



Military Despatches

Vol 5 November 2017

Stranger than fiction

Facts, figures and trivia about World War I

We must remember them

The importance of Remembrance Day

Head-to-Head

Rifles and SMGs of World War II. Which was the best?

Forged in Battle

The Thompson Submachine Gun

Military Disaster

The Dieppe Raid

For the military enthusiast

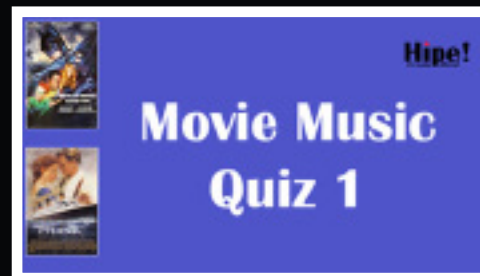


Click on any video below to view



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

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



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



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



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



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

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

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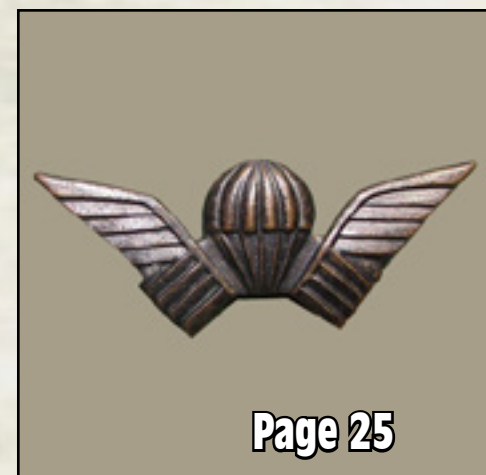
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Cover Photograph

The Cenotaph in Cape Town, venue for the annual Remembrance Day Parade. The parade is to honour those that fell in World War I and other wars.





Editor's Sitrep

It's hard to believe that this is already the fifth issue of Military Despatches. It's even harder to believe that next month is Christmas. Where did the year go?

I can remember, rather vaguely I must admit, when I was a teenager. Okay, it was a long time ago. But back then time always seem to go so slowly.

Sitting around waiting for the school bell to ring. Waiting for the weekend to finally arrive. Or waiting for your birthday or Christmas to roll around.

How about that long wait until you finally turned 21 and came of age. Time really did seem to drag then.

I think it all changes when you hit 30. Suddenly time seems to fly. You're still recovering from the New Year's Party and the next thing you know the Christmas decorations are going up again.

You hear a song on the radio and you think "Hey, I remember that song. It was a big hit a couple of years ago". Then the announcer tells you that it was a hit back in 1987 - 30 years ago.

This year it will also be 30 years since Cuito Cuanavalle. Can it really be that long ago?

This month, on 11 November,

it will be 99 years since World War I ended. As a youngster I would often go from Ireland to London on Armistice Day. My late dad, who was a World War II veteran, would always march in the parade.

I can still remember that there were a large number of World War I veterans that would actually march in the parade.

These days they are long gone and there are not that many World War II veterans still around. Even our generation is not getting any younger.

I trust that you will enjoy this month's issue of the magazine. You will notice that there is no book review this month. That's because we did a slightly longer movie review than usual.

Instead of reviewing a single movie, we've taken a look at what we think are eight really good movies set during World War I.

I trust that you will all remain in good health and that November will be a good month.

Until next month.

Matt

Hipe!

media

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Manfred von Richthofen

Respected by friend and foe alike, Manfred von Richthofen was nicknamed the 'Red Baron'. With 80 kills he was the top fighter ace of World War I.

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Forged in Battle

The Thompson Submachine Gun

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

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The Dieppe Raid

The plan was simple - seize a German-held port on the French Channel coast and hold it for the duration of at least two tides, and destroy enemy facilities and defences before withdrawing. The result, however, was a disaster.

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Movie Review - World War I movies

A bit different this month. Instead of looking at a single movie, we've reviewed eight really good movies set during World War I.

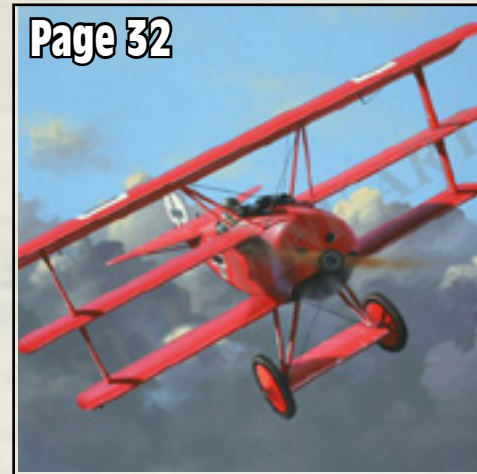
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The Lighter Side

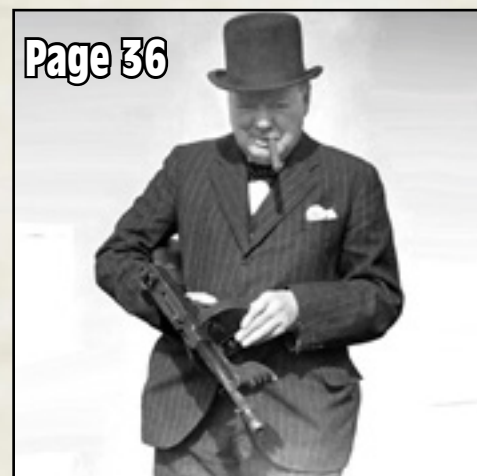
The fine art of 'gypping'

The South African Defence Force had their own language - a mixture of English, Afrikaans, slang and techno-speak. One of the first worlds new conscripts learnt was "gyppo" - the way to get out of work or make life easier.

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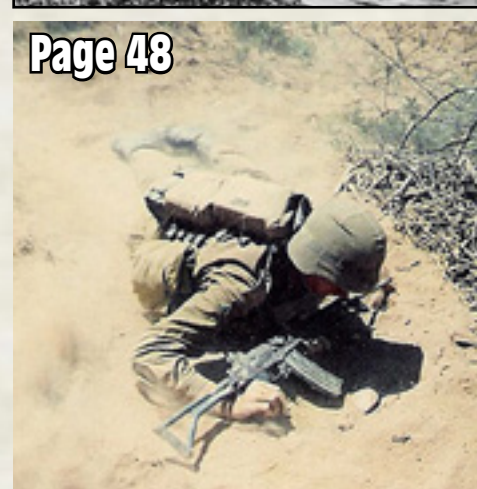
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World War I - facts, figures & trivia

A few facts, figures and trivia about World War I. On 11 November it will mark 99 years since 'The Great War' ended.

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

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

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

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

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

Largest armed forces of World War I

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

Smallest armed forces of World War I

1. Montenegro - 50,000
2. Portugal - 100,000
3. Greece - 230,000
4. Belgium - 267,000

5. Serbia - 707,343
6. Romania - 750,000

Greatest military losses of World War I

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

Greatest merchant shipping losses in World War I

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

Top Air Aces of World War I

1. Rittmeister Manfred von Richthofen (Germany) 80
2. Capitaine Rene Fonck (France) 75
3. Major William Bishop (Canadian) 72
4. Major Edward 'Mick' Mannock (British) 68
5. Major Raymond Collishaw (Canadian) & Oberleutnant Ernst Udel (Germany) 62
6. Major James McCudden (British) 57
7. Captain Anthony Beau-

champ-Proctor (South African), Captain Donald MacLaren (Canadian) & Capitaine George Guynemer (France) 54

World War I Trivia

- Germans were the first to use flamethrowers in WWI. Their flamethrowers could fire jets of flame as far as 40 metres.
- More than 70 million men from 30 countries fought in WWI. Nearly 10 million died. The Allies (The Entente Powers) lost about six million soldiers. The Central Powers lost about four million.
- Nearly two-thirds of military deaths in WWI were in battle. In previous conflicts, most deaths were due to disease.
- In August 1914, German troops shot and killed 150 civilians at Aerschot. The killing was part of war policy known as Schrecklichkeit ("frightfulness"). Its purpose was to terrify civilians in occupied areas so that they would not rebel.
- During WWI, British tanks were initially categorized into "males" and "females." Male tanks had cannons, while females had heavy machine guns.
- "Little Willie" was the first prototype tank in WWI. Built in 1915, it carried a crew of three and could travel as fast as 4.8 km/h.



