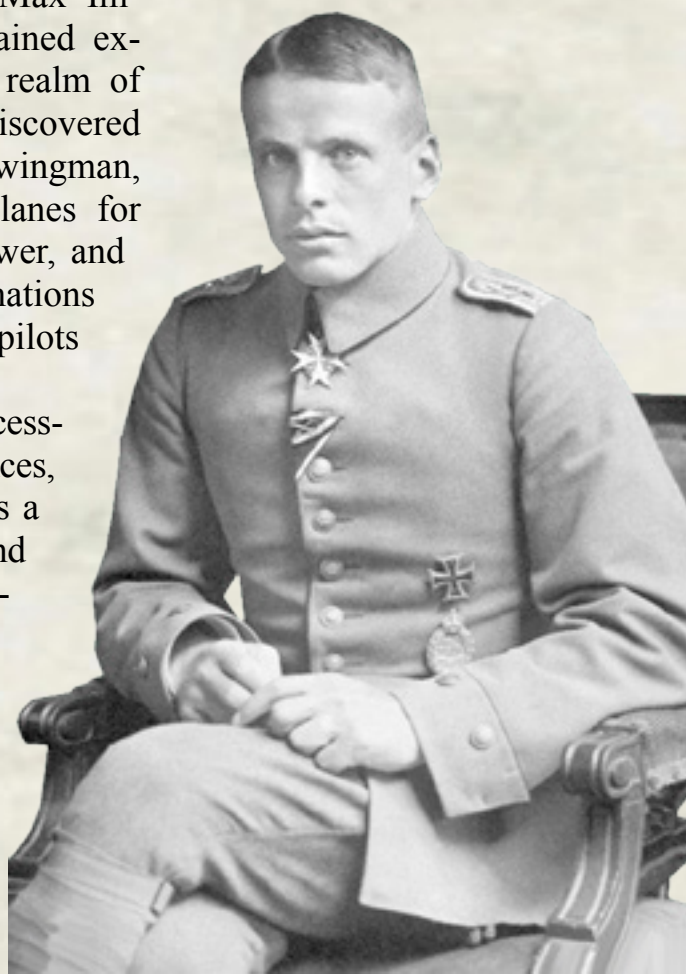
Legacy

After writing the Dicta, Boelcke's tactics were taught in the fighter school he had suggested founding. He suggested that fighter planes be organized into squadrons. He also organized and led one of these original German fighter squadrons,

Jagdstaffel 2.

By the time he died in action after his 40th victory, he had thoroughly schooled his squadron in his tactics. Jasta 2 went on to be one of the two most successful German fighter squadrons during the remainder of the war, scoring 336 victories, and achieving a victory ratio that ran as high as 12 to one.

The simple Dicta Boelcke manual has, over time, evolved into widespread use of tactics, techniques, and procedures manuals for air forces worldwide. The United States Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), the United States Navy (USN), and the United States Air Force (USAF) each have their own air tactics manuals. Under the auspices of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the USAF trains German, Dutch, Norwegian, Turkish, Italian, and Greek fighter pilots at Sheppard Air Force Base, using air tactics manuals descended from the Dicta Boelcke.



SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

SAAFA is an all-ranks Association formed to perpetuate a tradition of comradeship, knowing no distinction of rank, race, language, gender or creed, which has developed over the years among members of the South African Air Force.

Click on the logo above to visit the SAAFA website

Disobedient Heroes

In the military it is expected that you obey orders. Yet there are cases where there is a good reason to disobey those orders.

The military has a very strict code of conduct. When a soldier is given an order he/she is expected to carry it out immediately.

Commanding officers can order troops into a suicide mission if it serves the greater purpose. When obeying orders, it's necessary for those troops to believe a commander wouldn't order them into harm's way unless it was necessary, that the order serves a greater good, and it's not an illegal order.

The military takes a dim view on anyone that fails or refuses to obey an order. Those that refuse to carry out an order can be court martialled and, in some cases, even sentenced to death if found guilty.

Yet there are cases where there is a valid reason for disobeying an order. Such as when they believe that the order is putting the lives of friendly troops or innocent people at stake.

The following people not only disobeyed orders, they even became heroes because of it.

Albert Battel

As a fifty-one-year-old reserve officer and a lawyer by profession, Oberleutnant Battel was stationed in Przemyśl in southern Poland as the adjutant to the local military commander, Major Max Liedtke. Battel had been a member of the Nazi Party since 1933.

When the SS prepared to launch their first large-scale "re-

settlement" (liquidation) action against the Jews of Przemyśl on 26 July 1942, Battel, in concert with his superior, ordered the bridge over the River San, the only access into the Jewish ghetto, to be blocked.

As the SS commando attempted to cross to the other side, the sergeant-major in charge of the bridge threatened to open fire unless they withdrew. All this happened in broad daylight, to the amazement of the local inhabitants.

Still later that same afternoon, an army detachment under the command of Oberleutnant Battel broke into the cordoned-off area of the ghetto and used army trucks to evacuate up to 100 Jews and their families to the barracks of the local military command.

These Jews were placed under the protection of the Wehrmacht and were thus sheltered from deportation to Belzec. The remaining ghetto inmates, including the head of the Judenrat, Dr. Duldig, underwent "resettlement" in the following days.

After this incident, the SS authorities began a secret investigation into the conduct of the army officer who had dared defy them under such embarrassing circumstances.

Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer-SS, vowed to have the lawyer expelled from the Nazi party and arrested immediately after the war.

Battel's stand against the SS came to be recognised only a long time after his death; most notably, through the tenacious efforts of the Israeli researcher and lawyer Dr. Zeev Goshen. On 22 January 1981, almost 30 years after his death, Yad Vashem recognised Albert Battel as Righteous among the Nations.

Major Max Liedtke was also recognised as Righteous among the Nations.



Albert Battel

Thomas Currie Derrick

Tom Derrick was an Australian who went by the nickname of 'Diver'.

During World War II he joined the 2/48th Battalion of the Second Australian Imperial Force.

At the Siege of Tobruk, he was recommended for the Military Medal and promoted to

corporal. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal at El Alamein for knocking out three German machine gun posts, destroying two tanks, and capturing one hundred prisoners.

During the Battle of Sattelberg in the Pacific nation of New Guinea, Derrick was now a lieutenant.

On November 24, 1943, Lt. Derrick was ordered to withdraw his platoon because the CO didn't think he could capture the heights around Sattelberg.

Derrick's response: "Bugger the CO. Just give me twenty more minutes and we'll have this place."

Derrick climbed a vertical cliff by himself, holding on with one hand and throwing grenades with the other, stopping only to fire his rifle. He cleared out 10 machine gun nests that night and forced the Japanese to withdraw. The Aussies captured Sattelberg and Derrick was awarded the Victoria Cross.



Thomas Derrick

Desmond Doss

This was a man that wanted to serve his country during World War II. As long as he didn't have to kill anyone.

He was a pacifist and refused every order to carry a weapon or fire one. He was given a court martial and the court eventually decided that he did not have to carry a firearm and would be allowed to serve as a medic.

As his unit climbed a vertical cliffside at Okinawa, the Japanese opened up with artillery, mortars, and machine guns, turning his unit back and killing or wounding 75 men. Doss retrieved them one by one, loading them onto a litter and down the cliff.

A few days later, in the mouth of a cave, he braved a shower of grenades thrown from eight yards away, dressed wounds, and made four trips to pull his soldiers out. He treated his own wounds and waited five hours for a litter to carry him off.

On the way back, the three men carrying him had to take cover from a tank attack. While waiting, Doss crawled off his litter, treated a more injured man, and told the litter bearers to take the other man.

While waiting for them to come back, he was hit in the arm by a sniper and crawled more than 250 metres to an aid station.

He was twice awarded the Bronze Star Medal for actions in Guam and the Philippines. For his exploits at Okinawa, Doss was awarded the Medal of Honour.

He was the first conscientious objector to earn the Medal of Honour and was promoted to

the rank of corporal.



Desmond Doss

Daniel Hellings

Hellings was serving with the British Army in Afghanistan.

On 7 September 2010 he was on a joint patrol with Afghan allies in the Helmand Province. An IED (Improvised Explosive Device) was detonated in an alleyway.

Two troops were injured in the initial blast, one blinded and the second with severe leg wounds, and a third was wounded when he triggered another bomb just metres away from Private Hellings.

Private Hellings was ordered to withdraw from the alley by his commander but the young soldier realised there was no time to find an alternative route to recover the casualties and volunteered to return to the task.

With his metal detector rendered all but useless because so much metallic debris lay on the ground, he carried out an hour-long fingertip search for further IEDs.

One hidden bomb he found

had wires stretching the width of the alley, which would normally have prevented him going any further. But Private Hellings knew that his injured comrades would almost certainly die if he waited for a bomb disposal team.

He disregarded the danger to himself and continued clearing the ground around the IEDs so he could reach the three casualties, giving them life-saving first aid and helping to evacuate them.

For his bravery and quick thinking, he was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal.



Daniel Hellings

Frank Luke Jr

Frank Luke Jr was an U.S. Army Air Service during World War I. He held the rank of 2nd Lieutenant.

He was an ace with 18 confirmed kills, second only to Captain Eddie Rickenbacker. Luke's nickname was the 'Arizona Balloon Buster'.

On 29 September 1918 he had been grounded by his squadron's commanding officer, Captain Alfred A. Grant, and told that if he took off he would be considered AWOL. He took off

anyway.

He knocked out three balloons that day before his aircraft was hit by machine gun fire and he was forced down behind enemy lines.

He managed to land, climbed out of his aircraft and, using his side arm, opened fire on the Germans that were heading to take him prisoner. He was killed in the one-sided fight.

He was later awarded the Medal of Honour, becoming the first pilot to receive the award.



Frank Luke Jr.

Dakota Meyer

Meyer was a member of the United States Marine Corps and it 2009 was at the Battle of Ganjgal in Afghanistan.

His commander ordered him to disregard a distress call from ambushed Afghan and American troops, four of them friends, pinned down by possibly hundreds of enemy fighters.

He repeatedly asked permission to drive his truck to help relieve his outnumbered and surrounded friends and allies. Each time the request was denied.

Taking matter into his own hands he and another Marine hopped in a Humvee. Meyer

manned the gun while the other drove the vehicle.

They drove right into the firestorm, loading the beleaguered Afghans, mostly wounded, onto their Humvee. As weapons jammed, Meyer would grab another, and another. They drove into the melee five times, until they came across Meyer's friends, now fallen, and pulled them out too.

For his actions Meyer was awarded the Medal of Honour. He is the second-youngest living Medal of Honour recipient.



Dakota Meyer

Stanislav Petrov

On 26 September 1983, three weeks after the Soviet military had shot down Korean Air Lines Flight 007, Lt Colonel Petrov was the duty officer at the command centre for the Oka nuclear early-warning system when the system reported that a missile had been launched from the United States, followed by up to five more

Standing orders were clear - report it immediately to his commanding officers, who would have likely launched a counter-strike with their nuclear arsenal.

Suspecting that it was a false alarm he disobeyed the standing orders and, in doing so, averted World War III and mutually assured destruction.



Stanislav Petrov

Benaya Rein

During the Second Lebanon War several Israeli soldiers, lacking accurate maps, became lost in 2006 while in Southern Lebanon. As they attempted to get their bearings, about 20 men appeared in the distance, and the commander, convinced they were Hezbollah fighters, ordered Benaya Rein to open fire.

Rein wasn't so sure. Instead, he took a tank out to the location to investigate. When he arrived, he found 20 of his fellow IDF soldiers.

Rein would later be killed after the tank he was commanding was hit by a Hezbollah missile. He was one of the last Israelis killed during the war.



Benaya Rein

Daniel Sickles

Major General Sickles' slight disobedience to orders during the Battle of Gettysburg changed the momentum of the war and may have changed the entire history of the United States. In a move historians haven't stopped talking about for 150 years, Sickles moved his men to Peach Orchard instead of Little Round Top, as Gen. George G. Meade ordered him. This move prompted Confederate Gen. James Longstreet to attack the Union troops in the orchard and the wheat field, nearly destroying the Union forces there. Which, admittedly, sounds terrible.

The Confederate move allowed Union troops to flank them in a counter-offensive and completely rout the Confederate forces, winning Gettysburg for the Union and ending Robert E. Lee's invasion of the North. Sickles himself lost a leg in the fighting, but received the Medal of Honour.



Daniel Sickles

David Teich

During the Korean War, US Army Lieutenant David Teich was in a tank company near the 38th parallel in 1951 when a radio distress call came in from the Eighth Ranger Company. Wounded, outnumbered, and under heavy fire, the Rangers were near Teich's tanks, and facing 300,000 Communist troops, moving steadily toward their position.

Teich wanted to help, but was ordered to withdraw instead, his captain saying "We've got orders to move out. Screw them. Let them fight their own battles."

Teich went anyway. He led four tanks over to the Rangers' position and took out so many Rangers on each tank, they covered up the tank's turrets. He still gets letters from the troops he saved that day, thanking him for disobeying his order to move out.



David Teich

Battle of Britain - a few facts

The Battle of Britain lasted from 10 July – 31 October 1940 and was the first major military campaign in history to be fought entirely in the air. Here are a few facts about the battle that you may, or may not, have known.

It was described by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill as the RAF's (Royal Air Force) finest hour. It was one of Britain's most important victories of the Second World War and is credited with preventing Germany from invading Britain.

Adolf Hitler aimed to force Britain to submit by bombing, naval blockade or, if necessary, invasion. But to achieve this, he needed air supremacy. So, in the summer and autumn of 1940, a few thousand airmen waged a dogged battle in the skies over Britain.

Next to the later conflicts of World War II, it was a tiny affair. But the stakes were huge – resting on the result was the survival of Britain and the outcome of the entire war.

Most readers will know about the Battle of Britain, and will also know the final outcome of the battle - a victory for the Royal Air Force.

Yet there are some facts about the battle that are not all that well known. Here are a few of them.

It got its name before it even began.

The stage for the battle was set in May 1940, when Nazi Germany launched a massive blitzkrieg against Western Europe. Hitler's armies overran Belgium, the Netherlands and France in only a matter of

weeks, leaving Britain as the lone standing Allied power.

During a June 18 speech, Prime Minister Winston Churchill predicted a showdown with Germany when he said, "The Battle of France is over. I expect the Battle of Britain is about to begin."

How strong were the RAF and Luftwaffe in July 1940?

The German Air Force, or Luftwaffe, consisted of three *Luftflotten* ('Air fleets'), deployed in an arc round Britain from Normandy to Scandinavia. During the Battle of Britain they had about 2,800 aircraft, two-thirds of which were bombers.

The Luftwaffe had already defeated the air forces of Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, and the RAF contingent prior to Dunkirk.

Its crews were experienced and confident and its commander predicted it would only take a few days to knock out the RAF.

In 1936, the RAF had been organised into four separate Commands: Training, Coastal, Bomber and Fighter. Fighter Command was organised geographically into four 'Groups'.

Air Vice-Marshal Park's 11 Group, in the South East, would bear the brunt of the fighting. It had about 650 aircraft and 1,300 pilots at its disposal at the start of the Battle.

Fighter Command had suf-

fered heavy losses during the Battle of France and its commander Hugh Dowding controversially refused Churchill's request for more squadrons to be sent there, arguing that every plane was needed for the forthcoming fights over Britain.

Hitler tried to convince Britain to surrender without a fight.

Despite being fresh off his lightning conquest of France, Hitler was wary of invading Britain. The island nation was protected by the English Channel, and its Royal Navy was superior to the German *Kriegsmarine*.

He instead hoped that Britain would acknowledge "her militarily hopeless situation" and sue for peace. A small contingent of British politicians also favoured a compromise, but Winston Churchill brushed off talk of surrender and announced that Britain was determined to fight on.

He rallied the public by characterizing the coming battle as a struggle for national survival, and when the Nazis dangled the prospect of a peace treaty in early July 1940, he rejected it outright.

It was only then that Hitler reluctantly approved plans for Operation Sea Lion, an amphibious invasion originally scheduled to unfold in mid-August.

What was the Luftwaffe's plan?