PROTOTYPE: "Little Willie" was the first prototype tank. It carried a crew of three and could travel as fast as 4.8 km/h.

- Artillery barrage and mines created immense noise. In 1917, explosives blowing up beneath the German lines on Messines Ridge at Ypres in Belgium could be heard in London, 220 km away.
- The Pool of Peace is a 12-m deep lake near Messines, Belgium. It fills a crater made in 1917 when the British detonated a mine containing 45 tons of explosives under the German lines.
- The most successful fighter pilot of the entire war was German fighter pilot Manfred Albrecht Freiherr von Richthofen (1892-1918), or the "Red Baron." He shot down 80 planes, more than any other WWI pilot. He died after being shot down near Amiens. France's René Fonck (1894-1953) was the Allies' most successful fighter pilot, shooting down 75 enemy planes.
- During WWI, dogs were used as messengers and carried orders to the front lines in capsules attached to their bodies. Dogs were also used

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

they joined the French Foreign Legion or the British or Canadian army. A group of U.S. pilots formed the Lafayette Escadrille, which was part of the French air force and became one of the top fighting units on the Western Front.

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

become president in 1929, was appointed U.S. Food Administrator. His job was to provide food to the U.S. army and its allies. He encouraged people to plant “Victory Gardens,” or personal gardens. More than 20 million Americans planted their own gardens, and food consumption in the U.S. decreased by 15%.

- The total cost of WWI for the U.S. was more than \$30 billion.
- The war left thousands of soldiers disfigured and disabled. Reconstructive surgery was used to repair facial damage, but masks were also used to cover the most horrific disfigurement. Some soldiers stayed in nursing homes their entire lives.
- WWI is the sixth deadliest conflict in world history.
- British author T.E. Lawrence (1888-1935), also known as Lawrence of Arabia, worked for Allied intelligence in the Middle East. He also led an Arab revolt against the Turks and wrote about it in his book *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.
- Four empires collapsed after WWI: Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian.
- While the first military submarine (named the Turtle) was first used by the Continental Army during the American Revolution, submarines only made a large military impact during WWI when Germany launched its fleet of U-boats. Its submarines mostly stayed on the surface and submerged only



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

to attack ships with torpedoes. Germany’s indiscriminate submarine warfare was a primary reason the U.S. joined the war.

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

ing it the largest army in the war. More than three-quarters were killed, wounded, or went missing in action.

- The terrorist group responsible for the assassination of Franz Ferdinand was called Black Hand, Sarajevo.
- The United States joined WWI during the final year and half of fighting.
- For the span of WWI, from 1914-1918, 274 German U-boats sank 6,596 ships. The five most successful U-boats were U-35 (sank 224 ships), U-39 (154 ships), U-38 (137 ships), U-34 (121 ships), and U-33 (84 ships). Most of these were sunk near the coast, particularly in the English Channel.
- German trenches were in stark contrast to British trenches. German trenches were built to last and included bunk beds, furniture, cupboards, water tanks with faucets, electric lights, and doorbells.
- France, not Germany, was the first country to use gas against enemy troops



IN FLANDERS FIELD: No Man’s Land, the area between the trenches was littered with shellholes, barbed wire, and bodies.

in WWI. In August 1914, they fired the first tear gas grenades (xylyl bromide) against the Germans. In January 1915, Germany first used tear gas against Russian armies, but the gas turned to liquid in the cold air. In April 1915, the Germans were the first to use poisonous chlorine gas.

- During WWI, the Germans released about 68,000 tons of gas, and the British and French released 51,000 tons. In total, 1,200,000 soldiers on both sides were gassed, of which 91,198 died horrible deaths.
- Approximately 30 different poisonous gases were used during WWI. Soldiers were told to hold a urine-soaked cloth over their faces in an emergency. By 1918, gas masks with filter respirators usually provided effective protection. At the end of the war, many countries signed treaties outlawing chemical weapons.
- During the war, the U.S. shipped about 7.5 million

tons of supplies to France to support the Allied effort. That included 70,000 horses or mules as well as nearly 50,000 trucks, 27,000 freight cars, and 1,800 locomotives.

- WWI introduced the widespread use of the machine gun, a weapon Hiram Maxim patented in the U.S. in 1884. The Maxim weighed just over 45 kg and was water cooled. It could fire about 450-600 rounds per minute. Most machine guns used in WWI were based on the Maxim design.
- The term “dogfight” originated during WWI. The pilot had to turn off the plane’s engine from time to time so it would not stall when the plane turned quickly in the air. When a pilot restarted his engine midair, it sounded like dogs barking.
- The French had what German soldiers called the Devil Gun. At 75 mm, this cannon was accurate up to almost 6.5 kilometres. The French military command-

ers claimed that its Devil Gun won the war.

- During U.S. involvement in WWI, more than 75,000 people gave about 7.5 million four-minute pro-war speeches in movie theaters and elsewhere to about 314.5 million people.
- “Hello Girls,” as American soldiers called them, were American women who served as telephone operators for Pershing’s forces in Europe. The women were fluent in French and English and were specially trained by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. In 1979, the U.S. Army finally gave war medals and veteran benefits to the few Hello Girls who were still alive.
- During WWI, American hamburgers (named after the German city of Hamburg) were renamed Salisbury steak. Frankfurters, which were named after Frankfurt, Germany, were called “liberty sausages,” and dachshunds became “liberty dogs.” Schools stopped teaching German, and German-language books were burned.
- Millions of soldiers suffered “shell shock,” or posttraumatic stress disorder, due to the horrors of trench warfare. Shell-shocked men often had uncontrollable diarrhea, couldn’t sleep, stopped speaking, whimpered for hours, and twitched uncontrollably. While some soldiers recovered, others suffered for the rest of their lives.
- Even though the U.S. gov-

ernment didn't grant Native Americans citizenship until 1924, nearly 13,000 of them served in WWI.

- There were over 35 million civilian and soldier casualties in WWI. Over 15 million died and 20 million were wounded.
- More than 200,000 African Americans served in WWI, but only about 11 percent of them were in combat forces. The rest were put in labour units, loading cargo, building roads, and digging ditches. They served in segregated divisions (the 92nd and 93rd) and trained separately.
- The Germans were skilled at intercepting and solving Allied codes. Germans also captured one out of four paper messengers. However, when a U.S. commander used Choctaw tribe members from the Oklahoma National Guard unit, they used an extremely complex language that the Germans could not translate. The eight Choctaw men and others who joined them became known as the Choctaw Code Talkers.
- More than 500,000 pigeons carried messages between headquarters and the front lines. Groups of pigeons trained to return to the front lines were dropped into occupied areas by parachutes and kept there until soldiers had messages to send back.
- On Christmas Eve in 1914, soldiers on both sides of the Western Front sang carols to each other. On Christmas Day troops along two-thirds of the Front declared a truce.



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

In some places the truce lasted a week. A year later, sentries on both sides were ordered to shoot anyone who attempted a repeat performance. The British High Command ordered artillery bombardments to start on Christmas Eve and carry on for three days.

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

gun nest, taking 32 machine guns, killing 28 German soldiers, and capturing 132 more. He returned home with a Medal of Honor, a promotion to Sergeant, the French *Croix de Guerre*, and a gift of 400 acres of good farmland.

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



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

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

- WWI helped strengthen the power of central government in the United States and Europe, which meant that 19th-century liberalism that emphasized individual responsibility was gone forever. In fact, one of the chief legacies of the war is the lasting power of the state over its citizens.
- WWI increased people's suspicions of minority groups. All outsiders were considered a potential threat, especially the Jews, who were seen as sleek profiteers of the armaments industry.
- The Harlem Hell Fighters

were one of the few African American units that saw the front lines. For their extraordinary acts of heroism, the soldiers received the French *Croix de Guerre*, a medal awarded to soldiers from Allied countries for bravery in combat. However, in the U.S their deeds were largely ignored.

- During WWI, the Turks slaughtered approximately 1.5 million Armenians. This act of genocide would later attract the attention of Hitler and was partly responsible for sowing the seeds of the Holocaust.
- After WWI, Britain's leadership in the world economy was gone forever. It had huge debts, high unemployment, and slow growth. France suffered as well. Most of the loans it had made to czarist Russia were never repaid, inflation was rampant, and large parts of the country were ruined.
- WWI brought a new era of warfare. The most significant development was air

power, which brought civilians in the line of fire. By 1918, it was clear that the days of cavalry as a realistic fighting force were over with the introduction of poisonous gas. Tanks heralded a new era of offensive war. Finally, the Nazi blitzkrieg tactic of WWII grew out of the final Allied offensive of 1918 in which tanks, aircraft, artillery, and men were carefully coordinated.

- Because mustard gas was unpredictable, it was never the war-winning weapon its users hoped it would be in WWI. Neither side used it in WWII.
- WWI helped bring about the emancipation of women. Women took over many



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

traditionally male jobs and showed that they could perform them just as well as men. In 1918, most women over the age of 30 were given the vote in the British parliamentary elections. Two years later, the 19th amendment granted American women the vote.

- WWI helped bring about the emancipation of African Americans. For example, Henry Ford recruited black people from the South to work in his factories. The migration of African Americans from the South to the North during WWI was one of the most significant population shifts in the 20th century.
- Post-WWI literature includes John McCrae's *In Flanders Fields*, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and Wilfred Owen's tragic poem, *Anthem for Doomed Youth*.
- WWI helped hasten medical advances. Physicians learned better wound management and the setting of bones. Harold Gillies, an English doctor, pioneered skin graft surgery. The huge scale of those who needed medical care in WWI helped teach physicians and nurses the advantages of specialization and professional management.
- WWI was the catalyst that transformed Russia into the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). It was the creation of the world's first



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

communist state and ushered in a new phase in world history. Historians note that this was the most startling and important consequence of WWI.

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

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

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



REST IN PEACE: More than nine million combatants died during World War I. As did seven million civilians.

dangerous chemicals. The so-called 'canaries' were women who worked with TNT, which gave them toxic jaundice and turned their skin yellow.

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

in treating wounded soldiers. Blood was transferred directly from one person to another. A US Army doctor, Captain Oswald Robertson, established the first blood bank on the Western Front in 1917, using sodium citrate to prevent the blood from coagulating and becoming unusable. Blood was kept on ice for up to 28 days and then transported to casualty clearing stations for use in life-saving surgery where it was needed most.

- Nine out of 10 soldiers survived the trenches. Being in the firing line was rare for a British soldier. They constantly moved around the trench system - meaning more often than not they were kept from the dangers of enemy fire. The more typical experience for the British Tommy would have been a life of boredom and regular routine.
- Generals were banned from

going over the top. The stereotype is that the ordinary soldiers of WWI were lions led by donkeys - the donkeys being incompetent generals who sat out the war in comfort while thousands died unnecessary deaths. In fact, so many of the generals wanted to be closer to the fighting they had to be banned from going over the top because they kept getting killed. The experience required to be a general was too significant to lose.

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

Military myths and urban legends

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

Last month we looked at a few military myths and urban legends and discovered that most of them were not true.

US President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not know that the attack on Pearl Harbour was going to take place. Hitler did not dance a jig when he learnt that France had surrendered. And singer John Denver was not a sniper during the Vietnam War.

Yet the story of a British officer disabling a German tank with an umbrella was in fact true. And that Hollywood stars James Stewart and Charles Bronson were in fact decorated World War II veterans,

Let's look at a few more military myths and see if they are true, or nothing more than myths.

The Myth

If the Germans did invade England, the Royal Navy had developed a way of setting the English Channel on fire.

The Verdict

False

The Reality

While it was a fact that the British Petroleum Warfare Department were working on a way to cover the English Channel with oil that could be set alight, their attempts had not been successful.

British Intelligence, however, played up the rumour and took it so far that many people actually

believe that the Germans had already tried to invade England, with disastrous results brought about by the burning water.

No invasion ever did take place and the German invasion plans were scrapped after the Battle of Britain.

The Myth

Famous American big band leader Glenn Miller was killed by the Gestapo, or accidentally blown up by British bombers dumping their bombs.

The Verdict

False

The Reality

Miller served as a Major in the US Army Air Force during World War II.

On 15 December 1944 he was flying from England to Paris to give a concert for the troops stationed there.

The plane disappeared in bad weather and poor visibility. Miller was declared "missing in action".

Miller's plane crashed because it had a faulty carburetor. The plane's engine had a type of carburetor that was known to be defective in cold weather and had a history of causing crashes in other aircraft by icing up.

The Myth

The German SS in World War II were the cream of Aryan manhood.

The Verdict

False

The Reality

For a while, at the start of the war, they were. But by the end of the war the SS would take anyone they would take anyone they could get their hands on.

As early as 1940, the SS began using foreign soldiers to bulk out its ranks. First, the special "Wiking Division" was authorized, made up of anti-Communist fanatics from Scandinavia, the Low Countries and Estonia. Then 1942 saw the creation of separate SS divisions made of Croats, Ukrainians, Estonians, and Latvians. There were also Spanish, French, East Indian, Romanian and Russian units in the SS – with an attempt even made at a British Free Corps division of English volunteers, which was a miserable failure.

Ultimately, 60% of soldiers wearing the SS runes weren't German. And French SS soldiers were among the last defenders of Berlin, fighting to the death to avoid capture by the Russians.

The Myth

During D-Day several Koreans fighting for the Germans were captured by the Americans.

The Verdict

True

The Reality

This story is absolutely true, and their story is bizarre. They were first captured by the Japanese and conscripted into the



THE CREAM OF GERMAN MANHOOD: Not only were the SS not the cream of Aryan manhood, 60% of them were not even German.

Japanese army. They had then been taken prisoner by the Soviets during the Battle of Khalkhin Gol in Siberia in 1939.

They had then by drafted out of a labour camp and conscripted into the Soviet army to defend the city of Kharkov in 1943.

At Kharkov they were captured by the Germans. At that stage Germany was desperate for manpower and, because these Koreans had little love for the Soviets, were conscripted into the German army.

They had been conscripted into three different armies by three countries, thousands of kilometres away from each other.

The Myth

Japan was about to surrender before the atom bombs were dropped.

The Verdict

False

The Reality

It is clear from the records of meetings in the Japanese cabinet and from diplomatic cables that Japan was not on the verge

of surrender, at least not of the unconditional surrender demanded by the Allies. Instead, the Emperor and his cadre of military and civilian leaders were preparing to fight a decisive battle in the Home Islands against the forthcoming American invasion, which was scheduled for November.

Japan's leaders believed that they would inflict such horrific casualties on the invasion that American morale would break, leading to a negotiated peace. Hundreds of thousands of Americans and potentially millions of Japanese would die in this conflict – which both sides were still preparing for when the bombs were dropped.

It wasn't until August 15th, after two atomic bombings, the invasion of Manchuria by the Soviet Union, a massive bombing raid on Tokyo, and a coup attempt by junior officers, that the Emperor made his famed announcement of surrender.

And still he was opposed by senior officers who believed victory could be achieved

through heroic resistance. Additionally, while the Soviet invasion played a role in the Japanese surrender, it was not the only reason – as Soviet amphibious forces were too weak to pose any threat to the Japanese mainland.

The Myth

During the Battle of Heartbreak Ridge in Korea, an American soldier attacked the North Koreans with only a trench knife and his fists and killed 40 of them.

The Verdict

True

The Reality

Herbert K. Pililaau was the last American left standing on Hill 931 of Heartbreak Ridge.

While the rest of his squad retreated, he covered them. He fired his Browning Automatic Rifle until he ran out of ammunition. Then he threw grenades until they ran out.

He took cover behind some rocks and began throwing rocks at the enemy until there were none within reach.

It was at this point that he pulled out his trench knife and led a one-man charge at the advancing North Koreans. This was how the members of his squad last reported seeing him.

When the American retook the position the following day they found Pililaau were he had fallen. His body was surrounded by 40 dead North Korean soldiers.

For his exceptional bravery that day, Herbert K. Pililaau was awarded the Medal of Honor and the admiration of every soldier he saved on Heartbreak Ridge.

We **must** remember them

At 11.00 am on November 11 most countries in the world will observe two minutes of silence. Raymond Fletcher looks at the significance of Remembrance Day and imagines what it must have been like to fight in the 'war to end all wars'.