The aims of the two sides were relatively straightforward. The Germans planned to bomb key British military, industrial and, later, civilian targets, thus devastating Britain's ability and willingness to fight.

They also reasoned that, as the RAF would have to respond to these attacks, its fighter force would be worn down until the numerically superior Luftwaffe enjoyed supremacy in the skies over Britain. Then, an invasion might just be possible.

In order to get at the bombers, the RAF first had to fight its way through a protective screen of enemy fighters. And here, the Germans enjoyed a tactical advantage.

The RAF had always liked close formation flying. Its three-plane V formations looked impressive, but were not very agile in battle. The Germans, on the other hand, had learnt from their experiences in the Spanish Civil War.

They replaced the V with a pair of planes – one would lead while the other acted as its wingman, watching its back. Two pairs often worked

together and, until the British adjusted their own tactics, these looser formations gave the Germans an edge in close combat.

However, the Germans consistently underestimated how many planes the RAF had, and how quickly it could replace those it had lost. And, like the RAF, they usually overestimated how many planes they'd shot down. As a result, they never really had a clear picture of how the battle was going.

In August, they began attacking RAF airfields, which did, in fact, put Fighter Command under severe strain. But when, in early September, they switched their sights to British cities, they did so at just the wrong time.

They believed Fighter Command was on its last legs. They were wrong. When large numbers of RAF fighters inflicted heavy losses on the raids of 15 September, it was a devastating blow to Luftwaffe morale.

Who were 'the Few'?

RAF fighter pilots were a cosmopolitan bunch, very different to the public school 'Tally Ho

old boy' chaps they're popularly seen as.

In fact, of the almost 3,000 pilots that flew during the Battle of Britain, fewer than 200 were public-school educated. The rest came from a wide variety of backgrounds – bank clerks, shop assistants and factory workers all served as fighter pilots.

What they did have in common was their youth. While a few 'old sweats' were over 30, the average age of an RAF fighter pilot was just 20, and many were as young as 18.

At the time, you had to be 21 to vote so many of these young men were risking their lives in defence of a democracy they were not yet old enough to participate in.

And not all of them were British. About 20 per cent of Fighter Command's aircrew came from overseas: New Zealanders, Canadians, Australians and South Africans took part in the Battle of Britain, and they were joined by volunteers from a variety of nations including neutral countries like Ireland and the US.

Vital contributions were also



made by pilots from Nazi-occupied countries – Poles, Czechoslovakians, Belgians, Frenchmen and Austrians all flew in the Battle. Many of them were experienced fighters, often motivated by an intense hatred of the country that was oppressing their own.

Although it was only operational for six weeks, the Polish No 303 Squadron shot down more German planes than any other unit.

The battle included one of the earliest uses of radar in combat.

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

Shortly after the technology was developed in the 1930s, the British built a ring of radar stations along their coastline.

These “Chain Home” stations were still primitive - a civilian Observer Corps was required to spot low-flying aircraft - but

they nevertheless became a crucial part of Britain’s strategy.

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

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

RAF pilots generally received less training than their German counterparts

At this time, all German aircrew had to undergo at least six months of basic training; British pilots rarely got more than a month.

German aviators received up to 80 hours’ training at specialist bomber or fighter schools, and took part in simulation sorties and mock battles before seeing combat. RAF pilots were lucky if they got more than about 20 hours of actual flying before

they were posted to an operational unit, such as Britain’s shortage of manpower.

Pilots on both sides rapidly learned that there was a world of difference between the flying they’d learned in training and flying in combat. Some ‘aces’ were not great pilots, but were deadly shots.

You might have been the most elegant flier in the world but it counted for little if you couldn’t shoot straight.

Fighter planes normally had only enough ammunition for about ten seconds of sustained firing, and so often the best tactic was to get your plane as close as possible to an enemy – ideally without him seeing you – fire off a short burst of one or two seconds and then quickly move on.

Such deadly encounters often lasted moments and in these circumstances strong nerves, quick reactions and good eyesight were as important as technical flying ability.

Women played vital roles in the Battle of Britain

Many worked in factories building the aircraft that actually did the fighting while one out of every eight of the pilots in the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), which delivered planes to stations across the country, were female.

One of these was the accomplished Amy Johnson, who died in 1941 when the aircraft she was flying crashed into the Thames estuary.

Members of the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) worked alongside the RAF as drivers, clerks, telephonists, cooks and orderlies.

Some served at radar stations while others famously worked as plotters in the various Fighter Command operations rooms mapping friendly and enemy aircraft positions and helping to direct fighter planes.

Many of the places they worked at were primary targets for German attacks. More than 750 WAAs lost their lives during the war.

Meanwhile, women in the Army’s Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) worked as radar operators, and joined the crews of anti-aircraft guns and searchlight units.

More than 250,000 women served in the ATS during World War II, including the future Queen Elizabeth II, who joined up while a princess at the age of 19, training as a driver and mechanic.

Pilot exhaustion and personnel shortages plagued both sides.

For men on both sides of the

Battle of Britain, combat fatigue was as persistent a foe as enemy Spitfires and Messerschmitts.

German morale sank to dangerous lows as the battle wore on, and British airmen were beaten down by gruelling 15-hour shifts and constant Luftwaffe bombing raids on their airfields.

Pilots often flew several missions a day on only a few hours of sleep, and many took amphetamine pills just to keep themselves awake.

In a bid to bolster its used up fighter force, the RAF eventually cut the training time for new pilots from six months to just two weeks.

Some recruits even ended up on the front lines with as little as nine hours’ experience in modern fighter planes.

Insufficient Luftwaffe radio communications

The Germans had far more sophisticated radar than the British but failed to use it. Radio communications once in the air were non-existent between fighters and bombers, leading to repeated confusion.

There were no ground controllers as such, so that once on their way to England, the Luftwaffe were left with the pre-flight orders and nothing more. Otherwise, they were on their own. Confusion frequently ensued.

‘Bailing out’

When an aircraft was damaged by enemy, or sometimes friendly, fire the pilot and crew - if it was a bomber - would have no option but to ‘bail out’ and deploy their parachutes.

This was less of a problem for the RAF as it was for the Luftwaffe. RAF pilots would normally be over friendly territory. If they bailed out from their aircraft they could land and then be transported back to their base. While they may have lost an aircraft, the pilot would often be ready to go straight back into the fray.

This was not the case for members of the Luftwaffe. They would often have to bail out over England. On landing they were usually captured quickly and would become prisoners of war. Not only did the Germans lose aircraft, they also lost valuable pilots and crew.

On the odd occasion, however, things did not go all that smoothly for RAF pilots.

An RAF pilot, James Nicolson, was hit by cannon fire from a German fighter. His foot was smashed and he was on fire. Yet he still managed to shoot down the enemy plane before bailing out.

As he drifted down, wounded and still on fire, some members of the British Home Guard began blasting away at him with shotguns. Somehow he survived but was more injured by his Home Guard colleagues than by the enemy attack.

Nicholson would go on to become the only Second World War fighter pilot to be awarded the Victoria Cross.

The Spitfire was not Britain’s main aircraft.

Thanks to its sleek lines and blistering speed, the Supermarine Spitfire has gone down in popular lore as the plane that saved England during the Bat-



Five Key Dates of the Battle Of Britain

10 July 1940: Official start of the battle of Britain

The battle begins with the *Kanalkampf*, or Channel Battles phase, when the Germans launched sustained attacks against British shipping to prevent much-needed supplies from reaching the beleaguered British Isles.

13 August 1940: Eagle Day

With the outcome of the *Kanalkampf* phase of the battle inconclusive, Luftwaffe commander-in-chief Hermann Göring makes plans for an all-out assault against Fighter Command on the British mainland.

18 August 1940: The Hardest Day

Both sides suffer their greatest number of losses so far: 69 German aircraft versus Fighter Command's 29.

7 September 1940: The Blitz begins

Dismayed by the failure to destroy Fighter Command and incensed by a British bombing raid on Berlin, Göring turns his attention to London.

15 September 1940: Battle of Britain Day

Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park famously orders all his aircraft into the air to defend the capital, abandoning his own policy of deliberate, smaller attacks by individual squadrons.

tle of Britain.

Yet Spitfires only made up a third of the British fighters during the campaign. The bulk of the RAF force consisted of the less glamorous Hawker Hurricane, an older wood-and-fabric fighter that was slower than the Spitfire but reportedly sturdier and more forgiving in combat.

While the two planes carried the same armaments, the Hurricane's superior numbers meant that it was responsible for the vast majority of Luftwaffe losses during the battle.

Hitler's decision to bomb London turned the battle in Britain's favour.

The Luftwaffe's bombing campaigns in England were initially restricted to military and industrial targets, but the strategy changed in September 1940, after the RAF launched a retaliatory raid against Berlin.

The strike sent Hitler into a fit of rage. Ignoring the progress the Luftwaffe was making in attacking RAF air bases, he demanded they shift their focus toward "erasing" British cities from the map.

Hermann Göring was also not that happy about the raid. Weeks earlier he had said, "No enemy bomber can reach the Ruhr [region in Germany]. If one reaches the Ruhr, my name is not Göring. You may call me Meyer." Meyer, as every German understood, was an insult.

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

While the bombings took a sobering toll on British civilians, they also temporarily re-

lieved pressure on the RAF, allowing it to repair its crippled airfields and refresh its pilots. The respite proved critical.

When the Luftwaffe tried to score a knock-out blow with a massive air attack on 15 September, a resilient RAF intercepted them and downed roughly 60 aircraft. Hitler was forced to shelve Operation Sea Lion only a few days later.

German bombing raids continued long after the battle had ended.

The Battle of Britain fizzled out in late-October 1940, when Hitler abandoned his quest for control of British airspace and turned his attention toward attacking the Soviet Union.

The campaign was Germany's first major defeat in World War II, but it didn't mark the end of the Blitz against Britain. The Luftwaffe continued to conduct night time bombing raids over London, Coventry and other cities for several more months in a futile attempt to break Britain's fighting spirit.

By the time the campaign finally ended in May 1941, some 40,000 people had been killed.

"The gratitude of every home in our Island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world, except in the abodes of the guilty, goes out to the British airmen, who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of world war by their prowess and by the devotion. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few"

Winston Churchill



Springbok



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

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](#)

What's in the August issue?

August is Women's Month, so the August issue of Military Despatches will feature a number of articles looking at women in the military.

- 10 Modern day women warriors
- Females on the front line
- Vietnam War - a few facts
- Special Forces - Special Air Service
- Famous figures in military history - David Stirling

Rank Structure - Polish Army

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 Polish Army and Polish Special Forces.



The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland are the national armed forces of the Republic of Poland. The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland are the *Wojska Lądowe* (Polish Land Forces), *Marynarka Wojenna* (Polish Navy), *Siły Powietrzne* (Polish Air Forces), *Wojska Specjalne* (Polish Special Forces) and *Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej* (Polish Territorial Defence Force). From 2002 until 2014, Polish military forces were part of the Coalition Forces that par-

ticipated in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan led by NATO. Poland's contribution to ISAF was the country's largest since its entrance into NATO. Polish forces also took part in the Iraq War. From 2003 to 2008, Polish military forces commanded the Multinational Division (MND-CS) located in the South-Central Occupation Zone of Iraq. The division was made up of troops from 23 nations and totalled as many as 8,500 soldiers.

Polish Army and Special Forces

Non-commissioned Officers (NCO)

Szeregowy (Private)	Starszy szeregowy (Private First Class)	Kapral (Corporal)	Starszy kapral (Senior Corporal)
Plutonowy (Platoon Corporal)	Sierżant (Sergeant)	Starszy sierżant (Sergeant Major)	Młodszy chorąży (Junior Ensign)

Officers

Chorąży (Ensign)	Starszy chorąży (Warrant Officer)	Starszy chorąży sztabowy (Senior Staff Ensign)	
Podchorąży (Cadet)	Podporucznik (Second Lieutenant)	Porucznik (Lieutenant)	Kapitan (Captain)
Major (Major)	Podpułkownik (Lieutenant Colonel)	Pułkownik (Colonel)	Generał brygady (Brigadier General)
Generał dywizji (Major General)	Generał broni (Lieutenant General)	Generał (General)	Marszałek Polski (Field Marshal)

Aircraft in the Battle of Britain

This month we take a look at some of the aircraft, both British and German, that took part in the Battle of Britain.

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

During a June 18 speech, Prime Minister Winston Churchill predicted a showdown with Germany when he said, "The Battle of France is over. I expect the Battle of Britain is about to begin."

Hitler hoped that the British government would seek a peace agreement. If, however, all other options failed he considered an invasion as a last resort. It was given the code name *Unternehmen Seelöwe* (Operation Sea Lion) and was planned for September 1940.

Hawker Hurricane Mk.IIC

Without doubt it was the Supermarine Spitfire that was in the public consciousness during the Battle of Britain.

Yet Spitfires only made up a third of the British fighters during the campaign. The bulk of the RAF force consisted of the less glamorous Hawker Hurricane.

The Hurricane inflicted 60 percent of the losses sustained by the *Luftwaffe* in the battle, and fought in all the major theatres of the Second World War.

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

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

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

While the *Luftwaffe* enjoyed an edge in total aircraft during the early stages of the battle, the

RAF had a secret weapon in the form of Radio Direction Finding, better known as radar.

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

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

In this month's Head-to-Head we look at some of the aircraft, both British and German, that took part in this famous battle.



Generally, the Spitfire would intercept the German fighters, leaving Hurricanes to concentrate on the bombers, but, despite the undoubted abilities of the "thoroughbred" Spitfire, it was the "workhorse" Hurricane that scored the higher number of RAF victories during this period.

On 8 August 1940, Hurricanes of No. 145 Squadron were recorded as having fired the first shots of the Battle of Britain.

The highest scoring Hurricane squadron during the Battle of Britain was the No. 303 Polish Fighter Squadron. This squadron also had the distinction of having the highest ratio of enemy aircraft destroyed to own losses suffered.

As a fighter, the Hurricane had some drawbacks. It was slightly slower than both the Spitfire I and II and the Messerschmitt

Bf 109E, and the thicker wing profiles compromised acceleration; but it could out-turn both of them.

In spite of its performance deficiencies against the Bf 109, the Hurricane was still capable of destroying the German fighter, especially at lower altitudes.

The standard tactic of the 109s was to attempt to climb higher than the RAF fighters and "bounce" them in a dive; the Hurricanes could evade such tactics by turning into the attack or going into a "corkscrew dive", which the 109s, with their lower rate of roll, found hard to counter.

If a 109 was caught in a dogfight, the Hurricane was just as capable of out-turning the 109 as the Spitfire. In a stern chase, the 109 could evade the Hurricane.

General characteristics

- Crew: One
- Length: 9.83 metres
- Wingspan: 12.19 metres
- Height: 4.001 metres
- Gross weight: 3,479 kg
- Powerplant: 1 × Rolls-Royce Merlin XX V-12 liquid-cooled piston engine, 1,185 hp at 6,400 metres
- Propellers: 3-bladed

Performance

- Maximum speed: 550 km/h at 6,400 metres
- Range: 970 km
- Service ceiling: 11,000 metres
- Rate of climb: 14.1 metres per second

Armament

- Guns: 4 × 20 mm Hispano Mk II cannon
- Bombs: 2 × 110 kg or 1 × 230 kg bomb

Supermarine Spitfire

Throughout the Battle of Britain the Spitfire was involved in countless dogfights with every plane that the *Luftwaffe* sent. Pilots of the Spitfire were able to use the planes superior abilities to outmanoeuvre and defeat the German invader.

The Spitfire held another great advantage in combat, this was that it was much more manoeuvrable in a dogfight compared to any German plane. The British fighter could be stressed much harder than the Me-109, so much so that if the Me 109 would attempt to manoeuvre in the same manner as its British counterpart the structural in-



HEAD TO HEAD

tegrity of the plane would fail.

Although the Spitfire would prove itself effective while being chased, pilots also had to contend with the rear gunners of several Luftwaffe planes. The rear guns in planes such as the Me-110 presented much more danger to pilots than being shot at from behind.

Not only was it more likely for a pilot to be directly shot, a rear gunner would also have a clear sight line at the powerful engine of the Spitfire.