If there was one subject that I really didn't enjoy it would have to be history. I've always been far more interested in what's happening now, not what happened centuries before I was born.

Then last year a strange thing happened. We got a new history teacher at my school and his whole approach to history was just so different. He puts things into context and makes history come alive.

Since he arrived history has gone from being one of my worst subjects to my favourite, along with English.

One of the things none of us could ever work out was the

badge that our history teacher always wore on the lapel of his jacket. It was a small soldier's helmet. During one lesson we asked him about it.

He told us that he was a Moth. We all had a good laugh and had no idea of what he was talking about. Then he explained.

The word MOTH stands for Memorable Order of Tin Hats. It's an organisation that was started after World War I to honour the memory of all the soldiers that died during that war.

Charles Alfred Evenden was a soldier, cartoonist and author. But he will be best remembered as the man that started the

Moths. It was after he had seen a drawing in a newspaper (pictured on page 17) that he made a decision that those that fell in battle should never be forgotten.

We asked our teacher how he could be a Moth because surely he couldn't have fought in World War I. He laughed and told us that after World War II, those that had fought could also join the Moths.

Since then membership has been extended to anyone who fought in other wars such as Korea, the Gulf War, and even our own Border War.

He then asked us how much we knew about World War I and



THE TIN HAT: The symbol of the Memorable Order of Tin Hats (MOTH).

most of us, myself included, knew very little about it.

I've watched a lot of movies about World War II and Vietnam, but I can't recall ever having seen anything about World War I. All I knew is that it was a long time ago.

I was right. It was a long time ago and it began on July 28, 1914 and ended just over four years later on November 11, 1918. By the time it ended an estimated 20 million people had lost their lives.

The war was a true global conflict that took part in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, the Pacific Islands, China and off the coast of South and North America. The war was fought on land, sea and in the air.

It was mainly fought between the Allied Powers, which consisted of France, the British Empire (including Australia, India, Canada and South Africa), Russia and Italy. The Americans joined the Allied Powers in 1917 when they declared war on Germany.

On the other side was the Central Powers that consisted of Germany, Austria-Hungary

and the Ottoman Empire.

There were a number of things that I learnt about World War I that left me amazed, shocked and sad.

One of the things that did amaze me was the fact that the majority of the British Empire soldiers were volunteers. They were not forced to go and fight, they did so willingly.

Often an entire class from a university would go to a recruitment office and sign up. Very few of them ever returned to complete their studies.

Officially you had to be at least 18 years of age to sign up as a soldier and go off to fight in the war. Yet as losses mounted and replacements were desperately needed the recruitment teams began to turn a blind eye to the age requirement.

I'm 16 years old and I know that there were many boys my age that fought in World War I. Many were even younger than that. It is a documented fact that the youngest person to fight as a British soldier in World War I was only 12 years old.

The war on land quickly developed into a stalemate that became known as trench warfare.

These trenches stretched from the coast to the Swiss border, right across Europe. Sometimes the trenches were less than 100 metres apart. The area between the trenches was called 'no-man's land'.

By all accounts life in the trenches was horrific at the best of times. Rain would turn them into mud pits. The floor of the trench was covered with planks called 'duck boards'. Sometimes the mud would be so

deep and thick that if someone stepped off the duck board they would disappear into the mud never to be seen again.

The treatment of soldiers was often barbaric. If, for example, you were on guard duty at night and fell asleep, an officer had the right to shoot you. If he found you sleeping he could take out his pistol and shoot you dead without even bothering to wake you up.

Attacks on the enemy would always result in massive casualties. The object would be to capture a section of the enemy's trench. The normal procedure would be to bomb the opposition trench with artillery for up to three days. Then the artillery would stop and the infantry would launch an attack.

This was known as 'going over the top'. The infantry would climb out of their trenches and advance at a steady walk towards the enemy. The only problem with this was that the enemy were normally waiting for them.

The enemy would have sat in their bunkers dug into the side of the trench during the artil-





FOR KING AND COUNTRY: At the start of the war men of all ages flocked to the recruiting office to sign up. Many would go into "Pals Battalions" and fight alongside their friends.

lery fire and few of them would have been killed or injured.

As soon as the artillery stopped they knew the infantry would be on their way.

They would set up machine guns covering no-man's land and wait for the attack. The advancing infantry would usually be mown down before they had advanced more than a few steps.

Even if an attack did manage to succeed and a section of the enemy trench was captured, both sides had a second, third and forth line of trenches. They would launch a counter attack and normally recapture the lost territory very quickly.

Yet even though these tactics proved fruitless time after time, the generals and war planners on both sides persisted with them. No matter how many died.

Take the Somme offensive for example. It lasted from July 1 to November 18, 1916. The Allies took 60,000 casualties on the first day of the battle. This was the most casualties the British had ever taken in a single day.

By the end of it they would suffer a staggering 623,907 casualties.

The war also saw many new innovations and weapons being used. The French were the first to use chemical weapons in 1914.

They used tear gas against the Germans, but it was largely ineffective. A few months later the Germans retaliated by using chlorine gas.

In 1917 the Germans introduced the far more deadly mustard gas.

The tank was developed and first used during World War I. It was originally called the 'land battleship' and were sent to France in crates that were stamped 'tank' on the outside. This was so that people would think they were water tanks. The name stuck and everyone called them tanks.

The tank was first used during the Battle of Flers-Courcelette on 15 September 15, 1916. It had limited success. They could only move very slowly, would often break down, and were used in very limited numbers.

Another first was the use of aircraft. The Wright brothers had only taken the first powered flight 11 years earlier on December 17, 1903. Yet the aircraft would soon play a vital role in war.

Most World War I pilots would have as little as 10 hours flying time before being sent into combat. The average life expectancy of a pilot was 11 days.

During April 1917, known as 'Bloody April', the life expectancy of a new pilot was 20 minutes.

Although the parachute had been invented (they were issued to balloon observers) they were not issued to pilots. It was thought that pilots would then be too quick to bail out of a damaged aircraft rather than try and return it to its base.

Because the planes were made mostly from wood and canvas one of the greatest dangers was from the aircraft catching fire.

A pilot in an aircraft that was on fire had three choices. The first was to bail out and fall to his death. The second was to stay with the aircraft and burn to death. Nearly every pilot carried a revolver with him. His third choice was to shoot himself, which most of them did.

It is estimated that more than 14 000 Allied pilots were killed during World War I. The figures for the Axis powers is not known but it is estimated that it was even higher than those of the Allies.

World War I ended with the official surrender of the Central Powers at 11.00 am on November 11, 1918.

It became known as 'The



RECRUITMENT DRIVE: Recruiting posters would often be patriotic or make war seem glamorous and an adventure. Those that did join up found the reality a lot different to what the posters said.

Great War' and 'the war to end all wars'. Yet a mere 21 years later they would be at it again in another war that would result in even more deaths. The Great War was renamed World War I.

I wonder if I would have had the courage to go over the top. Or climb into an aircraft with only 10 hours training, knowing that in less than two weeks I would probably be dead.

Would I have lied about my age to get into the army? Would I have volunteered, knowing full well that there was a strong possibility that I would die?

While you can hate war and all it stands for, you cannot but admire the courage of those that fought, many of them paying the ultimate sacrifice.

At 11.00 am on November 11 most of the world will ob-

serve two minutes silence for all those that fell in World War I and other wars.

This year I will be one of those that stands to attention and observes two minutes of silence. It is the least I can do. It is vital that we remember them.

At the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, we will remember them.

I would like to end this article with the Moth credo which my history teacher told me about. I think it is very fitting.

They shall not grow old, as we who are left to grow old.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

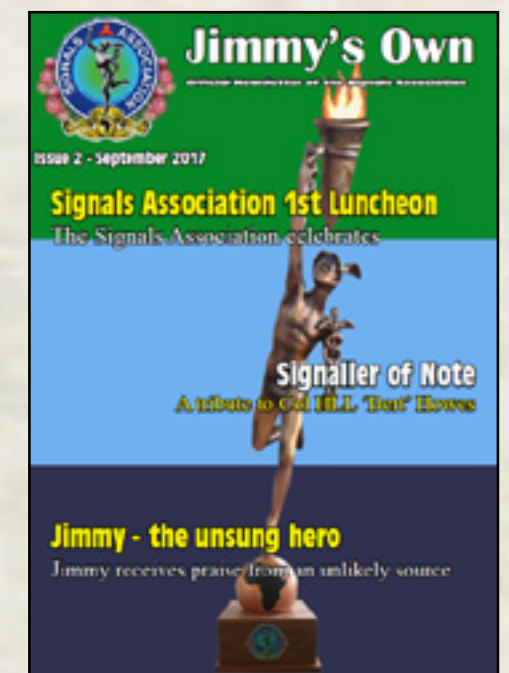
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,

We will remember them.