The Spitfires biggest test in combat came against the German Me-109. Spitfires held the overall advantage on the Luftwaffe fighter except for two areas. First was that the 109 had a fuel injected engine that allowed it to climb and dive a

little easier without the engine stopping. Secondly the 109 outnumbered the Spitfire so much so that the RAF had to maintain an overwhelming kill ratio to stay relevant in the battle.

The Spitfire played many roles throughout the Battle of Britain. Arguably the most important part that this plane played was psychological. It was both a morale boost for the British, and a spirit crushing sight for the Germans.

Most pilots who flew in this conflict were impacted by the Spitfire and were able to see what made this masterpiece of aviation an icon.

General characteristics

- Crew: One
- Length: 9.12 metres

- Wingspan: 11.23 metres
- Height: 3.02 metres
- Gross weight: 2,692 kg
- Powerplant: 1 × Rolls-Royce Merlin III V-12 engine, 1,030 hp at 4,877 metres
- Propellers: 3-bladed

Performance

- Maximum speed: 582 km/h at 5,669 metres
- Range: 400 km
- Service ceiling: 10,485 metres
- Rate of climb: 11.0 metres per second

Armament

- 8 × 0.303" Browning machine guns



mented with a 10 mm thick armoured plate behind the pilot's head during and after the Battle of France. Behind the fuel tank, an 8 mm armoured plate was placed in the fuselage protecting the tank and the pilot from attacks from behind.

More aerial kills were made with the Bf 109 than any oth-

er aircraft of World War II. One hundred and five Bf 109 pilots were each credited with the destruction of 100 or more enemy aircraft.

Thirteen of these men scored more than 200 kills, while two scored more than 300. Altogether, this group of pilots was credited with a total of nearly

HEAD TO HEAD

15,000 kills during the war.

General characteristics

- Crew: One
- Length: 8.95 metres
- Wingspan: 9.925 metres
- Height: 2.6 metres
- Gross weight: 3,148 kg
- Powerplant: 1 × Daimler-Benz DB 605A-1 V-12

Junkers Ju 87

Commonly known as the Stuka (from *Sturzkampfflugzeug* - dive bomber) the Ju 87 could drop nearly vertically from 450 metres at up to 600 km/h and deliver its bombs with pin-point accuracy.

The intimidating nature of the attack was often supplemented by a pair of screaming propeller-driven sirens, nicknamed, "Jericho trumpets."

During the early stages of the Battle of Britain, the Stuka was used to attack British shipping in the channel. It was also used to try and destroy British radar installations along the coast - without any real success.

Though sturdy, accurate, and very effective against ground targets, the Stuka was, like many other dive bombers of the period, vulnerable to fighter aircraft.

During the Battle of Britain, its lack of manoeuvrability, speed and defensive armament meant that it required a heavy fighter escort to operate effectively.

During August, the Ju 87s also had some success. On 13 August the opening of the main German attacks on airfields took place; it was known to the Luftwaffe as Adlertag

- inverted liquid-cooled piston engine, 1,455 hp
- Propellers: 3-bladed

Performance

- Maximum speed: 640 km/h at 6,300 metres
- Range: 440 km
- Service ceiling: 12,000 metres

- Rate of climb: 17 metres per second

Armament

- 2 × 13 mm synchronized MG 131 machine guns
- 1 × 20 mm MG 151/20 cannon as centreline Motor-kanone



("Eagle Day"). Bf 109s of Jagdgeschwader 26 (JG 26) were sent out in advance of the main strike and drew off RAF fighters, allowing 86 Ju 87s of StG 1 to attack RAF Detling in Kent unhindered.

The attack killed the station commander, destroyed 20 RAF aircraft on the ground and a great many of the airfield's buildings.

- liquid-cooled piston engine, 1,100 hp at 1,500 metres
- Propellers: 3-bladed

Performance

- Maximum speed: 339.6 km/h at sea level
- Range: 595.5 km
- Service ceiling: 5,800 metres
- Rate of climb: 2.3 metres per second

Armament

- Guns: 2× 7.92 mm MG 17 machine gun forward, 1× 7.92 mm MG 15 machine gun to rear
- Bombs: 1× 250 kg bomb beneath the fuselage and 4× 50 kg under-wing.

General characteristics

- Crew: Two
- Length: 11.10 metres
- Wingspan: 13.805 metres
- Height: 4.01 metres
- Gross weight: 4,336 kg
- Powerplant: 1 × Junkers Jumo 211Da V-12 inverted

Dornier Do 17

The Dornier Do 17 was often referred to as the *Fliegender Bleistift* (flying pencil). The aircraft was designed as a *Schnellbomber* (fast bomber), a light bomber which, in theory, would be so fast that it could outrun defending fighter aircraft.

The Do 17Z was an older type of German bomber that was no longer in production by the start of the Battle. Still, many *Kampfgeschwadern* still operated the Dornier.

Its air-cooled radial BMW engines meant that many of these aircraft were able to survive fighter attack because there was no vulnerable cooling system to disable.

The Dornier was also manoeuvrable, and as a result was popular in the Luftwaffe. The main problem with the Dornier was its limited combat range



General characteristics

- Crew: Four
- Length: 15.8 metres
- Wingspan: 18 metres
- Height: 4.56 metres
- Gross weight: 5,888 kg
- Powerplant: 2 × Bramo 323P 9-cyl. air-cooled radial piston engine
- Propellers: 3-bladed

Performance

- Maximum speed: 350 km/h at sea level

- Range: 660 km
- Service ceiling: 8,200 metres

Armament

- Guns: 6 × 7.92 mm MG 15 machine guns in front upper/lower, rear upper/lower and beam positions (all firing from cockpit area)
- Bombs: 1,000 kg of bombs carried internally, either 20 x 50 kg bombs or 4 x 250 kg bombs

Junkers Ju 88

The Battle of Britain proved very costly for the Ju 88. Its higher speed did not prevent losses from exceeding those of the Dornier Do 17 and Heinkel He 111, despite being deployed in smaller numbers than either.

Ju 88 losses over Britain in 1940 totalled 303 aircraft between July and October 1940. Do 17 and He 111 losses for the same period were 132 and 252 machines destroyed respectively.

Of all the losses suffered by the Ju 88 at that time, howev-



er, a number were due to the tricky behaviour of the plane, especially when compared with the proven He 111, and to the crews' lack of experience on the type – many having converted to the Ju 88 only shortly before.

General characteristics

- Crew: Four
- Length: 14.4 metres
- Wingspan: 20 metres
- Height: 4.8 metres
- Gross weight: 12,105 kg
- Powerplant: 2 × Junkers

Heinkel He 111

The He 111 was nearly 100 mph slower than the Spitfire and didn't present much of a challenge to catch, although the heavy armour for the crew stations, self-sealing fuel tanks and progressively uprated defensive armament meant that it was still a challenge to shoot down.

It was the most numerous German bomber type during the Battle, and was capable of delivering 2000 kg of bombs to the target, carried in an internal bomb bay – usually eight 250 kg bombs, stored vertically.

The state-of-the art *Lotfernrohr 7* gyroscoping bomb sight fitted to the Heinkel allowed for reasonable accuracy, for a level bomber.

Like the other Luftwaffe bombers, the He 111 was restricted by its light armament.

General characteristics

- Crew: Five
- Length: 16.4 metres
- Wingspan: 22.6 metres
- Height: 4 metres

Jumo 211J-1 or 211J-2 V-12 liquid-cooled inverted piston engine

- Propellers: 3-bladed

Performance

- Maximum speed: 470 km/h
- Range: 1,790 km
- Service ceiling: 8,200 metres

Armament

- Guns: 1 × 7.92 mm MG 81J machine gun on flexible mount in front windscreen. 1 × 7.92 mm MG 81J machine gun on flexible mount in lower fuselage nose glazing, firing forward. 2 × 7.92 mm MG 81J machine guns on flexible mount in the rear of the cockpit canopy, firing aft. 1 × 7.92 mm MG 81Z twin machine gun on flexible mount in the rear ventral Bola position, firing aft
- Bombs: Up to 1,400 kilograms of ordnance internally in two bomb bays



- Gross weight: 12,030 kg
- Powerplant: 2 × Junkers Jumo 211F-1 or Junkers Jumo 211F-2 V-12 inverted liquid-cooled piston engines
- Propellers: 3-bladed

Performance

- Maximum speed: 440 km/h
- Range: 2,300 km
- Service ceiling: 6,500 metres

Armament

- Guns: up to 7 × 7.92 mm MG 15 machine guns or 7 x MG 81 machine gun, (2 in the nose, 1 in the dorsal, 2 in the side, 2 in the ventral)
- Bombs: 2,000 kilograms in the main internal bomb bay

Anthony Beauchamp-Proctor

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

France 1917-18

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

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

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

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

The alterations to relatively primitive controls could have contributed to Beauchamp-Proctor's poor airmanship.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The next day marked a change of focus for him; he shot down

an observation balloon. For the remainder of his career, he would choose to blind the enemy, choosing to concentrate on shooting down kite balloons and observation aircraft.

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

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

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

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

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

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

One memorable day was the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

balloons destroyed, 15 (and one shared) aircraft destroyed, and 15 (and one shared) aircraft 'out of control'.

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

On 2 November, he had been awarded a Distinguished Service Order, crowned by the Victoria Cross later in the month, on the 30th.

Post war

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

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

Death

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

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

He was originally buried at Upavon, Wiltshire, but in August 1921 his body was re-

turned to South Africa where he was given a state funeral.

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

Citations

Military Cross

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

The second double VC winner was Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse, earning both during World War I. His bar was awarded posthumously.

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

Distinguished Flying Cross

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

period of a few months.

On a recent morning his patrol of five aeroplanes attacked an enemy formation of thirty machines and was successful in destroying two of them. In the evening he again attacked an enemy formation with great dash, destroying one machine and forcing two others to collide, resulting in their destruction."

DFC citation,

Distinguished Service Order

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

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

DSO citation,

Victoria Cross

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

Between October 1, 1918, and October 5, 1918, he destroyed two enemy scouts, burnt three enemy kite balloons, and drove

down one enemy scout completely out of control. On October 1, 1918, in a general engagement with about twenty-eight machines, he crashed one Fokker biplane near Fontaine and a second near Ramicourt; on October 2 he burnt a hostile balloon near Selvjigny; on October 3 he drove down, completely out of control, an enemy scout near Mont d'Origny, and burnt a hostile balloon; on October 5, the third hostile balloon near Bohain.

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

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

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

VC citation,

Fokker Dr.I

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

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

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

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

Soon, however, the need to

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

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

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

main wings stacked one above the other.

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

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

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

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

Design and Development

Despite its single Vickers machine gun ar-

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

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

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

ons and elevators.

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

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

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

Operational history

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Compared with the Albatros

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

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

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

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

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

crash landing.

Wing failures

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

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

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

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

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

Despite corrective measures,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Postwar

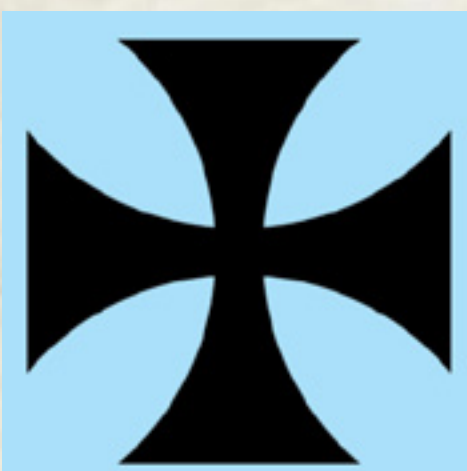
Three triplanes are known to have survived the Armistice. Serial 528/17 was retained as a testbed by the *Deutschen Versuchsanstalt für Luftfahrt* (German Aviation Research Institute) at Adlershof.

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

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

Replicas

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



Fokker Dr.1

General characteristics

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

Performance

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

Armament

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

At 04h26 on 1 September 1939, three Ju 87 B2 Stuka dive-bombers crossed the Polish border in the first mission of Case White - the invasion of Poland.

As night fell on 31 August 1939, the long flat airfield was covered with patches of fog, giving it an eerie feel.

Ghostly skeletal shapes of aircraft stood around the hangars and administration buildings.

The airbase was the scene of quiet unhurried activity. Black figures moved in and out of the beams of truck lights as maintenance crews serviced the aircraft, arming them with fragmentation bombs fitted to racks on the sloping struts, and fuelled them from tankers.

Each of the planes had a black cross on its fuselage and wings, and a rakish, fixed trouser-type undercarriage. They were ugly gull-winged Junkers Ju 87 B2 of *Luftflotte 1*, under the command of General Kesselring.

Along the border between Germany and Poland there was a tenseness in the air. Since sundown the night had been filled with clanging of tank tracks, the sound of vehicles moving into place, and distant sounds of shunting trains.

Despite rumours and intelligence reports, few in Poland believed that Germany would really attack Poland. After all, Britain and France had said they would come to Poland's aid if Germany attacked.

The were convinced that Hitler was mounting his greatest bluff ever and that he would not risk a European War. However, during 31 August, Poland belatedly began to mobilise her troops.

Preparing for War

At 03h30 on 1 September a long row of dimmed headlights headed through the fog towards the airfield.

Before long Luftwaffe staff cars and crew trucks were pulling in before a low flat building near the tarmac.

The six men that comprised the crews of three dive-bombers of 3rd Gruppe of Stukegeschwader 1 were among the first to enter the building.

Under the leadership of Hauptmann Bruno Dilley they had a cup of hot coffee and listened to last minute orders and weather reports.

More and more Stuka crews filled into the briefing room. They



huddled in tight knots around their leaders. The mood in the long narrow room was confident.

All briefings had taken place hours before and now they were checking changes to their flight plans because of the closed-in weather along the Eastern Front.

At 04h10, Dilley's group fastened on their helmets, checked their parachute harnesses and left the building. On the tarmac they split into pairs and walked to their aircraft. Ground crew members were waiting to give them a hand aboard.

The early morning stillness was shattered by a deafening roar as one by one the Jumo 211D engines burst into life. The three Ju 87 Bs stood waiting for the go signal, held in place only by their airbrakes.



INTO ACTION: Stukas take off from an airfield in Germany. Their destination is a target in Poland.

Then Dilley received the signal and his plane jerked forward and began roll across the field in the direction of the airstrip. Forty-five metres behind him came the second plane, with the other further behind.

They reached the end of the runway and swung round to face upwind. The engines roared to a crescendo and Dilley released his brakes. The Stuka began to pick up speed as it rushed down the runway. At short intervals, the second and third plane followed.

Dilley cleared the trees and the low ridge of hills into the darkness. The time was 04h26 and the first mission of *Fall Weiss* (Case White) had truly begun.

The sky above the clouds was clear. There was no moon and the whole of the eastern horizon was lit by the dull pink glow of dawn.

A cold blast of air swept into the cabin as Dilley's navigator slid open the Stuka's side screen. He looked down to get his bearings, but most of the

countryside was covered in cloud. He looked at the stars, took a compass bearing, and slid the screen shut.

The navigator opened his microphone and spoke a few words to Dilley, giving him a slight course adjustment.

Dilley acknowledged and then switched over to the open radio network and spoke to the other two pilots in the flight. They checked in a altered course with him.

Dilley pressed his stick forward and throttled back. The three Stukas sank slowly through the clouds.

Dilley turned the lighting on his instrumentation down low to minimise distraction. At 04h31 they crossed the border into Poland.

Dawn attack

The ground seemed to slowly come up at Dilley as he brought his plane down in a smooth sweep of controlled power.

The other two Stukas hung to his tail. Dilley climbed to skim over a low hill and the other two

aircraft followed like a double shadow.

Now they were hedge-hopping toward the low-lying valley of the Vistula. The navigation had been spot on.

Dilley could see the river lying diagonally in front of him. He banked sharply to get in line with it, turning north.

Their mission was the twin bridges at Dirschau. Their mission was not to destroy the bridges, but rather to save them.

The Germans knew that once the Panzers crossed the border, the Poles would demolish the Dirschau bridge and others in an effort to buy time.

An armoured train carrying units of the German shock troops was due to cross the border at 04h50, the moment when armoured groups from west Germany, Czechoslovakia and East Prussia would roll into Poland.

Dilley's mission was aimed at stopping the Poles from destroying the bridges across the Vistula before the armoured train could arrive.

The German High Command knew that the Poles would have rigged the bridges with explosives. These would have been wired to charges fixed to the bridge supports. It has been reasoned that the Stuka, armed with fragmentation bombs, would be the ideal weapon.

It was a hazardous mission and the crews had been hand-picked. They had spent several weeks training at Insterburg airfield.

Dilley and three other pilots had visited Dischau by train to make a first-hand inspection of the bridges and the surround-

ing terrain, particularly the approach from the south.

The *kette* (chain) leader had realised at once that it was not a dive-bombing mission, something for which the Stukas had been built. Rather this had to be a low-level bombing while flying straight and level.

If the strike was to be effective the Stukas would have to fly at the lowest possible level and drop their bombs at the very last instant. It would require precision flying.

At 04h35 the three Stuka pilots saw the twin bridges rushing towards them. The Jumo engines throttled up to a wailing scream as the planes swept towards the target, a mere nine metres above the ground.

They released their bombs to straddle the shelving river banks and the row of shacks that lay at the foot of the bridges. This was where the Polish troops that had the duty of blowing the bridges were stationed.

Once they had dropped their bombs they zoomed up over the bridges and away.

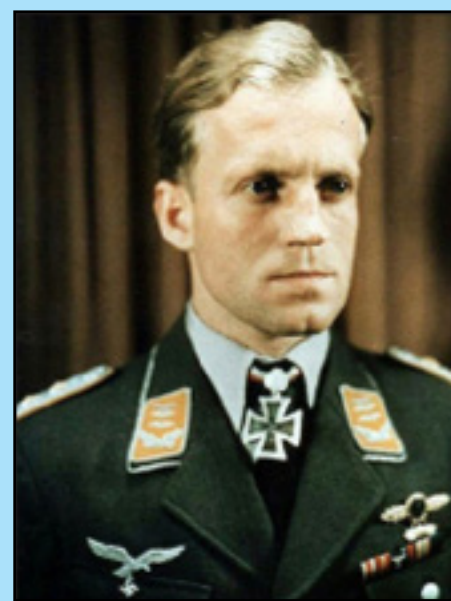
The bombs exploded in a flat crackle of blasts. Flames illuminated the darkness, exposing the gaunt under-structures of the bridges into spectral relief against the sky.

In a few seconds it was all over, leaving the surrounding countryside in silence. Then men began to cry out in alarm. Somewhere a dog began to bark. A whistle sounded. There was the crackle of flames as some buildings on the shore caught fire.

The Stukas climbed above the cloud base and turned for home. They were elated. They had just successfully completed the first mission of the war.

While the Stukas had succeeded in severing the leads to the detonators, what they didn't know was that, even now, the Poles were putting in fresh leads with which they would destroy the bridges before the German armoured train arrived.

German engineers were forced to build a pontoon bridge across the river.



Bruno Dilley was born on 29 August 1913. He joined the Luftwaffe as a lieutenant in 1935 and on 1 June 1938 he was promoted to squadron commander.

During World War II he fought in Poland, Norway, France, the Battle of Britain, the Balkans, Africa, and the Eastern Front.

He was shot down four times, managing to escape each time. He flew nearly 700 combat missions and was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves.

After the war he joined the Bundeswehr and finished his career as a Lt Colonel. He died on 31 August 1968.



HELD UP: One of the bridges across the Vistula was destroyed, the other damaged. German engineers had to build a pontoon bridge.



Aircraft Roundels

This month we're looking at aircraft roundels. These are usually found on the fuselage and wings of an aircraft and identify the country that it belongs to. We show you 15 of them, you tell us the country they're from. Answers on page 98.

1 	2 	3
4 	5 	6
7 	8 	9
10 	11 	12
13 	14 	15

TANK MECHANIC SIMULATOR

Matt O' Brien is now in the tank repairing and restoration business. He's just wondering what to do with all the parts left over once he's finished.

Back in the April 2020 edition of Military Despatches I did a review on Tank Mechanic Simulator.

Since then I've spent 287 hours playing this simulator and I've had a lot of fun doing so.

Something that I mentioned during my first review was that the game developers said that they would be adding new vehicles to the game on a regular basis. And they have made good on this promise.

Since I did the first review they have added six new vehicles to the game and will continue to do so on a regular basis.

You start off the game with a workshop as well as a tank museum. People will send you an e-mail and offer you a contract to repair or restore a tank. If you accept the contract then the tank will be delivered to your workshop. Nearly all of the tanks you receive will be covered in rust.

The tank is placed over an inspection pit and is ready for you to start work. Also in your workshop you have an engine stand and a turret stand.

The first thing you need to do is remove the engine and hang it from the engine stand. Then you remove the turret and place it on the turret stand.

You will then need to remove

all of the parts from the engine, turret and also from both the hull exterior and hull interior. And trust me, there are a lot of parts.

Once you're left with just the shell of the vehicle you use the rust removal tool to remove all of the rust, then you use the sandblaster to get it all clean and shiny.

Some tanks may have taken a shell or shells through the side or turret. Use the welding tool to repair the damage.

Then it's time to spray it with primer before applying a final coat of paint.

Once you've completed a job you will receive both money and reputation points. The money can be used to buy spare parts and you can also buy blueprints to tanks.

The reputation points are important. These you use to buy upgrades. The first thing you will want to upgrade is your normal wrench to a power wrench.

You can purchase extra tools such as a sledge hammer and angle grinder.

Later on you can use reputation points to add an extra bay to your workshop. Now you can work on two vehicles at the same time.

You can also buy a craft bench. If you have purchased

the blueprints to a vehicle you can now craft your own spare parts from scrap metal.

Another upgrade is the painting room. You can place a vehicle in the painting booth and paint it in various colours and camouflage patterns. This is also where you can add decals and insignia to the vehicle.

Earlier on I said that you also get a tank museum. Sometimes you will receive an e-mail informing you that they think they may know where a tank is buried.

You then go to the area and, using a jeep and a metal detector, try and discover where it is buried. Once you have found it you can dig it up and transport it back to your workshop. Once you have repaired and restored it, you can place it in your museum. The public will then pay to visit the museum.

Reputation points will allow you to buy a quad bike, magnetometer and even a drone. The drone is vital in actually finding buried tanks.

You can also find collectible articles in the area such as weapons, helmets, medals and badges, and these can also be displayed in your museum.

The more tanks and collectibles you have, the more you can charge visitors to the museum.

Often when repairing a tank



you will find that it is missing parts. These can be purchased, or if you have a crafting bench and the correct blueprints, you can make the part.

Outside the workshop you have access to a number of parking bays. These are used to store tanks that you own and that are not being displayed in the museum.

There is also a driving course where you can take tanks for a test drive. Often clients will request that you not only repair a tank, but also test it.

Finally, there is a shooting range to test the guns of your vehicle.

Currently there are 20 vehicles available in the game. These include American, German, Russian and British.

Russian

- KV-1
- KV-2
- T34/76
- T35/85

German

- PzKpffw VI Tiger Ausf. H
- PzKpffw V Panther Ausf. A
- PzKpffw IV Ausf. G
- PzKpffw III Ausf. J
- PzKpffw III Ausf. M
- StuG III Ausf. G
- SdLfz 251/1 Ausf. D half-track
- PzKpffw II Ausf C

American

- M4A3E8 Sherman
- M26 Pershing
- M10 Wolverine
- M3 half-track
- M29 Armoured car
- M8 Greyhound

British

- Vickers E
- Little Willie (the prototype of the first tank)

So far 19 of the vehicles are from World War II and one - Little Willie - is from World War I.

The developers seem to add a new vehicle every two months

and this keeps the game fresh and interesting.

If you're interested in tanks, then this game is a must. And I must admit that I'm having a lot of fun with it.

It doesn't need a super computer to run the game, and it's well worth the price.



Publisher - PlayWay SA

Genre - Simulator

Score - 8/10

Price - R71.50 (on Steam)



Movie Review

The Great Escape

Released: 1963

Running time: 172 minutes

Directed by: John Sturges

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

It is based on Paul Brickhill's 1950 book of the same name, a non-fiction first-hand account of the mass escape from Stalag Luft III.

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

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

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

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

His plan is to dig not one, but three escape tunnels nicknamed Tom, Dick and Harry. He aims to have 200 POWs escape at the same time.

The POWs are organised into teams. Flight Lieutenant Robert

Hendley is "the scrounger". His job is to get hold of needed materials from a camera to clothes and identity cards.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

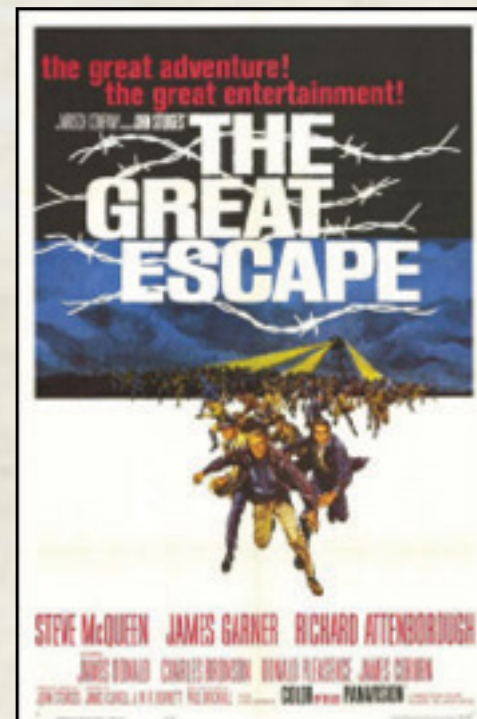
The Cast

Richard Attenborough - Sqn. Ldr.

Roger Bartlett, "Big X"

Steve McQueen - Capt. Virgil

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



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

As the Crow Flies

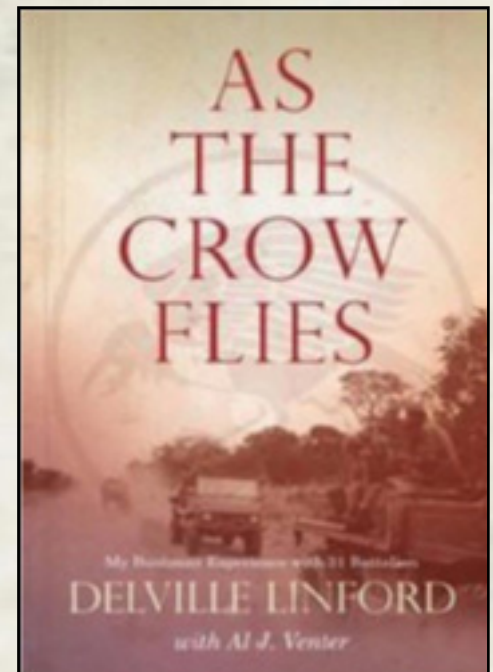
Until now, Colonel Delville Linford has had very little to say about his role as commander of Combat Group Alpha, or of that played by his Bushmen soldiers. In this volume he allows us a peek under the covers, not only how this tiny combat force operated, but also many 'behind the screens' machinations which explain how the unit was formed.

Following the independence of Angola from Portugal, a significant segment of that country's Bushman community crossed the border into what was then still South West Africa – Namibia today – and sought refuge with the South Africans. He goes on to tell us a lot about the Bushman people them-

selves: the nature of their society, tribal traditions, bush-craft, customs that have become ingrained with time, historical fears, life in the wild, tracking – as well as much else about a historical culture that goes back millennia. Together with many of Colonel Linford's empathetic observations of these often-intriguing 'little' people, all go towards making for a rather fascinating read.

A hallmark volume with an introduction by General Constand Viljoen, Colonel Linford offers us – for the first time – his own 'warts and all' report, not only of the legendary 31 Battalion but also of his career in the South African Army.

As The Crow Flies: My Bushman Experience with 31 Battalion

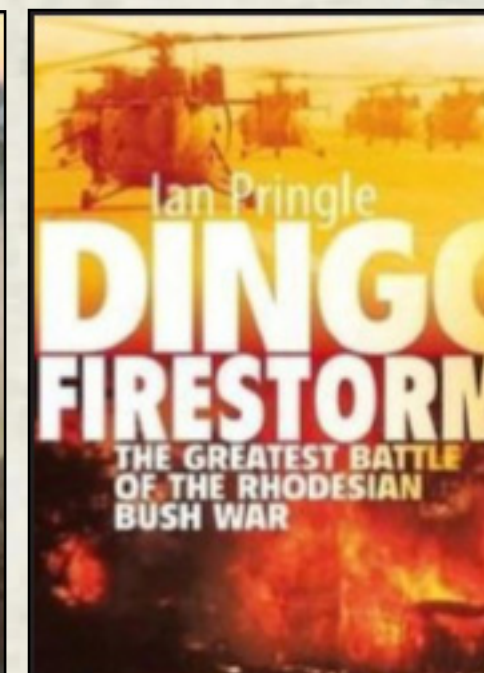


ion - Delville Linford with Al J. Venter

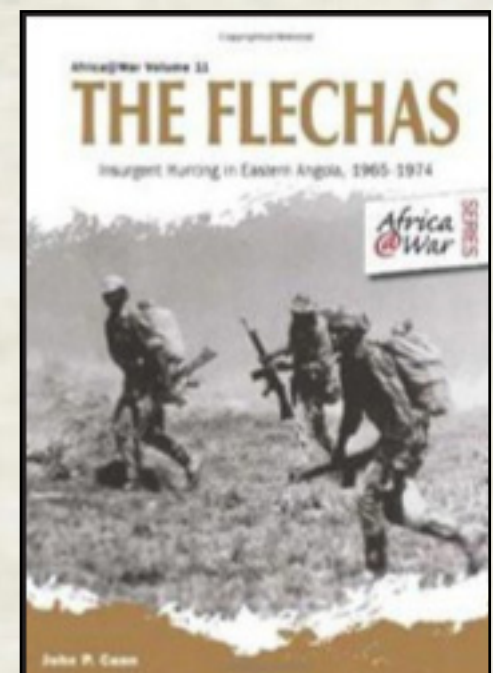
Softcover, 336 pages
Cost: R300



The Battle of Savate
R300



Dingo Firestorm
R300



The Flechas
R220

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

This month in military history

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

1 July

- **1863** - Beginning of the Battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War.
- **1911** - A German gunboat, *Panther*, reaches Agadir, Morocco, claiming that the French has ignored the terms of the 1906 Algeciras Conference. Thereby Germany precipitates the second Moroccan crisis, deepening divisions, which would ultimately lead to the outbreak of World War I in 1914.
- **1912** - The South African Department of Defence becomes a separate state department under Law no 13 of 1912.
- **1913** - The 12th Infantry (Pretoria Regiment) later known as the Princess Alice's Own Pretoria Regiment, but since 31 May 1961 again known as Pretoria Regiment, is formed from the Northern Mounted Rifles, part of the Central South African Railways volunteers.
- **1913** - Second Balkan War: Serbia & Greece declare war on Bulgaria.
- **1916** - Battle of the Somme begins.
- **1918** - The US 4th Marine Brigade secures Belleau Wood.
- **1940** - German troops occupy the Channel Islands.
- **1942** - World War II: North Africa. Hampered by sandstorms, General Erwin Rommel's Panzerarmee Afrika overrun an infantry brigade at Dier el Shein as his troops move towards El Alamein.
- **1942** - The Germans capture Sevastopol after a long siege.
- **1943** - The "Women's Army Auxiliary Corps" is renamed the "Women's Army Corps".
- Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, Victor of Pearl Harbour, Loser of Midway, commits suicide on Saipan at the age of 57.
- **1946** - US atomic bomb test at Bikini Atoll, the forth nuclear explosion.
- **1948** - The Berlin airlift, in which South Africa also takes part, starts. It lasted until 12 May 1949.
- **1950** - First US ground troops arrive in Korea.
- **1955** - The basic agreement about the transfer of Simonstown naval base to the Union of South Africa by the United Kingdom is concluded. The formal transfer took place at a historic ceremony on 2 April 1957.
- **1961** - British troops land in Kuwait to prevent an Iraqi invasion.
- **1968** - Britain, Soviet Union, United States and fifty-eight non-nuclear nations, includ-

ing South Africa, sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, to curb the spread of nuclear weapons.