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.



Music to March to

Seeing as it's Armistice Day this month, we decided to look at some music from the movies. And not just any movies, but war movies. Click on the underlined blue links below to listen to the actual songs.

Over the years there have been some really great war movies.

They've ranged from being exciting to sad and many have gone on to become classics.

Yet as with any good movie you need a good musical soundtrack. And while very few of these songs have gone on to feature on the hit parades, they're still really good songs, most from really good war movies. So let's have a listen to a few of them.

The [Battle of Britain](#) was a 1969 British movie about the war fought in the air over Britain during World War Two in 1940.

A much smaller force of British Royal Air Force (RAF) pilots defeated a much larger German force and was the main cause of Hitler cancelling his planned invasion of Britain.

The film starred greats such as Laurence Olivier, Christopher Plummer, Edward Fox and Michale Caine. The music was composed by Ron Goodwin.

The [Dam Busters](#) was another movie based on a true story.

In 1943 the RAF's 617 Squadron attacked a series of dams in Germany using a special bomb designed by Barnes Wallis.

The music for the film was composed by Eric Coates and Leighton Lucas.

The [Guns of Navarone](#) was

another movie set in World War Two.

This time a group has to destroy German cannons in Greece. The film score, written by Dimitri Tiomkin, won an Academy Award and a Golden Globe for Best Original Score.

The 1962 epic [Lawrence of Arabia](#) won seven Academy Awards that included Best Picture, Best Director, and a Best Actor award for Peter O'Toole.

The film score was composed by Maurice Jarre, little known at the time and selected only after both William Walton and Malcolm Arnold had proved unavailable.

Jarre was given just six weeks to compose two hours of orchestral music. His score won Oscar, BAFTA and Golden Globe Awards.

Not only was *The Bridge on the River Kwai* one of the best war movies ever, it also featured the memorable [Colonel Bogey March](#) that won an Oscar, BAFTA, Golden Globe and Grammy Award.

Apocalypse Now was a movie set during the Vietnam War.

One of the most memorable scenes is of American helicopter gunships flying in to attack a Viet Cong village.

Over loudspeakers they are playing Wagner's [Ride of the Valkyries](#).

On the subject of *Apocalypse*

Now, the song used in the open credits, [The End](#) by The Doors, was also brilliant.

With an all-star cast and based on a true story, [The Great Escape](#) was a classic. The catchy theme was written by Elmer Bernstein.

Top Gun starred Tom Cruise as an American fighter pilot. The movie had not one, but two songs that actually made it onto the hit parades. [Take My Breath Away](#) by Berlin and [Danger Zone](#) by Kenny Loggins both reached number one.

Kelly's Heroes starred Clint Eastwood, Donald Sutherland and Telly Savalas.

The theme song, [Burning Bridges](#) by the Mike Curb Congregation, was a Top Ten hit single.

Good Morning Vietnam starred the late Robin Williams. It featured some great music from the 60s including [What a Wonderful World](#) by Louis Armstrong.

The Green Berets starred John Wayne and was about their involvement in Vietnam. The theme song, [The Ballad Of The Green Berets](#) was written and sung by Sgt Barry Sadler, a real Green Beret.

Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* was not only an excellent movie, it also featured some great music.

One of the unique songs



BIRD IS THE WORD: The Trashmen's Surfin' Bird is used as the soundtrack for the Battle of Hue City in *Full Metal Jacket*.

comes at the end of the movie when US Marines, having been involved in a fierce battle in Vietnam, march away singing the [Mickey Mouse Club Song](#).

Also in *Full Metal Jacket* is The Trashmen's 1963 song [Surfin' Bird](#) used while showing scenes of the Battle of Hue City.

[The Marine Hymn](#), the official hymn of the United States Marine Corps, has been used in a number of films. *Full Metal Jacket* was one of them.

Platoon was another good Vietnam movie. It starred a young Charlie Sheen and one of the iconic scenes from the film features the 1965 hit by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, [The Tracks Of My Tears](#).

While most of us would have seen the brilliant *Saving Private Ryan*, *The Longest Day* was another movie about the D-Day landings. This one was made back in 1962. Maurice Jarre did the theme song, [The Longest Day](#).

[A Bridge Too Far](#) is another epic World War Two movie. John Addison, who wrote the musical score, was actually in-

involved in the real battle depicted in the movie.

The Battle of the Bulge was a 1965 film based on the German Ardennes Counteroffensive during World War II.

Before the attack German Col. Martin Hessler (Robert Shaw) is introduced to his new tank commanders.

"Boys," he says. "Too many boys."

One of them starts to sing the [Panzerlied](#) (Armour Song) and the rest of them join in.

Now listen to a French Foreign Legion marching song, [Képi Blanc](#) (White Cap). Do you recognise the tune?

Directed by Steven Spielberg, *Schindler's List* was nominated for 12 Academy Awards and won seven.

Near the start of the movie a group of German soldiers can be seen marching down the street. They are singing a song called [Erika](#).

Erika, a song about a flower (heather), was used by the German SS as one of their marching songs. The song was also adopted by the Finnish Waffen SS as their marching song.

They renamed it [Kaarina](#).

MASH was both a successful movie and later a television series. The theme song, called [Suicide Is Painless](#), was written by Johnny Mandel.

Most Vietnam era movies will feature some good 60s music. The TV series *Tour of Duty* had the Rolling Stones' [Paint it Black](#) as its theme tune.

It was another song that cracked the charts.

Band of Brothers was a television series produced by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks.

It follows Easy Company, part of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, from jump training in the United States through its participation in major actions in Europe, up until Japan's capitulation and the war's end.

The [Band Of Brothers Theme](#) was written by Michael Kamen.

This last song is a bit of a strange one because it's not exactly music that you can march to. But damn, it's a good song and worthy of a listen-to as a theme from a war movie.

The song in question is [Cavatina](#). It was composed by Stanley Myers for the 1970 film *The Walking Stick*.

Yet it was only eight years later, when Cavatina was used as the theme for the *Deer Hunter* that it became a UK Top 20 hit.

Hope that you enjoyed listen to some of these songs. Early next year we want to do an article about songs that are the themes for different military units and corps.

10 Celebrities that you may not know were in the military



They may have gone on to become stars of the big screen or small screen, or music legends, but these 10 celebrities all spent time in uniform.

I think I would be correct in saying that the vast majority of Military Despatches' readers served in the military at some stage.

They may have been permanent force members, conscripts, or even citizen force or reserve members.

Now if you did serve in the military then you have something in common with the 10 people on this list - at some stage they also served in the military.

1. Mr. T

Lawrence Tureaud is better known as Mr. T. He is best remembered for his role as B.A. Baracus in the 1980s television series *The A-Team*. He also starred as the boxer Clubber Land in the 1982 film *Rocky III*.

His brother had fought in Vietnam and Tureaud enlisted in the United States Army and served in the Military Police Corps.

In November 1975 he was awarded a letter of recommendation by his drill sergeant. In a group of 6,000 troops Tureaud was elected "Top Trainee of the Cycle" and was promoted to squad leader.

In July 1976 while at a training camp at Fort McCoy in Wisconsin, his platoon sergeant

punished him by ordering him to chop down trees. But he never told him how many to chop down.

Tureaud began chopping trees at 06h30. At 10h00 a shocked major superseded the sergeant's orders. In the space of three and a half hours Tureaud had single-handedly chopped down over 70 trees.

2. Bea Arthur

Bea Arthur will be best remembered for her role as Dorothy Zbornak on the 1980s sitcom *The Golden Girls*.

During World War II she served in the United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve where she worked as a truck driver and a typist. She was given an honourable discharge in 1945 with the rank of staff sergeant.

She passed away from cancer on 25 April, 2005 at the age of 86.