- **1968** - Two members from Central Flying School Dunnottar were killed when their AT-6 Harvard crashed shortly after take-off after striking High Tension Cables near Dunnottar. They were: Captain Ernest Lodewicus Groenewald (27). 2nd Lieutenant Anton Fick Bosch (21).
- **1982** - 2nd Lieutenant Campbell Uys from 32 Battalion died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while he was at Buffalo Base. He was 19.
- **1983** - Sapper Andries Petrus Burger from 1 Construction Regiment was killed when he was accidentally run over by a construction vehicle. He was 19.
- **1983** - Two members from 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces during Ops Dolfyn in Southern Angola. They were: Sergeant Gerrit Hendrik Du Rand (21). Rifleman Edwin Kasera (23).
- **1983** - Corporal Andries Petrus Malan from 701 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop carrier overturned in the Operational Area. He was 19.

- **1983** - Rifleman Johannes Albertus Wessels from Regiment Christiaan Beyers died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while he was stationed at Vhembe Base. He was 18.
- **1986** - Rifleman Gavin Bazil Glinski from 7 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Ackorhoek. He was 18.
- **1989** - Lieutenant Nikolaos Sataras from Group 13 was Killed in a private motor vehicle accident at Gravelotte near Tzaneen while on official duty. He was 19.

2 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: the British forces occupy Utrecht after the defending burgers had to retire the previous day.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Six unarmed Boer prisoners (later called the Geyser group) are murdered by members of the Bushveld Carabineers who operated as a special British unit in the Spelonken area, not far from Louis Trichardt.
- **1926** - Congress authorizes the Distinguished Flying Cross.
- **1942** - World War II: North Africa. British Commander-in-Chief (Middle East) Claude Auchinleck, acting on information obtained by Ultra, sends troops south to outflank General Erwin Rommel's Panzerarmee Afrika but hits them head-on instead. The ensuing tank

battle last well into the night with Rommel's limited forces holding off the British through the use of 88 mm Flak Guns used as anti-tank artillery.

- **1943** - Lt Charles Hall, 99th Pursuit Sqn, becomes the first black USAAF pilot to shoot down a Nazi plane, a Focke-Wulf 190 over Pantelleria.
- **1944** - Marshal von Kluge replaces von Rundstedt in command in France.
- **1966** - First French nuclear explosion, Mururoa atoll.
- **1976** - Gunner Cornelius Johannes Holtzhausen from 14 Field Regiment was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident, at Potchefstroom. He was 18.
- **1979** - Gunner Rolf Eduard Ortmann from 10 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment was killed when the military ambulance he was driving at high speed, overturned and caught fire in Wynberg, Cape town. He was 20.

- **1979** - Rifleman Daniel Gerhardus van Brakel from 61 Mechanised Battalion died from a gunshot wound sustained at stand-to as a result of an accidental discharge at of a fellow soldiers rifle while at Omathiya. He was 19.
- **1982** - Special Sergeant Hilalius Thomas 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 32.
- **1987** - Rifleman Augustinus Mbambo from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN Insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 19.
- **1988** - Corporal Anton Prinsloo from 203 Battalion SWATF was killed in action East of Cuito Cuanavale in South Eastern Angola. He was 21.
- **1988** - A car bomb explodes

Claude Auchinleck



at the Ellis Park Rugby Stadium. Two spectators are killed and thirty-seven injured.

3 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: The British abandon Utrecht, occupied the previous day, on receiving reports of General Grobler's approach.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Lord Roberts orders Col. Baden-Powell to evacuate Rustenburg and to occupy Commando Nek and Silkaatsnek.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: A general council of war with President Steyn presiding, hears the case against Barend Cilliers, accused of the murder of Lieut. Cecil Boyle. The accused is acquitted. The court finds that Cilliers had received a direct order from General Philip Botha to shoot the prisoner. General Botha has subsequently been killed in action.
- **1940** - World War II: The British Royal Navy sinks the French fleet in North Africa.
- **1950** - First US-North Korean clash during the Korean War.
- **1954** - World War II food rationing ends in Britain.
- **1962** - The Algerian Revolution against the French ends. Algeria eventually gains independence after 132 years of French rule. Abderrahman Farès is appointed as President of the Provisional

Executive.

- **1976** - 103 hostages are rescued by an Israeli commando unit at the raid on Entebbe airport in Uganda in operation Thunderball (later re-named Operation Yoni). Seven pro-Palestinian guerrilla hijackers, twenty Ugandan soldiers and three hostages are killed in the raid.
- **1983** - Corporal Frederick Coenraad Greyling from 5 SAI was accidentally killed at Itenga Base near Opuwa in an explosion inside the Ops Room. The Platoon Commander and Signaller were both injured in the explosion and they were evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria. He was 21.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal Karools Jonkers from the South African Cape Corps was Killed in Action when his patrol walked into a PLAN ambush in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1987** - Two members from 1 Special Service Battalion, attached to the 10th Armoured Car Regiment were Killed in Action when they walked into a "kraal", unaware that two PLAN insurgents were hiding in one of the huts. The casualties were: Trooper Joseph Johannes Cloete (18). Trooper Van Zyl Jac van Heerden (19).
- **1988** - Iran Air Flight 655 was destroyed while flying over the Persian Gulf after the U.S. Navy Warship Vincennes fired two surface-to-air missiles, killing all

290 passengers aboard. A subsequent U.S. military inquiry cited stress related human failure for the mistaken identification of the civilian Airbus as an enemy F-14 fighter jet.

- **1992** - Two members from 116 Battalion were killed near Punda Maria, in the Kruger National Park when their Mamba vehicle collided with a tree during a follow-up operation against MK Operatives that had entered the area from Mocambique. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Nicholas Bizeki (34). Rifleman Tonki Frans Kekana (18).

4 July

- **1879** - The Battle of Ulundi, decisive battle during the Zulu War, takes place with the British forces gaining the upper hand and Cetshwayo, king of the Zulus, suffers his final defeat.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Republican General C.F. Beyers captures a troop train near Naboomspruit, Transvaal, killing nine soldiers.
- **1913** - Fighting breaks out as a riotous crowd on the Johannesburg market square is confronted by police and mounted soldiers during the first miners' strike.
- **1936** - League of Nations applies sanctions on Italy for the invasion of Ethiopia.
- **1940** - World War II: East Africa. British posts at Kassala and Gallabat, on the

borders of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), Eritrea, and Sudan, are attacked and captured by the Italian Northern Army under the command of the Duke of Acosta.

- **1942** - First American bombing mission over Nazi-occupied Europe.
- **1955** - The basic agreement about the transfer of Simonstown naval base to the Union of South Africa by the United Kingdom is concluded. The formal transfer took place at a historic ceremony on 2 April 1957.
- **1960** - The Congolese army mutinies.
- **1974** - Trooper Jan Albertus Kotze from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident in Eastern Caprivi. He was 19.
- **1979** - Rifleman Balthazer Johannes Carolus van der Walt from SWA SPES was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Ruacana. He was 19.
- **1979** - Rifleman Carlo Johannes Kotze from 1 SAI was critically injured in a military vehicle accident at Otjiwarongo Base on 3 July 1979. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he succumbed to his injuries on 04 July 1979. He was 19.
- **1981** - Rifleman Pieter Adriaan van Niekerk from 6 SAI was accidentally shot dead by own forces in Southern Angola in a friendly fire incident during Ops

Carnation. He was 20.

- **1983** - Staff Sergeant John Christian Anthony Oliver from the South African Engineer Corps was critically injured when his Samil 50 vehicle overturned at Moshesh near Rundu. He succumbed to his injuries a short while later. He was 33.
- **1984** - Sergeant Johnny Ralph Adams from the Army Catering Corps was grievously burned on 2 July 1984 when a phosphorus grenade exploded while he was playing with it in a bunker at Hurricane Base, Ruacana. He died in 1 Military Hospital on 4 Jul 1984. He was 23.
- **1986** - Two members from 1 Parachute Battalion were killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Richmond in the Cape. They were: Corporal Jacobus Nicolaas Claase (21). Rifleman Richard Alexander Knipe (20).
- **2001** - Congolese President Joseph Kabila and Ugandan

President Yoweri Museveni meet for first face-to-face peace talks in Tanzania as part of an effort to end the three-year war in Congo.

5 July

- **1830** - The French occupy the North African city of Algiers. The colonisation of Algeria was seen as a way of providing employment for veterans of the Napoleonic wars.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Commandant-General Louis Botha receives a telegram from President Kruger urging him to continue fighting.
- **1943** - The Battle of Kursk: Despite a massive German assault, the Soviets lose some ground, but halt the attack in about a week.
- **1975** - Otto Skorzeny, World War II Waffen SS *Obersturmbannführer* and the man that led the rescue mission that freed the deposed Italian dictator Benito Mus-

**Otto
Skorzeny**



solini from captivity, dies at the age of 67.

- **1977** - Pakistan: coup by General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq.
- **1977** - Corporal Peter Noel Wiggell HC from the Technical Services Corps was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents while attached to Bravo Company Regiment Algoabaai. He was 25.
- **1977** - Sapper William Thomas Wiggell from 2 Field Engineer Regiment was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Bethlehem. He was 20.
- **1980** - Rifleman J. Dingombo from 31 Battalion (210 Battalion) SWATF was accidentally killed when he fell from a horse and broke his neck. He was 23.
- **1981** - Rifleman Aubrey Leonard Neveling from 6 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 18.
- **1982** - Corporal Andre van der Walt from 4 Vehicle Reserve Park was killed in a private motor vehicle accident approximately 20km from Bloemfontein on the Winburg - Bloemfontein road. He was 21.
- **1985** - Airman Benjamin Arthur Nell from the South African Air Force was accidentally shot dead at his Guard Post at Eros Airport, Windhoek as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 18.

6 July

- **1865** - The Pretoria Rifle Corps is founded under Stephanus Schoeman as a volunteer corps to defend Pretoria and surroundings. The local police force was instituted at a later date.
- **1916** - Second-Lieutenant William Nimmo Brown of the 1st SA Infantry is killed in the Battle of the Somme and becomes the first South African officer killed in France during World War I.
- **1917** - Arab horsemen led by British officer T.E. Lawrence also known as Lawrence of Arabia capture the heavily garrisoned Turkish fort at Aqaba.
- **1942** - German troops capture Voronez, USSR.
- **1945** - Movement to the US of captured German scientists and equipment begins.
- **1967** - The Biafran War erupts as Nigerian forces invade the Republic of Biafra. The war claimed some 600,000 lives. About one million died of starvation.
- **1976** - Women are admitted to the U.S. Naval Academy for the first time.
- **1980** - Rifleman Francis Mukweli from 33 Battalion SWATF was killed in a Military Vehicle accident in the Caprivi Strip. He was 37.
- **1982** - Five members from 201 Battalion SWATF were Killed when their Buffel Troop carrier overturned on the White Road between Bagani and Rundu, just east of Mashari. They were: Cor-

poral Frans Adonio (31). Rifleman Kafuru Bango (29). Rifleman Pedro Kademba (30). Rifleman Petrus Kapango (28). Rifleman Oscar Nando (23).

- **1983** - Rifleman B. Ngarukua from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in an accidental Hand Grenade Explosion in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.

7 July

- **1798** - Napoleon Bonaparte's army begins its march towards Cairo from Alexandria, Napoleon's desert nemesis.
- **1944** - RAF drops 2,572 tons on Caen, to support ground attack.
- **1944** - Saipan: Japanese troops make a final "banzai" charge.
- **1944** - U.S. B-29s from China attack Japan.
- **1944** - US troops capture Rosignano, NW of Rome.
- **1948** - First women sworn into the US Naval Reserve.
- **1960** - USSR shoots down a US aircraft over the Barents Sea.
- **1960** - Belgium sends troops to the newly independent Congo.
- **1966** - Vietnam: Marines initiate "Operation Hasting" - to clear NVA from the DMZ.
- **1976** - Rifleman Leon Hendrik Delpont from the Durban Regiment was accidentally shot dead at the Oshivelo shooting range when he took up a position behind one of the targets

during a fire and movement drill. He was 23.

- **1980** - Rifleman Johannes Jacobus Joubert from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed when he accidentally fell off the rear of a moving military vehicle. He was 23.
- **1981** - Private Wayne Ivor Purdon from the Jozini Military Base was killed in a military vehicle accident between Magudu and Cando-ver. He was 18.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal Alexander John Tucker from 1 Parachute Battalion was Killed in Action when his Patrol was ambushed by combined FAPLA/Cuban force while operating in an area North of Xangongo, approximately 32km from Cahama. He was 19.
- **1983** - Rifleman V. Kamundiro from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 19.
- **1990** - An illegal demonstration in Kenya becomes known as the "Saba Saba" (Seven Seven the date in Swahili). The government sends in police and military, killing at least twenty and arresting several hundreds, including politicians, human rights activists and journalists.

8 July

- **1943** - During the Nazi occupation of France, Resistance leader Jean Moulin died following his arrest and

subsequent torture by the Gestapo.

- **1944** - British troops capture Caen, a month behind schedule.
- **1950** - General Douglas MacArthur is named commander-in-chief of United Nations (UN) forces in Korea, including more than 800 South Africans.
- **1960** - The newly independent Republic of Congo's army mutinies against Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba's government. Europeans are reported to be fleeing the country. Belgium sends troops to Congo Republic. Patrice Lumumba appeals to the UN for military assistance.
- **1979** - Lance Corporal Gerhardus Johannes Jordaan (SAAF) from 2 Satellite Radar Station, Ellisras died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained. He was 18.
- **1980** - Corporal Pierre Babin from 1 Construction Regiment was accidentally killed while towing a broken down military vehicle when he lost control of his vehicle, causing it to overturn between Omega and Chetto. He was 24.

• **1981** - Rifleman T. Tjakuva from 102 Battalion SWATF died from Malaria contracted while serving in the Operational Area. He was 27.

• **1982** - Rifleman Vegkurid Kavari from 102 Battalion SWATF was killed when the Buffel Troop carrier in which he was travelling, overturned at Opuwa. He was 24.

• **1982** - Two members from 201 Battalion SWATF were Killed when the Buffel Troop carrier in which they were travelling, overturned. The casualties were: Rifleman T.A.S. Mesongo (27). Rifleman Joas Masonga (29).

• **1987** - Angolan news agency Angop reports that South African troops, backed by planes, tanks and artillery, used chemical weapons in attacks inside Angola. The SA Defence Force says the allegations are an attempt to minimise setbacks incurred



T.E. Lawrence

by Unita victories in the area.

- **1988** - Rifleman Leon Volschenk was critically wounded in the stomach on 30 June 1988 after being accidentally shot by an LMG during a live fire and movement exercise at Oshivello. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he succumbed to his wounds on 08 July 1988. He was 20.

9 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Lieutenant General Hunter and Brigadier-General Sir Hector A. MacDonald arrive at Bethlehem, OFS. Hunter takes over command of all the British forces in the north-eastern Free State.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: 'Long Cecil', the gun designed and manufactured by G.F. Labram and used by the British during the siege, is taken from Kimberley by train to be exhibited during the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall, later King George V and Queen Mary.
- **1915** - World War I: Dr Theodore Seitz, governor of German South West Africa, surrenders at the farm Khorab, between Otavi and Tsumeb, to General Louis Botha.
- **1934** - Reichsfuhrer-SS Himmler takes command of German Concentration Camps.

- **1940** - RAF bombs Germany.
- **1941** - The British break Germany's air-ground ops code used on the Russian Front.
- **1944** - US secures Saipan: 3,200 US, 27,000 Japanese KIA, & many civilian suicides.
- **1979** - Rifleman Stephanus Petrus Janse van Vuuren from SWA SPES (SWATF) was Killed in Action when his horse detonated a landmine while on patrol along the pipeline North of Etale. He was 18.
- **1980** - Rifleman H. Muhenje from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.
- **1985** - Corporal Pieter Apollis from the South African Cape Corps attached to 53 Battalion was killed after suffering a fatal gunshot wound as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle. He was 24.
- **1985** - Chad and Zaire sign an agreement on military co-operation.
- **1988** - Corporal M. Kavetu from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action when he triggered a Soviet POMZ-2 Anti-Personnel Picket Mine while on patrol. He was 27. Corporal Kavetu was the last 102 Battalion Bush War Operational Casualty.

10 July

- **1899** - Second Anglo-Boer

War: Queensland, Australia, offers military aid to Britain.

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: In a letter to Lord Roberts, Chief Commandant de Wet protests against the indiscriminate destruction of private property by British troops.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Colonel Lawson reports that the De Beer and Van Rooyen's commando, raiding the upper Tugela from the Free State, includes thirty armed Basotho and twenty other armed Blacks.
- **1913** - Second Balkan War: Romania declares war on Bulgaria.
- **1943** - The Allied invasion of Italy began with an attack on the island of Sicily. The British entry into Syracuse was the first Allied success in Europe. General Dwight D. Eisenhower labelled the invasion "the first page in the liberation of the European Continent."
- **1953** - American troops abandon Pork Chop Hill, Korea.
- **1960** - Belgium sends troops to Congo.
- **1978** - A military coup takes place in Mauritania.
- **1980** - Corporal Clive Roland Hardenberg from 4 Reconnaissance Regiment accidentally drowned during a training exercise at Salmander Bay, Langebaan. He was 20.
- **1981** - Rifleman Lionel van Rooyen from 1 South African Infantry attached

61 Mechanised Battalion Group died from multiple shrapnel wounds accidentally sustained when a 120mm mortar round exploded prematurely during a live fire training exercise between Tsintsabis and Omuthiya, prior to the launch of Ops Protea. He was 19.

- **1982** - Two members from 42 Squadron were flying over an Army column near Ondangwa in their Atlas AM3C Bosbok when the pilot decided to execute an unauthorised stall turn at low level for the benefit of the troops on the ground. The aircraft failed to recover and crashed nearby, killing both crew members on board. The casualties were: Lieutenant Otto Carel Janse van Rensburg (24). Candidate Officer Anton Geno Roux (20).
- **1985** - Corporal A.L. Tefo from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was killed instantly after being struck by lightning during a thunderstorm while on operations in Southern Angola. He was 24.
- **1985** - Four British men are jailed for conspiring to smuggle military components into South Africa.
- **1986** - Rifleman R Tjiposa from 102 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1986** - Special Constable Tjiposa Virero 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 29.

11 July

- **1882** - The British fleet bombards Alexandria, Egypt.
- **1899** - The Battle of Silkaatsnek, west of Pretoria, starts with General De la Rey launching a three-pronged attack on the British forces. The British, under Colonel Roberts, surrenders the next morning.
- **1901** - With dawn approaching, General Broadwood surprises the Free State force, accompanied by President Steyn, in Reitz. Pres. Steyn's Griqua groom, Jan Ruiter, wakes the President, borrows a saddle and helps the president to mount and, mounting another horse, gallops away. When stopped by a British soldier, Ruiter dismounts and distracts the soldier, allowing the president to escape into darkness without hat or coat. After the battle Ruiter and the other Blacks are left behind and he rejoins his employer.
- **1901** - The complete Free State Executive Council,

except the president who escaped with the help of Ruiter, 29 persons, is captured in Reitz by General Broadwood and sent to Heilbron as prisoners.

- **1915** - The German cruiser 'Konigsberg' is scuttled near Dar-es-Salam, Tanganyika.
- **1942** - Japanese GHQ acknowledges the results of the Battle of Midway.
- **1979** - Rifleman Peter Wayne Bowry Atherton from 11 Commando Regiment died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained at Jan Kemp Dorp as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 17.
- **1982** - Rifleman Munehemba Muharukua from 102 Battalion SWATF was killed when the Buffel Troop Carrier in which he was a passenger, overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.



Heinrich Himmler

- **1985** - Sapper Kenneth Claude Cole from 2 Field Engineer Regiment died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained as a result of the accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was standing guard duty at 2 Field Engineer Regiment in Bethlehem at the time of the incident. He was 19.
- **1985** - Special Constable U. Ngombe from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.
- **1986** - Rifleman L. Sivanda from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents. He was 22.
- **1989** - WO I Johannes Petrus Coetzee from 16 Maintenance Unit was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident 10km from the Mangetti Dunes. He was 50.
- **1990** - Private Iain Bruce Robertson from the Technical Service Corps was critically injured when the Ratel in which he was travelling, overturned on the road in front of Special Forces Head Quarters in Pretoria. He succumbed to his injuries a short while later. He was 27.

12 July

- **1899** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Lord Brassey of Victoria, Australia, offers Britain volunteers for service in

South Africa.

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: A court martial at Fouriesburg confirms Boer ex-Commandant S.G. Viljoen's sentence of five years hard labour for treason.
- **1902** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Lord Kitchener receives a hero's welcome in London on his return.
- **1941** - First Luftwaffe air raid on Moscow.
- **1943** - During World War II, in the Battle of Kursk, the largest tank battle in history took place outside the small village of Prohorovka, Russia. About nine hundred Russian tanks attacked an equal number of German tanks fighting at close range. When Hitler ordered a cease-fire, 300 German tanks remained strewn over the battlefield.
- **1944** - Theresienstadt Concentration Camp disbanded, with 4,000 people gassed.
- **1984** - A car bomb explodes in Durban, killing five and injuring twenty-seven people.
- **1973** - Rifleman Abraham Frederik Greeff from 3 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident at Rundu. He was 18.
- **1979** - Lance Corporal J.L. Samutiki from 33 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop carrier overturned in the Operational Area. He was 27.
- **1980** - Rifleman T. Josef from 35 Battalion SWATF died from a gunshot wound

accidentally sustained in the Operational Area. He was 24.

- **1982** - Rifleman Katopora Tjiharukua from 102 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Opuwa. He was 25.
- **1983** - Lieutenant Bruce Charles Chinery from 40 Squadron was killed when his Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I suffered engine failure shortly after take-off from Air Force Base Waterkloof. He was 22.
- **1994** - Germany's Constitutional Court ended the ban on sending German troops to fight outside the country. The ban had been in effect since the end of World War II. The ruling allowed German troops to join in United Nations and NATO peace-keeping missions.

13 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: At a council of war, Chief Commandant De Wet explains the shortcomings of the Republican concentration in the Brandwater Basin and the importance of moving out before they are bottled up.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: J.P. Coetzee, Cape rebel, is executed by the British and all male adults are ordered to attend.
- **1936** - 15,000 World War I veterans from all nations swear an "Oath of Peace" and observe a minute of si-

lence at the Ossuary at Ft. Douaumont, Verdun.

- **1966** - Candidate Officer Christo Cornelius Johannes Joubert from Air Operations School Langebaanweg was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed near Velddrif during a routine training exercise. He was 19.
- **1971** - Firing squads in Morocco execute ten army officers accused of trying to overthrow King Hassan.
- **1982** - Rifleman Jean Louis Moerdyk from SWA SPES (SWATF) was killed in a military vehicle accident at Bagani. He was 20.
- **1982** - Rifleman Karetu Muhenje from 102 Battalion SWATF was critically wounded on 12 July 1982 during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He succumbed to his injuries at 05h00 the following morning. He was 26.
- **1998** - Unita again occupies two towns in Angola and hundreds of inhabitants flee.

14 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: The Free State government is to dispense with the idea of a capital, and they become a government 'in the field'.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: British General French drives Scheepers out of the Camdeboo Mountains and Major Moore, with a detachment of Connaught Rangers, defeats the Boers under

Myburgh at Zuurvlaakte and captures his laager.

- **1942** - Japanese Admiral Yamamoto creates the Eighth Fleet for operations in the South Pacific.
- **1972** - Vietnam: Jane Fonda makes first of 10 broadcasts on Radio Hanoi.
- **1976** - Two members from 11 Squadron and two ground crew personnel from 19 Squadron were killed when an 11 Squadron Cessna 185A crashed at the Umtali River Mouth. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Mario Almeroe Janse van Rensburg (21). Corporal Charles Lloyd van der Merwe (23). Private Izak Jacob Joubert Geyser (18). Private Gerhard Nicholaas van Rooyen (19).
- **1982** - Three crew and five passengers of a SAAF 21 Squadron Swearingen Merlin 4A and four members of a civilian Piper Navajo were killed when the aircraft were involved in a mid-air collision at night over the residential area of Swartkops. The SADF casualties were: Captain Jan

Izak Tobias de Villiers (25). Lieutenant Leon Goldstein (21). Flight Sergeant (Miss) (Air Hostess) Annerie Niemand (23). Major General Dirk Johannes van Niekerk (53). Major General Jacobus Marthinus Crafford (48). Colonel Johan Adam Coetzer (48).

- **1992** - President de Klerk announces the future disbandment of two security force units, the 31 and 32 battalions, and the dissolution of the controversial police unit, Koevoet.
- **1993** - Somali militiamen fire on UN headquarters in a new wave of assaults hours after Somali militants distribute leaflets calling for revenge attacks on American soldiers.
- **1995** - South Africa and Russia sign a military cooperation agreement.



Isoroku Yamamoto

15 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Chief Commandant De Wet, Pres. Steyn and members of the Free State government break out of the Brandwater Basin through Slabbert's Nek, with about 2,000 men, 400 vehicles and five field-guns. Their column passes within three km of Paget's (British) camp at Sebastopol, OFS.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Dr K. Franks, camp doctor at the Mafeking concentration camp reports that the camp is "overwhelmed" by 1,270 women and children brought in after sweeps on the western ZAR. Lack of facilities adds to the hardships encountered by the new arrivals.
- **1916** - World War I: The Battle of Delville Wood, the bloodiest battle ever fought by South Africans, starts. It lasted till 20 July. Of the 121 SA officers and 2,032 soldiers, only 750 soldiers survived.
- **1918** - World War I: During the Battle of the Marne in World War I, German General Erich Ludendorff launched Germany's fifth, and last, offensive to break through the Chateau-Thierry salient.
- **1937** - Buchenwald Concentration Camp opens.
- **1944** - Britain's Greenwich Observatory is damaged by a German V-1 flying bomb.
- **1948** - US World War I General of the Armies John J. Pershing, dies at the age of 87.
- **1960** - UN troops arrive to help deal with the political crisis following Moïse Kapekenda Tshombe's declaration of independence for Katanga province on 11 July. Meanwhile the province of South Kasai also declares independence, calling itself the Federal State of South Kasai, with Joseph Ngalula as head of parliament.
- **1981** - Rifleman Ettienne Zwanepoel from 1 SAI was accidentally shot dead during a training exercise at the Wepener Training Area. He was 18.
- **1982** - Special Constable Vusi Tsiposa from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.
- **1984** - Three members from the Special Forces Headquarters Unit were killed when their Unimog Troop Carrier overturned near M'pacha. The casualties were: Rifleman Christoffel Booysen (21). Rifleman Marthinus Hendrik Grobler (20). Sapper Nicolaas Jacobus Gerhardus Helberg (17).
- **2000** - In a rare display of force, UN troops launch a rescue mission that frees all 222 peacekeepers and eleven military observers trapped by rebels inside a UN base in eastern Sierra Leone.

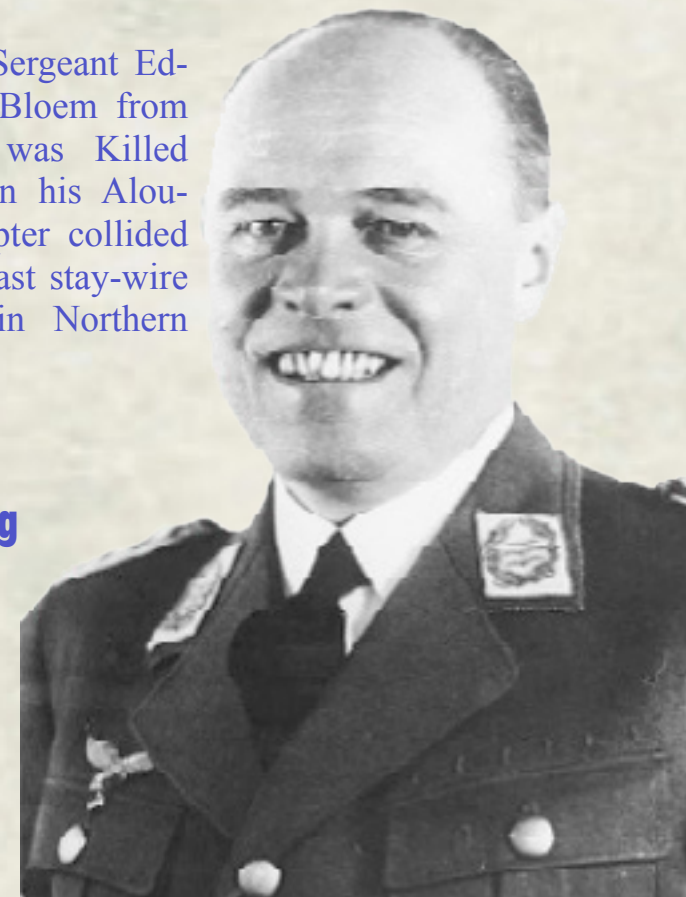
16 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Lord Methuen reoccupies Rustenburg. This is the third British occupation of the town.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Three commandos under the newly appointed Combat General Viljoen, attack about 4,650 British soldiers with twenty field guns and four to five machine guns under General Hutton at Tierpoort, Rietvlei and Olifantsfontein, ZAR. The burghers are supported by three field guns and two pom-poms, but they have to charge over open ground. Commandant-General Botha, who observes the Republican charge from a vantage point, later says he has never seen a braver and more determined attack. The heaviest resistance comes from the New Zealanders and Irish Fusiliers.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: The British Colonial Office appoints a Ladies Commission to investigate the concentration camps in SA. The commission, whose members are reputed to be impartial, includes Mrs Millicent G. Fawcett who recently criticised Emily Hobhouse and Dr. Jane Watson, daughter of a British general, who recently wrote against "the hysterical whining going on in England" while "we feed and pamper people who had not even the

- grace to say thank you for the care bestowed on them".
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: In the Free State, Lieutenant-General E.L. Elliot's drive ends. At the cost of only three British casualties, the drive has resulted in three burghers killed and wounded, sixty-one prisoners, 7,000 horses, 7,000 cattle, 6,000 rounds of ammunition and 300 vehicles captured.
- **1916** - World War I: The South African brigade is called to capture Delville Wood in France in a fierce two-day battle.
- **1940** - Hitler orders preparations for "Operation Sea Lion".
- **1944** - With the aid of the Polish Resistance, the Soviets capture Vilna, Lithuania, from the Germans.
- **1945** - The experimental Atomic bomb "Fat Boy" was set off at 05h30. in the desert of New Mexico desert, creating a mushroom cloud rising 12,497 metres. The bomb emitted heat three times the temperature of the interior of the sun and wiped out all plant and animal life within 1,6 kilometres.
- **1946** - A US court sentences 46 SS-men to death for the Malmedy massacre.
- **1960** - Albert Kesselring, German airman and field marshal, dies at the age of 74.
- **1977** - Soviet advisers are expelled from the Republic of Somali by orders of the president, Muhammad Siyad Barre.
- **1977** - Rifleman Christiaan Michael Albert Tesnar from the Lydenburg Commando was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents near Ruacana. He was 24.
- **1981** - Rifleman G. Ruhuzo from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents. He was 26.
- **1984** - Private Gabriel Johannes Jacobus Frederik Crouse from 72 Motorised Brigade was killed in a military vehicle accident in Alberton. He was 19.
- **1984** - Rifleman Daniel Adonis Douwrie from the South African Cape Corps was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1986** - Flight Sergeant Edward Michael Bloem from 31 Squadron was Killed in Action when his Alouette III Helicopter collided with a radio mast stay-wire at Okankolo in Northern

- Owamboland during late afternoon counter-insurgency operations in the area. He was 39.
- **1993** - Staff Sergeant Richard Ebanhaezer Gericke from 31 Battalion SWATF was killed in a motor vehicle accident between Schmidtsdrift and Kimberley. He was 27.
- **2006** - The first of South Africa's fleet of Gripen aircraft ordered to re-equip the SA National Defence Force is transported by road to Ysterplaat Air Force Base from Cape Town Harbour.
- **2006** - Maluleke George, the deputy defence minister, attends the 90th commemoration of the Battle of Delville Wood in France. During the ceremony, a new South African coat of arms is unveiled

Albert Kesselring



at the South African memorial on the site. The names of Black members of the South African Labour Corps who died at Arques-la-Bataille and those who perished on board the SAS Mendi are also unveiled at the museum.