3. Gene Hackman

Best remembered for his role as Detective Popeye Doyle in *The French Connection*, Hackman won two Academy Awards, three Golden Globe Awards, and two BAFTA Awards.

He starred in a number of "war" movies that included *A Bridge Too Far*, *Uncommon Valour*, *Crimson Tide* and *Be-*

hind Enemy Lines.

At the age of 16 he lied about his age to enlist in the United States Marine Corps where he served four and a half years as a field radio operator.

4. Chuck Norris

Martial arts champion and actor Carlos Ray Norris is better known as Chuck Norris.

He has starred in numerous movies and the TV series *Walker, Texas Ranger*.

He joined the United States Air Force as an Air Policeman (AP) in 1958 and was sent to Osan Air Base, South Korea.

It was there that Norris acquired the nickname Chuck and began his training in Tang Soo Do, an interest that led to black belts in that art and the founding of this own style, Chun Kuk Do.

When he returned to the United States, he continued to serve as an AP at March Air Force Base in California. Norris was honourably discharged from the U.S. Air Force in August 1962.

5. Morgan Freeman

Academy Award winning actor Morgan Freeman needs little introduction.

His many movie credits include the role of President Nelson Mandela in the 2009 film *Invictus*.

As a youngster he turned down a partial scholarship from Jackson State University. Instead he chose to enlist in the United States Air Force where he wanted to train as a pilot. He ended up serving as an Automatic Radar Repairman, rising to the rank of Airman 1st Class.

6. Arnold Schwarzenegger

Arnold "I'll be back" Schwarzenegger has done it all - actor, producer, businessman, investor, author, philanthropist, activist, world body-building champion, and former Governor of California.

He won the Mr. Universe title at age 20 and went on to win the Mr. Olympia contest seven times, remaining a prominent presence in bodybuilding and writing many books and articles on the sport.

Born in Austria, Schwarzenegger had to fulfill the one year of military service required at the time. At the age of 18 he was conscripted into the Austrian Army.

During his army service he won the Junior Mr. Europe contest. Unfortunately he would often go AWOL so he could take part in competitions. He ended up spending a week in military detention.

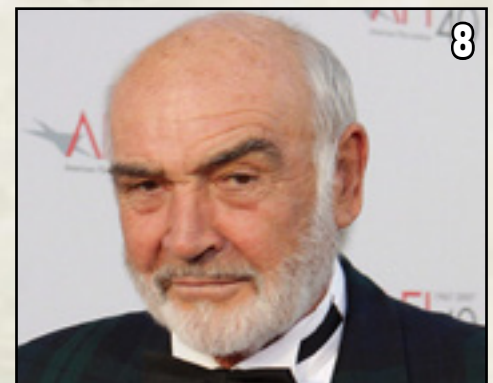
4. Clint Eastwood

Clint Eastwood rose to fame as the "Man with No Name" and as Detective Harry Callahan in the five *Dirty Harry* films.

He starred in war movies such as *Where Eagles Dare* and *Kelly's Heroes*. He also directed the acclaimed *Letters from Iwo Jima*.

He was drafted into the United States Army during the Korean War, but did not serve in Korea.

According to his former long-time companion Sondra Locke, he was a life guard at Ford Ord in northern California for his entire stint in the military.



3. Sean Connery

The original James Bond, Scottish actor Sean Connery has been polled as “The Greatest Living Scot”.

He joined the Royal Navy during which time he acquired two tattoos. One tattoo is a tribute to his parents and reads ‘Mum and Dad,’ and the other is self-explanatory, ‘Scotland Forever.’”

Connery was later discharged from the navy on medical grounds because of a duodenal ulcer, a condition that affected most of the males in previous generations of his family.

2. Jimi Hendrix

Regarded by many as one of the best guitarists ever, Jimi Hendrix was only 27 when he died.

Not only did Hendrix serve in the military, he was a para-trooper. At the age of 19, after twice being caught by police for riding in stolen cars, a judge gave him the choice of spending time in prison or enlisting in the military. He chose the later option and entered the US Army in 1961

After basic training he was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division and stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

By February 1962, his personal conduct had begun to draw criticism from his superiors. His platoon sergeant wrote in a report, “It is my opinion that Private Hendrix will never come up to the standards required of a soldier. I feel that the military service will benefit if he is discharged as soon as possible.”

On 29 June 1962 Hendrix



ART IMITATES LIFE: Sean Connery (left) and Gene Hackman starred in the film *A Bridge Too Far*. Connery as Major General Urquhart and Hackman as Polish Major General Sosabowski. Both served in the military.

was granted an honourable discharge on the basis of unsuitability.

1. Elvis Presley

Elvis Presley was already a star when he was drafted into the US Army in March 1958.

Presley announced that he was looking forward to his military stint, saying he did not want to be treated any differently from anyone else: “The Army can do anything it wants with me.”

After his basic training, Presley joined the 3rd Armored Division in Friedberg, Germany. Fellow soldiers have attested to Presley’s wish to be seen as an able, ordinary soldier, despite his fame, and to his generosity. He donated his Army pay to charity, purchased TV sets for the base, and bought an extra set of fatigues for everyone in his outfit.

Honourable Mentions

Of course these 10 celebrities were not the only ones to ever serve in the military. Many oth-

er also served. The list is far too long to mention, but here are a few.

- Private First Class Hugh Hefner.
- British singer Captain James Blunt.
- Corporal Mel Brooks.
- Dr. Ruth (Israeli Defence Force).
- Christopher Lee – Finnish Army, British Home Guard, Royal Air Force.
- Tom Selleck (Magnum PI).
- Leonard Nimoy (Dr Spock).
- James Earl Jones.
- Actors Jimmy Stewart, Lee Marvin, Charles Bronson, Clark Gable, Ernest Borgnine, Humphrey Bogart, Michael Caine, Henry Fonda, Charlton Heston, Steve McQueen, Kirk Douglas, Harvey Keitel, Mickey Rooney, Gene Wilder, Paul Newman, Sidney Poitier
- Singers Kris Kristofferson, Tony Bennett, Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson.
- Former heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis.

Parachute Wings

This month we’re looking at wings awarded to soldiers that have successfully completed a basic parachute course. We show you a set of wings, you tell us the country and, if applicable, the unit or arm of service. Answers on page 53.

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WWII Rifles & submachine guns

This month we've decided to do something a little different on Head-to-Head.

We show you 17 iconic rifles and submachine guns used in World War II.

What you need to do is list what you think are the top ten. Then e-mail your list to us at editor@hipe.co.za and use

WWII weapons as the subject. E-mails must reach us before 20 November 2017.

In the December issue we will then list what our readers think were the ten best rifles and submachine guns used in World War II.

The list features five American weapons, four German weapons, three Russian weap-

ons, two British weapons, and one each from Finland, Italy and Japan.

The list includes ten rifles, six submachine guns, and the Sturmgewehr 44 - the first fully automatic assault rifle.

In you e-mail you may want to include any rifles or submachine guns you feel should have made the list.

Sturmgewehr 44

Type - Assault Rifle
Place of origin - Nazi Germany
Designer - Hugo Schmeisser
Weight - 4.6 kg
Length - 94 cm
Cartridge - 7.92×33 mm Kurz
Rate of fire - 550–600 rpm
Effective firing range - 300 m (automatic) 600 m (semi-automatic)
Feed - 30-round detachable box magazine



German fully-automatic assault rifle - the first of its kind.



Standard rifle of the US armed forces for two decades. Called "the greatest battle implement ever devised" by General George S. Patton.

M1 Garand

Type - Semi-automatic rifle
Place of origin - United States
Designer - John C. Garand
Weight - 4.31 kg
Length - 1,100 mm
Cartridge - .30-06 Springfield
Rate of fire - 0–50 rpm
Effective firing range - 457 m
Feed - 8-round en-bloc clip, internal magazine

MP 40

Type - Submachine gun
Place of origin - Nazi Germany
Designer - Heinrich Vollmer
Weight - 3.97 kg
Length - 833 mm stock extended / 630 mm stock folded
Cartridge - 9×19 mm Parabellum
Rate of fire - 500–550 rpm
Effective firing range - 100–200 m
Feed - 32-round detachable box magazine



The Maschinenpistole 40 was often erroneously called "Schmeisser" by the Allies, despite Hugo Schmeisser's non-involvement in the weapon's design and production.