17 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Lieutenant-Colonel M.O. Little, commanding the 3rd Cavalry Brigade of 738 mounted men, is ordered in the direction of Lindley to join the hunt for De Wet.
- **1917** - World War I: King George V orders the British royal family to dispense with German titles and surnames. Saxe-Coburg becomes Windsor and Battenburg becomes Mountbatten.
- **1943** - RAF bombs German rocket research base at Peenemünde, on the Baltic.
- **1944** - Having helped the Russians to liberate Vilna from the Germans, the leaders of the Polish resistance "Army Krajowa" are arrested by Stalin.
- **1945** - US Third Fleet undertakes surface and air attacks on targets near Tokyo.
- **1975** - Captain Geoffrey Dennis Law from 40 Squadron was killed instantly during a weapons demonstration exercise at Bloemfontein when the complete main plane of his AT-6 Harvard separated in flight while the aircraft was diving onto the target. He was 29.

- **1976** - Rifleman Andries Johannes Blaauw from 2 Parachute Battalion was Killed in Action after he and his twin brother Pieter, had a brief contact with a group of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents while on patrol.
- **1981** - Private David Gordon Munro from Sector 70 Headquarters died in 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria from Malaria contracted while serving in the Operational Area. He was 18.
- **1986** - Trooper Willem Jan Pienaar from the School of Armour died in the Universitas Hospital in Bloemfontein after being critically injured in a military vehicle accident in Bloemfontein. He was 18.

18 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: In the first drive in the Cape Colony, the British under overall command of General French are deployed along the Beaufort West Graaff-Reinet line and march north.
- **1914** - The British Royal Navy extends an invitation to the German Imperial Navy to take part in a fleet week in August
- **1935** - Ethiopian King Haile Selassie urges his countrymen to fight to the last man against the invading Italian army.
- **1936** - The Spanish Civil War begins in the early morning hours with a revolt at Melilla in Spanish Morocco.

rocco.

- **1942** - Maiden flight of the Messerschmitt Me 262, the first operational jet fighter.
- **1944** - US troops capture St. Lo, Normandy.
- **1963** - Candidate Officer Matthys Marthinus Hattingh from Air Operations School at Langebaanweg was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed into a mountain-side near Porterville in bad weather. He was 19.
- **1972** - Egypt demands the Soviet Union remove its 20,000 advisers from the country, accusing it of failing to supply promised arms.
- **1973** - Rifleman Keith Hahn from 1 SAI was killed when the Bedford vehicle in which he was travelling as a passenger, overturned at Kandelaars River Station. He was 18.
- **1980** - Lance Corporal Nicolaas Jacobus van der Merwe from 1 Special Service Battalion was Killed in Action while on patrol 10km from Ondangwa.
- **1981** - Rifleman James Findlay-Marshall from the Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the National road between De Rust and Uniondale while on weekend pass. He was 18.
- **1982** - Rifleman Frisiano Dala from 201 Battalion SWATF died in 1 Military Hospital from injuries received in a Military Vehicle Accident at Rundu on 06 July 1982. He was 24.

- **1983** - Rifleman Jan Harm Kruger from 1 Parachute Battalion died after suffering severe brain injuries in a non-military related accident. He was 23.
- **1985** - Rifleman George Mike Thompson from the Army Catering Corps was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Oshakati. He was 22.
- **1988** - Angola, Cuba, and South Africa, after talks in New York from 11-13 July under US mediation, announce that they have reached tentative agreement on a document containing principles for a settlement in south-western Africa.
- **2005** - General William Westmoreland, Commander of the US forces in Vietnam, between 1964-1968, dies at the age of 91.

19 July

- **1863** - During the American Civil War, Union troops made a second attempt to capture Fort Wagner near Charleston, South Carolina. The attack was led by the 54th Massachusetts Coloured Infantry, commanded by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, who was killed along with half of the 600 men in the regiment. This battle marked the first use of black Union troops in the war.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Lord Kitchener writes in a letter concerning the Ladies' Commission sent out to investigate into con-

ditions in the concentration camps: "... I doubt there being much for them to do here as the camps are very well looked after. Kendal Franks was quite astonished at the excellence of some of the camps ...".

- **1918** - German armies retreat across the Marne.
- **1941** - Winston Churchill flashes "V for Victory" for the first time.
- **1942** - German occupiers confiscate bicycles in the Netherlands.
- **1991** - In a report published in the New Nation, a former South African army sergeant, Mr. Felix Ndimene, alleges that members of the Five Reconnaissance Regiment, which is part of South Africa's special forces, carried out an attack on a Soweto-bound train in September 1990. Twenty-six persons

died in that attack.

- **1997** - Charles Taylor, a rebel leader with a reputation for brutality, wins Liberia's first peaceful presidential election following a seven-year civil war.

20 July

- **1871** - Queen Victoria abolishes the practice of purchasing commissions in the British Army.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Boer General C.J. Spruyt is killed in action while attempting to cross the railway line between Val Station and Vlaklaagte on his way to invade Natal.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: At Paardekop, in the Gatsrand, near Vereeniging, General J.C. Smuts and a small party are surprised in their sleep. His Black or-

William Westmoreland



derly, Kleinbooi, is shot and killed but General Smuts manages to get away by shouting orders in English and stealing away on bare feet. He later retrieves all the documents he has had to leave behind in the dark.

- **1916** - World War I: Only three SA officers and 140 men march out of Delville Wood. Six days earlier, on moving in, the strength of the brigade was 3,433. In 1920 the SA government bought the wood and erected a monument.
- **1922** - The League of Nations agrees to award former German colonies as mandates.
- **1944** - US Marines land on Guam.
- **1944** - A plot by senior army officers to assassinate Adolf Hitler fails.
- **1949** - Israel's 19 month war of independence ends.
- **1954** - An agreement was signed in Geneva, Switzerland, ending hostilities between French forces in Vietnam and the People's Army of Vietnam.
- **1976** - Last US troops leave Thailand.
- **1982** - Corporal Michael Daniel Otto from 912 Battalion SWATF was killed when his SAMIL 20 vehicle overturned at Okahandja.
- **1983** - Rifleman James Tjuima a SWATF basic trainee, died in hospital from complications after contracting Pneumonia while undergoing basic training.

He was 19.

- **1983** - 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 Constable Frans Hamutewa (27). Special Constable Klemens Mpase (22).
- **1987** - Captain Barend Jacobus Vorster from 8 Squadron was killed when his Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I crashed into the sea off Durban during a joint training exercise with the South African Navy. He was 24.
- **1988** - Corporal Johannes David Gerhardus van der Merwe from 3 Parachute Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Batavia. He was 25.
- **1988** - South Africa, Angola and Cuba formally accept the principles of an Angola/Namibia peace plan. The three countries, in separate statements, announce their agreement on the withdrawal of foreign troops from Angola and independence for South West Africa/Namibia.

21 July

- **1798** - Napoleon defeats the Arab Mameluke warriors at the Battle of the Pyramids in Egypt.
- **1899** - Second Anglo-Boer War: New South Wales,

Australia, offers 1,860 officers, non-commissioned officers and men to Britain for service in SA.

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: British General Lord Robert's advance along the eastern line begins, starting from his outposts east of Pretoria along the Delagoa Bay railway line for more than 56 km. Commandant-General Louis Botha split his force of about 2,200 men into small groups to render isolated local resistance to the huge army moving eastwards.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Captain Danie Theron and his men capture a train from the Welsh fusiliers. After looting what they could carry, they placed the wounded under medical care in a railway carriage, which they push out of danger and set the train on fire. The next day he was congratulated by De Wet and promoted to the rank of commandant.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: The burning of Bremersdorp.
- **1941** - Himmler orders building of Majanek Concentration Camp.
- **1944** - Colonel Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg (37), executed by firing squad, & General Ludwig Beck (64), assisted suicide, for their part in the plot to assassinate Hitler.
- **1945** - U.S. radio broadcasts demand that Japan surrender or be destroyed.

- **1962** - Indian and Chinese troops skirmish in the Himalayas.
- **1975** - Lance Corporal Douglas Brian Snell from 11 Commando Regiment died from a gunshot wound resulting from the accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle while stationed in Northern Owamboland. He was 18.
- **1984** - Private Johannes Ricardo Matthee from 16 Maintenance Unit died from a gunshot wound resulting from the accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle while stationed at Grootfontein. He was 21.
- **1985** - Rifleman Christiaan Jack from the Army Catering Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Oshikuku. He was 26.
- **1986** - Corporal Mark Twain Whiteley from 701 Battalion SWATF was accidentally shot dead by own forces. He left the TB at night to relieve himself and was mistaken for a SWAPO/PLAN insurgent on his return. He was 24.
- **1987** - Rifleman George Immelman was stationed at the Army Battle School. He was accidentally killed when he was crushed between a loader and a tipper during construction work. He was 22.
- **2004** - An Egyptian and three Kenyans, along with four other truck drivers, are taken hostage by a militant Iraqi group.

22 July

- **1942** - Defeated on all fronts in 16 day war with Peru, Ecuador agrees to a cease fire.
- **1942** - 1st Battle of Alamein: British halt German-Italian drive under Rommel.
- **1942** - 300,000 Warsaw Ghetto Jews are sent to Treblinka extermination camp.
- **1943** - Patton captures Palermo.
- **1946** - Jerusalem: The Irgun bombs British HQ in the King David Hotel, 90 die.
- **1983** - Sergeant Walter Alexander Robinson from 61 Base Workshop, Technical Service Corps died in his sleep in the Single Quarters at TEK Base after apparently suffering a fatal heart attack. He was 42.
- **1984** - Rifleman Gerhard Ernst De Lange from 1 Parachute Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents while on patrol north of Ondangwa. He was 20.
- **1987** - Corporal Adriaan Jonker from 2 SWA SPES (SWATF) was accidentally killed in Windhoek when his parachute failed during a practice jump at the J. G. Strydom Airport. He was 20.
- **1987** - Rifleman Lyall Gregory Sole from 2 SAI died

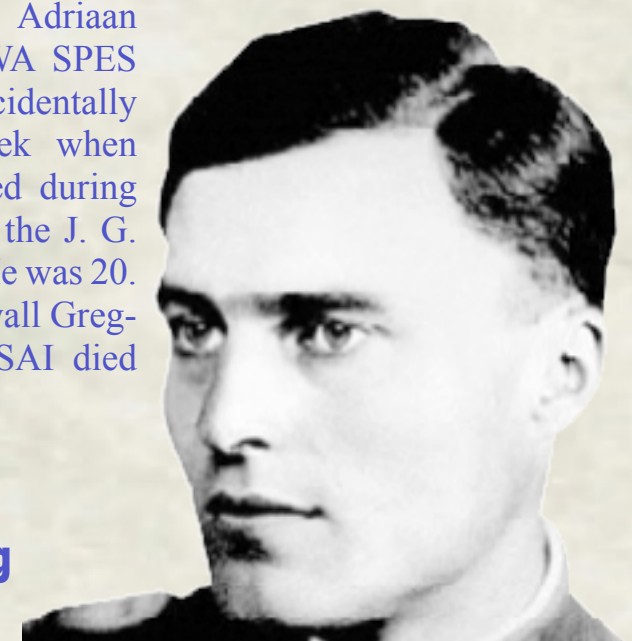
of injuries sustained during a training exercise when he was accidentally run over by an armoured vehicle in conditions of poor visibility. He was 20.

- **1987** - Soviet PM Gorbachev agrees to negotiate a ban on intermediate-range nuclear missiles.
- **2001** - Bertie Felstead of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, the last known survivor of the Christmas Truce of 1914, dies at the age of 106.

23 July

- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Lord Milner is presented with the freedom of the City of London at the Guildhall.
- **1940** - The "Blitz" begins: the first all-night Luftwaffe raid on London.
- **1942** - German troops capture Rostov.
- **1942** - World War II: Hurricanes of No.1 Squadron shoot down thirteen Ju-87s over the South African positions in the Alamein line,

Claus von Stauffenberg



- North Africa.
- **1943** - Battle of Kursk ends: Soviets win the greatest tank battle in history.
- **1944** - Soviet Army captures Lublin, Poland.
- **1951** - Lieutenant FM Bekker and Lieutenant RM du Plooy, serving with the SAAF Cheetah Squadron in the Korean War, are killed in action.
- **1951** - Henri Philippe Pétain, Marshal of France, Vichyite, dies in prison at the age of 95.
- **1952** - Egyptian military officers led by Gamal Abdel Nasser overthrow King Farouk I.
- **1970** - UN Security Council adopts resolution 282 (1970) calling on States to take a series of measures to strengthen the arms embargo against South Africa. The vote was 12 in favour and 3 abstentions (France, UK, USA).
- **1973** - Eddie Rickenbacker, the top American ace of World War I with 26 kills, dies at the age of 82.
- **1973** - Rifleman Stuart Craig McGregor from 4 SAI died from a gunshot wound to the stomach while stationed at Greefswald. He was 18.
- **1974** - Greek military dictatorship collapses.
- **1984** - Rifleman K. Muringo from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 22.
- **1988** - A surprise top-level

military meeting between Angola, South Africa and Cuba ends in Cape Verde. The talks follow reports that a fresh contingent of 2,000 Cuban troops, combined with Angolan forces, is moving along the front.

- **1989** - Airman (Miss) Marianna Christina Murphy from the Highveld Airspace Control Sector died in the H.F. Verwoerd Hospital from injuries received in a private motor vehicle accident on the N1 highway near Witbank. She was 18.
- **1994** - Gambian soldiers proclaim military government in Dakar, Senegal.

24 July

- **1897** - A combined force of the Seventh Hussars, local troops and the newly recruited British South Africa Police attacks Mashona chief Mashayamombe's kraal. The Chief was killed and the rebellion, started in June 1896, came to an end in November 1897, with the surrender of Nyanda and Kagubi.
- **1936** - Spanish Nationalists form a junta to conduct the civil war with the Spanish Republic.
- **1943** - RAF bombs Hamburg, initiating a firestorm.
- **1943** - During World War II in Europe, the Royal Air Force conducted Operation Gomorrah, raiding Hamburg, while tossing bales of aluminum foil strips overboard to cause German radar

screens to see a blizzard of false echoes. As a result, only twelve of 791 Allied bombers involved were shot down.

- **1945** - At the conclusion of the Potsdam Conference in Germany, Winston Churchill, Harry Truman and China's representatives issued a demand for unconditional Japanese surrender. The Japanese, unaware the demand was backed up by an Atomic bomb, rejected the Potsdam Declaration on 26 July.
- **1969** - Muhammad Ali is convicted of refusing induction in the US Army.
- **1973** - Four men from the Japanese Red Army, a militant group dedicated to a worldwide communist revolution, hijack a Japan Airlines plane. They release the 137 occupants, then blow it up and are arrested in Libya.
- **1977** - Egypt's President Anwar Sadat orders his troops to observe immediate ceasefire in fighting with Libya.
- **1977** - Sergeant Izak Cornelius Du Plessis from 1 Air Depot died in 1 Military Hospital. He was suffering from cancer. He was 25.
- **1984** - Rifleman Arthur James Henn from the South African Cape Corps died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained. He was 20.
- **2000** - In Sierra Leone, dozens of rebels, including children, surrender to UN forces in the eastern city of Kenema and turn over their weapons.

25 July

- **1866** - Ulysses S. Grant is named the first full general in the history of the US Army.
- **1898** - During the Spanish-American War, the U.S. invaded Puerto Rico, which was then a Spanish colony. In 1917, Puerto Ricans became American citizens and Puerto Rico became an unincorporated territory of the U.S. Partial self-government was granted in 1947 allowing citizens to elect their own governor.
- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: In the month since 25 June, Emily Hobhouse has addressed 26 public meetings in Britain on the concentration camps, raising money to improve conditions.
- **1934** - Nazi coup fails in Austria.
- **1938** - Spanish Republican Army begins an offensive on the Ebro.
- **1943** - RAF bombs Fokker airplane factory in Amsterdam.
- **1943** - Mussolini was deposed just two weeks after the Allied attack on Sicily.
- **1944** - Allied breakthrough at St-Lo, Patton begins his drive across France.
- **1944** - First jet fighter used in combat, the Messerschmitt 262.
- **1945** - Japan says it will surrender, but not unconditionally.
- **1946** - US detonates an un-

derwater A-bomb at Bikini, the fifth atomic explosion.

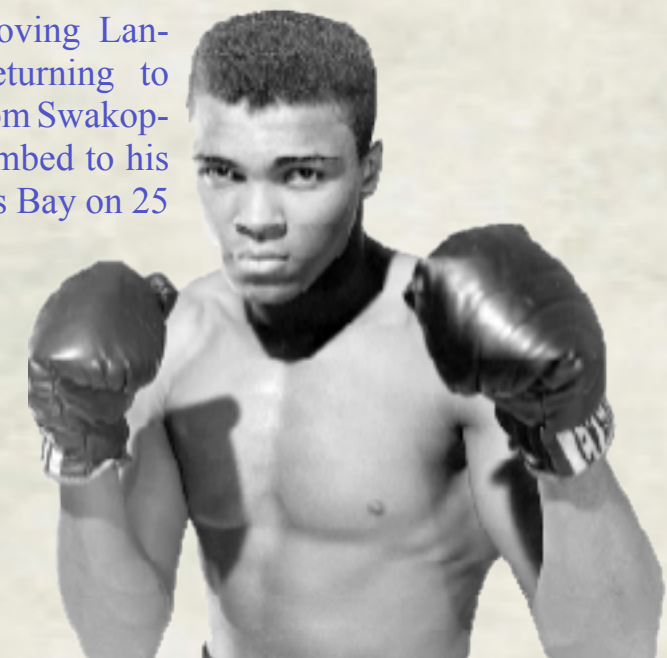
- **1947** - The US Army, Navy, & Air Force are subordinated to the new Department of Defence.
- **1982** - Rifleman M.J.J. Mahlio from 113 Battalion died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while stationed at Phalaborwa. He was 26.
- **1983** - Special Sergeant Leonard Mattheus from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was the Driver of Koevoet Casspir Zulu Foxtrot 2. He was Killed in Action when his vehicle was hit by a Soviet RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket after the vehicle ran into a SWAPO/PLAN ambush just North of Okatopi. He was 26.
- **1987** - Flight Sergeant Hendrik Andries Prinsloo Engelbrecht from Air Force Base Rooikop was critically injured on 22 July 1987 when he accidentally fell off the backing of a moving Landrover while returning to AFB Rooikop from Swakopmund. He succumbed to his injuries in Walvis Bay on 25

July 1987. He was 35.

- **1987** - Private Cornelius Johannes Kriel from 93 Ammunition Depot was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Jan Kempdorp. He was 21.
- **1988** - Rifleman Roelof van Aswegen from the Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Curries Post while on leave pass. He was 18.
- **1990** - Liberian rebels attack an airfield in Monrovia, closing off that city's last link to outside world.
- **1994** - Israel & Jordan formally end a state of war that existed since 1948.
- **2006** - Carl M. Brashear, the first black diver in the US Navy, dies at the age of 75.
- **2009** - Harry Patch, the last British Army veteran of the World War I trenches, dies at the age of 111.

26 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General Piet de Wet,



Muhammad Ali

- brother of Chief Commandant C.R. de Wet, and his staff lay down their arms at Kroonstad. The two brothers were never reconciled again.
- **1942** - RAF bombs Hamburg.
- **1944** - The U.S. Army began desegregating its training camp facilities. Black platoons were then assigned to white companies in a first step toward battlefield integration. However, the official order integrating the armed forces didn't come until July 26, 1948, signed by President Harry Truman.
- **1944** - Russian troops arrive on the Vistula.
- **1945** - The U.S. Cruiser Indianapolis arrived at Tinian Island in the Marianas with an unassembled Atomic bomb, met by scientists ready to complete the assembly.
- **1953** - The beginning of Fidel Castro's revolutionary "26th of July Movement." In 1959, Castro led the rebellion that drove out dictator Fulgencio Batista. Although he once declared that Cuba would never again be ruled by a dictator, Castro's government became a Communist dictatorship.
- **1957** - USSR launches its first intercontinental multi-stage ballistic missile.
- **1968** - Candidate Officer Bruce Spafford Human from Central Flying School Dunnottar was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed near Balfour while on a routine general flying training

flight. He was flying solo at the time of the accident. He was 19.

- **1973** - Rifleman Joseph Petrus Hermanus Viviers from 3 SAI accidentally drowned while his patrol was crossing the Kavango River. His foot got stuck between rocks in deep water and by the time assistance arrived and he was freed, he had already drowned. He was 18.
- **1979** - Corporal David Michael Muller from 2 Special Service Battalion died from injuries sustained in a military vehicle accident on the 23 July 1979 when his Landrover overturned approximately 8km from Jozini. He was 22.
- **1981** - Lance Corporal Michael Steven Hadlow from 44 Parachute Regiment Pathfinder Company was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 25.
- **1981** - Two members from Jozini Military Base were killed when their military vehicle overturned near Jozini. They were: Corporal Rory Clyde Joliffe (19). Rifleman Samuel Matenjwa (34).
- **1988** - Swapo claims SA is moving military equipment and troops to the Angola-South West Africa border.
- **1989** - Private Johannes Gysbertus de Klerk from 16 Maintenance Unit was killed in a Military Vehicle

Accident 15 km south of Tosca. He was 18.

- **1991** - Rifleman Mohapi Petrus Mdakane from 21 Battalion was accidentally killed when he was run over by a Samil 20 in Lenz Base. He was 23.
- **1994** - The Department of Defence is allocated some R10.5 billion, more than 8.7 per cent of the budget.

27 July

- **1901** - Second Anglo-Boer War: Chief Commandant C.R. De Wet, operating in the Bethlehem district, issues instructions to Commandant Willem D. Fouche in the Eastern Cape Colony to summarily execute any armed Blacks they capture.
- **1909** - Orville Wright demonstrates a plane for the US Army, flying 72 minutes.
- **1943** - Stalin issues Order No. 227: "Panic makers and cowards must be liquidated on the spot. Not one step backward . . . !"
- **1944** - First British jet fighter enters combat, the Gloster Meteor.
- **1944** - Soviets liberate Majanek Concentration Camp.
- **1953** - The undeclared Korean War ends, after three years of fighting between North Korean and Chinese Communists against the United Nations forces (mainly South Korean and American).
- **1954** - Armistice divides Vietnam in two.

- **1954** - Britain and Egypt initial an agreement to end British occupation of the Suez Canal Zone.
- **1978** - UN Security Council endorses Western plan for ending guerrilla warfare in Southwest Africa and making it independent new state of Namibia.
- **1985** - Rifleman James Richard Willard Rudd from 3 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident at Omauni. He was 18.
- **1987** - Rifleman Andre Hartzenberg from Infantry School was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at the Infantry School Training Centre in Oudtshoorn. He was 19.
- **1990** - Rifleman Alan Fuller from 3 SAI was accidentally killed at the Vooruitsig Shooting Range after being struck by a bullet that ricocheted off a stone wall at the range. He was 21.
- **1995** - Korean War Veterans Memorial dedicated in Washington.
- **2004** - Sixty-seven of the sixty-nine suspected mercenaries plead guilty to lesser charges of violating Zimbabwe's immigration and civil aviation laws.

28 July

- **1914** - World War I: Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia a month after the murder on Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo. World War I begins.
- **1943** - During World War II,

a firestorm killed 42,000 civilians in Hamburg, Germany. The firestorm occurred after 2,326 tons of bombs and incendiaries were dropped by the Allies.

- **1945** - Kamikaze sink their last ship, the USS 'Callaghan' (DD-792), off Okinawa.
- **1960** - Dag Hammarskjold, secretary-general of the UN, arrives in the Congo to try to end the civil war.
- **1972** - Two members from the Army Services School were killed in a military vehicle accident at Voortrekkerhoogte. They were: Private Carel David Aucamp Labuschagne (18). Private Jonathan Peter Knight (18).
- **1979** - Rifleman Ignatius Matheus Fick Du Plessis from 5 SAI was accidentally killed at Elundu after being struck by a bullet from a fellow soldiers unattended rifle when the weapon discharged after it fell over and hit the ground. He was 21.
- **1980** - Corporal Johan Heinrich Wasserman from Air Force Headquarters was killed when his military vehicle that was parked next to the Ben Schoeman Highway near Pretoria, was crushed

after being struck by an extra heavy articulate vehicle. He was 23.

- **1983** - Rifleman Eduard Cornelius Mostert from 5 SAI, attached to SWA SPES (SWATF) was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 18.
- **1988** - Rifleman Sipho Brian Msomi from 121 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with FRELIMO Forces at Muzi, near Jozini on the Mozambique border. He was 27.

29 July

- **1900** - The Alabama, American raider of the Southern States during the American Civil War, arrives in Saldana Bay for provisions.
- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General Marthinus Prinsloo, leader of the Republican forces in the



Joseph Stalin

Brandwater Basin, sends an emissary to Gen. Hunter, asking a 4-day armistice. Hunter refuses and insists on unconditional surrender.

- **1949** - Berlin Airlift ends, as Soviets end blockade.
- **1953** - Soviets shoot down US patrol bomber northeast of Vladivostok.
- **1965** - Private Petrus Frederick Johannes Kruger from the Army Service Corps died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained at Brits. He was 18.
- **1969** - Lieutenant Andrew le Roux from 8 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed into the Rustfontein Dam. He was 23.
- **1980** - Sapper Hans Wolfgang Pfeffer from the South African Engineer Corps died in 1 Military Hospital after contracting cerebral meningitis while serving in the Operational Area. He was 24.
- **1982** - Rifleman Johan Wilhelm Christiaan Scheepers from 5 SAI was killed while on official duty when his private motor vehicle overturned while he was on his way to attend a military parade. He was 18.
- **1983** - Rifleman Andre Jordaan from 3 SAI was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1986** - Rifleman Martin Johannes Botes from 2 SAI was killed while standing guard duty at the Selelekelela High School in Soweto

when a fellow guard accidentally dropped his loaded rifle and a shot went off, hitting him in the head. He was 19.

- **1988** - Sergeant Zacharias Eduardo from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 35.
- **1991** - Major Wilfred de Koker from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was accidentally killed while participating in a night parachute training exercise at the Hellsgate Training Area. He was 32
- **2003** - Sierra Leonean rebel leader Foday Sankoh, who had been in United Nations custody since 2000 and was awaiting trial on charges of mass murder and other crimes, dies at a hospital in Freetown, after a stroke.

30 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General Marthinus Prinsloo surrenders in the Brandwater Basin, near Clarens. Some generals refuse to surrender and escape through Golden Gate with about 1,500 men.
- **1909** - US Army accepts delivery of its first military airplane.
- **1966** - US airplanes bomb demilitarized zone in Vietnam.
- **1979** - Sapper Colin Stephen Rees from the School of Engineers died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while he was stationed at Kroonstad. He was

24.

- **1982** - Rifleman Daryl Peter Croeser of 61 Mechanised Battalion was Killed in Action in Southern Angola during Ops Meebos when Ratel 72 detonated a double boosted Yugoslavian TMA-3 Cheese mine. He was 19.
- **1986** - Lance Corporal R.H. Makaranga from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 25.
- **1987** - Rifleman Johannes Petrus Wessels Groenewald from 8 SAI was critically Injured and paralysed in a landmine explosion near Katima Mulilo on 14 July 1983. He was placed into a care facility after discharge from 1 Military Hospital but three years later, complications arose as a result of these injuries and gangrene set in. He was re-admitted to 1 Military Hospital where he died on 30 July 1987. He was 24.
- **1987** - An ANC car bomb attack directed at the headquarters of the Wits Command, takes place in Quartz Street, Johannesburg. One person is killed and sixty-eight are injured.
- **2002** - President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwandan President Paul Kagame sign a peace agreement intended to bring an end to the civil war that started in 1998. More than 2,5-million people died.

31 July

- **1900** - Second Anglo-Boer War: General De la Rey arrests ex-General Schoeman on his farm near Pretoria for refusing to obey an order to escort a convoy of supply wagons.
- **1917** - World War I: Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) begins (ends Nov. 10th), perhaps 500,000 die or are injured on both sides.
- **1925** - Last Allied occupation forces leave the Rhineland.
- **1970** - Black Tot Day: Parliament abolishes the Royal Navy's 330 year tradition of a daily issue of grog, replacing it with a daily can of beer.
- **1978** - Sapper Louis Francois Porter from 46 Survey Squadron, South African Corps of Engineers, was

killed in a military vehicle accident at Kimbezi in Eastern Caprivi. He was 21.

- **1982** - Rifleman Domingo Dala Denge from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 30.
- **1987** - Airman Jacques de Villiers Snyders from TEK Base was killed in a private motorcycle accident in Central Pretoria when his motorcycle collided with a truck at the intersection of Church and Rebecca Street. He was 18.
- **1987** - Rifleman Louis Samuel Du Piesanie from Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident 8km from Beaufort West. He was 23.
- **1989** - Private Edward Stephen Cooper from the Prov-

ost School was killed when his SAMIL 50 overturned at the Army Battle School. He was 18.

- **1990** - The chief of the SA defence force, Gen. Jannie Geldenhuys, announces that the Citizens Cooperation Bureau (CCB) will be disbanded.
- **1991** - Two members from 111 Battalion were killed when their military vehicle that was transporting patients to 1 Military Hospital, overturned on the N4 Highway near Cullinan. They were: Rifleman Bonisani Abednego Sibuyi (27). Rifleman Morris Mavabaza Simbine (33).
- **1991** - George H.W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev sign the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.



Third Battle of Ypres



QUIZ

Aircraft Roundels

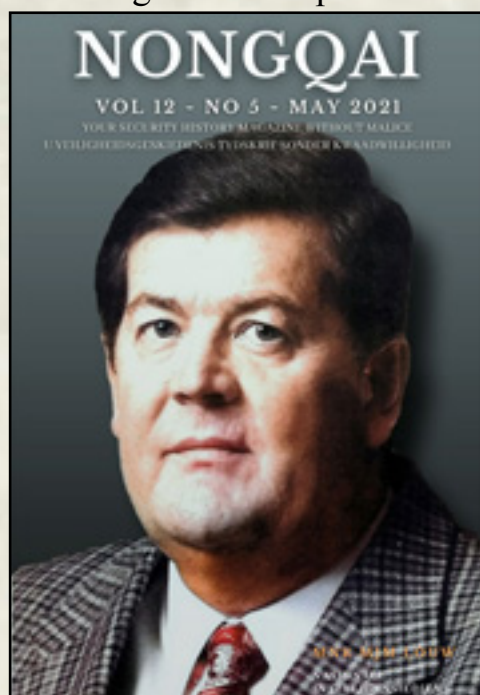
1. India
2. Portugal
3. Cuba
4. Russia
5. Angola
6. Republic of China (Taiwan)
7. Israel
8. Bangladesh
9. Chile
10. Egypt
11. UK (Royal Air Force)
12. Zambia
13. USA
14. Syria
15. People's Republic of China



Useful links

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

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



Military Despatches Website



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

Steve Jobs



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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.

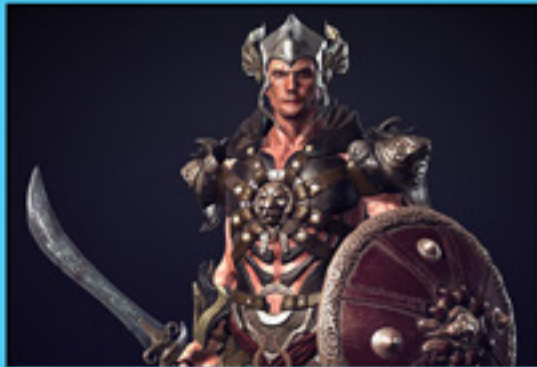
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