Known as the 'Tommy Gun'. It was popular with gangsters during the prohibition era and nicknamed the 'Chicago Typewriter' or 'The Chopper'.

M1928A1 Thompson

Type - Submachine gun
Place of origin - United States
Designer - John T. Thompson
Weight - 4.9 kg
Length - 850 mm
Cartridge - .45 ACP
Rate of fire - 600–725 rpm
Effective firing range - 150 m
Feed - 20-round box, 30-round box, 50-round drum magazine

M1 Carbine

Type - Submachine gun
Place of origin - Nazi Germany
Designer - Frederick Humeston
Weight - 2.4 kg
Length - 900 mm
Cartridge - .30 Carbine
Rate of fire - 750 rpm
Effective firing range - 270 m
Feed - 15- or 30-round detachable box magazine



This was a standard firearm for the U.S. military during World War II, the Korean War and well into the Vietnam War.



Mauser Karabiner 98k

Type - Bolt-action rifle
Place of origin - Nazi Germany
Designer - Heereswaffenamt
Weight - 3.7–4.1 kg
Length - 1,110 mm
Cartridge - 7.92 × 57 mm Mauser
Rate of fire - 0–50 rpm
Effective firing range - 500 m
Feed - 5-round stripper clip, internal magazine

Standard rifle of the German Army in World War 2. Nearly 15 million were made.

Gewehr 43

Type - Semi-automatic rifle
Place of origin - Nazi Germany
Designer - Walther
Weight - 4.4 kg
Length - 1,130 mm
Cartridge - 7.92×57 mm Mauser
Rate of fire - 30 rpm
Effective firing range - 500 m
Feed - 10-round detachable box magazine, stripper clip fed

According to accounts and testimony from German veterans of World War II, many German soldiers disliked the Gewehr 43, and preferred the tried and true Karabiner 98k



Lee–Enfield Mk I

Type - Bolt-action rifle
Place of origin - United Kingdom
Designer - James Paris Lee
Weight - 4.19 kg
Length - 1,260 mm
Cartridge - .303 Mk VII SAA Ball
Rate of fire - 20–30 rpm
Effective firing range - 503 m
Feed - 10-round magazine, loaded with 5-round charger clips



Often referred to as the “SMLE,” which is short for the common “Short Magazine Lee-Enfield” variant.



Sten Mk II

Type - Submachine Gun
Place of origin - United Kingdom
Designer - Major Reginald V. Shepherd, Harold J. Turpin
Weight - 3.2 kg
Length - 760 mm
Cartridge - 9×19 mm Parabellum
Rate of fire - 500-600 rpm
Effective firing range - 100 m
Feed - 32-round detachable box magazine

Cheap and easy to produce, they were effective insurgency weapons for resistance groups.



PPSh-41

Type - Submachine Gun
Place of origin - Russia
Designer - Georgy Shpagin
Weight - 3.63 kg
Length - 843 mm
Cartridge - 7.62×25 mm Tokarev
Rate of fire - 900 to over 1000 rpm
Effective firing range - 125 - 150 m
Feed - 35-round box magazine or 71-round drum magazine

Cheap, easy to make, and deadly. Its nickname was “pe-pe-sha”, which is Russian for “daddy”.

Mosin–Nagant

Type - Bolt-action rifle
Place of origin - Russia
Designer - Captain Sergei Mosin, Léon Nagant
Weight - 4 kg
Length - 1,232 mm
Cartridge - 7.62×54 mm R
Rate of fire - Variable
Effective firing range - 500 m
Feed - 5-round non-detachable magazine, loaded individually or with 5-round stripper clips



Even though it was a 50 year old design, millions of Soviet troops carried them.



Tokarev SVT-40

Type - Semi-automatic rifle
Place of origin - Russia
Designer - Sergei Simonov
Weight - 3.85 kg
Length - 1,226 mm
Cartridge - 7.62×54 mm R
Rate of fire - 400 rpm
Effective firing range - 500 m
Feed - 10-round detachable box magazine

Captured SVT's were highly prized by both the Germans and the Finns.

Carcano Modello 1891

Type - Bolt-action rifle
Place of origin - Italy
Designer - Salvatore Carcano
Weight - 3.9 kg
Length - 1,285 mm
Cartridge - 6.5×52 mm Carcano
Rate of fire - Variable
Effective firing range - 1,000 m
Feed - 6 round integral magazine, loaded with an en-bloc clip



A Carcano Model 91/38 was the rifle used to assassinate US President John F. Kennedy.



M1903 Springfield

Type - Bolt-action rifle
Place of origin - United States
Designer - Springfield Armory
Weight - 3.94 kg
Length - 1,097 mm
Cartridge - .30-03
Rate of fire - 10–15 rpm
Effective firing range - 914 m
Feed - 5-round stripper clip, 25-round (Air Service variant) internal box magazine

Used early in the war by the US, the Springfield was noted for its accuracy.

Type 99 rifle Arisaka

Type - Bolt-action rifle
Place of origin - Japan
Designer - Nariakira Arisaka
Weight - 3.8 kg
Length - 1,118 mm
Cartridge - .7.7×58 mm Arisaka
Rate of fire - Variable
Effective firing range - 547 m
Feed - 5-round internal box magazine, stripper clip loaded



The standard rifle issued to the Japanese Imperial Army.



Reliable and accurate, it was regarded as one of the best submachine guns of the war.

Suomi KP/-31

Type - Submachine Gun
Place of origin - Finland
Designer - Aimo Lahti
Weight - 4.6 kg
Length - 870 mm
Cartridge - 9×19 mm Parabellum
Rate of fire - 750–900 rpm
Effective firing range - 200 m
Feed - 20-, 36- or 50-round box, 40- or 71-round drum. Also modified German MP 38 u. 40 32-round box magazine

M3

Type - Submachine Gun
Place of origin - United States
Designer - George Hyde
Weight - 3.70 kg
Length - 760 mm, stock extended
Cartridge - .45 ACP
Rate of fire - 450 rpm
Effective firing range - 91 m
Feed - 30-round detachable box magazine



Nicknamed the "Grease Gun", it was used by paratroopers and infantry for close combat.

Manfred von Richthofen

Respected by friend and foe alike, Manfred von Richthofen was nicknamed the 'Red Baron'. With 80 kills he was the top fighter ace of World War I.

Known simply as the 'Red Baron', Manfred von Richthofen became the most famous (and feared) pilot of the war.

German propagandists even circulated rumours that the Allies were so terrified of von Richthofen that they vowed to award a Victoria Cross to any pilot who shot him down. Yet who exactly was the 'Red Baron' and how did he earn his reputation.

Manfred Albrecht Freiherr von Richthofen was born in Kleinburg, near Breslau, Lower Silesia on 2 May 1892. This is now part of the city of Wroclaw in Poland.

His family were prominent Prussian aristocrats. His father was Major Albrecht Philipp Karl Julius Freiherr von Richthofen and his mother was Kunigunde von Schickfuss und Neudorff.

He was one of four children and had an elder sister and two younger brothers. Like his father and two brothers, he was a *Freiherr* (literally "Free Lord"), a title of nobility often translated as 'baron'.

As a young boy he enjoyed riding horses as well as gymnastics at school. Along with his brothers, Lothar and Bolko, he would often hunt boar, elk, deer and birds. His hunting skills would later stand him in good stead.

Early military career

Von Richthofen's military cadet training began in 1911 when he was 11. After completing his training he joined an Uhlan cavalry unit, the *Ulanen-Regiment Kaiser Alexander der III. von Russland (1. Westpreußisches) Nr. 1* ("1st Emperor Alexander III of Russia Uhlan Regiment (1st West Prussian)") and was assigned to the regiment's 3. Eskadron ("No. 3 Squadron").

At the start of World War I he served as a cavalry reconnaissance officer on both the Eastern and Western Fronts and saw action in Russia, France and Bel-

gium.

With the advent of trench warfare it soon became clear that the traditional role of cavalry was outdated. Von Richthofen's regiment were dismounted and served as dispatch runners and field telephone operators.

Von Richthofen was not happy about matters. When he was ordered to transfer to the army's supply branch it was the last straw.

He immediately applied for a transfer to *Die Fliegertruppen des deutschen Kaiserreiches* (Imperial Ger-



INTERESTING FACT: Von Richthofen only began flying his signature Fokker Dr I tri-plane in the final months of his life. Nearly 75% of his victories were won in various makes of Albatross (such as the Albatross D. V on the right) as well as the Halberstadt D. II.

man Army Air Service).

It is said that in his application for a transfer he wrote, "I have not gone to war in order to collect cheese and eggs, but for another purpose."

To his own surprise his request was granted and at the end of May 1915 he joined the Army Air Service.

Transfer

He did not train as a pilot, but as an observer on reconnaissance missions over the Eastern Front, serving with *Feldflieger Abteilung 69* (No. 69 Flying Squadron).

When he was transferred to the Champagne front he probably scored his first kill. Using his observer's machine gun, he shot down an attacking French Farman aircraft.

It when down behind the Allied lines and could not therefore be confirmed, so he was not credited with the kill.

The legend is born

It was a chance meeting with German ace Oswald Boelcke that led to von Richthofen training as a pilot in October 1915.

In February 1916 von Richthofen then convinced his brother Lothar to transfer to the *Fliegertruppe*.

In March 1916 von Richthofen joined *Kampfgeschwader 2* (No. 2 Bomber Squadron), flying a two-seater Albatros C.III.

He was not a brilliant pilot. Far from it. He struggled to control his aircraft and in fact crashed during his first flight at the controls.

It was over Verdun on 26 April 1916 when he shot down a French Nieuport over Fort Douaumont. Yet again he was not credited with a kill.

During August 1916 Von Richthofen and Boelcke met again. Boelcke was visiting the east in search of candidates for his newly formed Jasta 2. It was one of the first German fighter squadrons and Von Richthofen was invited to join.

Boelcke was killed on 28 October 1916 after a midair collision with a friendly aircraft. Von Richthofen witnessed the event.

Von Richthofen finally achieved his first confirmed kill

over Cambrai on 17 September 1916.

To mark the occasion he contacted a jeweller in Berlin and ordered a silver cup engraved with the date and the type of enemy aircraft. He continued to celebrate each of his victories in the same manner until he had 60 cups, by which time the dwindling supply of silver in blockaded Germany meant that silver cups could no longer be supplied. Von Richthofen discontinued his orders at this stage, rather than accept cups made from base metal.

Von Richthofen was a firm believer in what was known as the 'Dicta Boelcke' to assure success not only for himself but the squadron. Von Richthofen would dive from above with the sun behind him while other pilots of his squadron covered his rear and flanks.

While he may not have been a brilliant pilot, he was an excellent marksman and a good tactician.

The Flying Circus

Von Richthofen's fame grew with each victory. He became

an ace on 16 October 1916 and in January 1917 he was awarded the *Pour le Mérite* (Blue Max) after his 16th confirmed kill. The same month he was appointed commander of *Jagdstaffel* or *Jasta 11*.

The squadron contained some of the best German pilots, several of whom would go on to become leaders of their own squadrons.

When he became squadron leader he decided to paint his aircraft red. In his autobiography he stated, "For whatever reasons, one fine day I came upon the idea of having my crate painted glaring red. The result was that absolutely everyone could not help but notice my red bird. In fact, my opponents also seemed to be not entirely unaware of it."

German propaganda made much of it by referring to Richthofen as *Der Rote Kampfflieger* - "the Red Fighter Pilot."

Eventually he became known to friend and foe alike as 'the Red Knight', 'the Red Devil' and finally 'the Red Baron'.

Von Richthofen led by example and force of will. He was often described as distant, unemotional and humourless, although many of his colleagues would have disagreed.

During April 1917, also known as 'Bloody April', Von Richthofen shot down 22 British aircraft, including four in a single day.

By June he had become commander of the first of the new larger 'fighter wing' formations. These were highly mobile, combined tactical units that could move at short notice to different parts of the front as

required.

Von Richthofen's new command, *Jagdgeschwader 1*, was composed of fighter squadrons No. 4, 6, 10, and 11. J.G. 1 became widely known as "The Flying Circus" due to the unit's brightly colored aircraft and its mobility, including the use of tents, trains, and caravans, where appropriate.

He taught his pilots the basic rules that he wanted them to fly 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 with the pilot."

Wounded in action

On 6 July 1917 during combat near Wervicq, Von Richthofen sustained a serious head wound.

The wound caused instant disorientation and temporary partial blindness. He regained his vision just in time to ease the aircraft out of a spin and managed to execute a forced landing in a field in behind friendly lines.

His injury required several operations to remove bone splinters from the impact area. His wound is thought to have caused lasting damage; he later often suffered from post-flight nausea and headaches, as well as a change in temperament.

Strictly against doctor's orders, Von Richthofen returned to active duty on 25 July 1917. He was sent on convalescent leave from 5 September to 23 October 1917.

While in hospital he penned a shamelessly self-embellishing autobiography from his hospital



Decorations and Awards

These are just some of Von Richthofen's awards.

- Prussian Order Pour le Mérite.
- Prussian Order of the Red Eagle, 3rd Class with Crown and Swords.
- Prussian House Order of Hohenzollern, Knight's Cross with Swords.
- Prussian Iron Cross, 1st Class (1914).
- Prussian Iron Cross, 2nd Class (1914).
- Saxon Military Order of St. Henry, Knight's Cross.
- Württemberg Military Merit Order (Württemberg), Knight's Cross.
- Bavarian Military Merit Order, 4th Class with Swords.
- War Merit Cross.
- Duke Carl Eduard Medal with Swords clasp.
- Wound Badge (1918) in Black.
- Saxe-Ernestine House Order, Knight 1st Class with Swords.
- Hesse General Honour Decoration, "for Bravery".
- Lippe War Honour Cross for Heroic Deeds, 2nd class.
- Bremen Hanseatic Cross.
- Bulgarian Order of Bravery, 4th Class (1st Grade).



END OF THE ROAD: Australian soldiers and airmen pose with remains of von Richthofen's famous tri-plane. It was quickly taken apart by souvenir hunters.

bed. Entitled *Der rote Kampf-flieger* or "The Red Battle Flier" (you can [click here](#) to read the entire book), the book sold well in Germany and was even translated into English (and heavily censored) the following year. Von Richthofen was later embarrassed by the boasts he'd made and was even hoping to edit out some of the book's more self-serving aspects. He never did get the chance.

Death of the Red Baron

Just after 11h00 on 21 April 1918 Von Richthofen received a fatal wound while flying over Morlancourt Ridge near the Somme River.

He had been pursuing a Sopwith Camel at very low altitude, piloted by novice Canadian pilot Lieutenant Wilfrid "Wop" May of No. 209 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Von Richthofen was spotted and briefly attacked by a Camel piloted by May's school friend and flight commander, Canadian Captain Arthur "Roy"

Brown.

Von Richthofen had been hit by a single .303 bullet that had damaged his heart and lungs. In the final seconds of his life he managed to make a rough landing in a field in a sector controlled by the Australian Imperial Force. His Fokker Dr.I 425/17 was not badly damaged by the landing, but it was soon taken apart by souvenir hunters.

In common with most Allied air officers, Major 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 AFC.

The body was buried in the cemetery at the village of Bertangles, near Amiens, on 22 April 1918. Six of No. 3 Squadron's officers served as pallbearers, and a guard of honour from the squadron's other ranks fired a salute.

Allied squadrons stationed nearby presented memorial

wreaths, one of which was inscribed with the words, "To Our Gallant and Worthy Foe".

Von Richthofen's body was disinterred in 1925 and repatriated to Germany for a second funeral.

Who fired the fatal shot?

There has been much controversy and speculation about who fired the shot that killed the Red Baron.

The RAF credited Brown with the kill, but it is now generally agreed that the bullet which hit Von Richthofen was fired from the ground.

Some sources claim that Sergeant Cedric Popkin was the person most likely to have killed Von Richthofen. Popkin was an anti-aircraft (AA) machine gunner with the Australian 24th Machine Gun Company, and he was using a Vickers gun.

Other sources suggest that Gunner W. J. "Snowy" Evans, a Lewis machine gunner with the 53rd Battery, 14th Field Artillery Brigade, Royal Australian Artillery is likely to have killed von Richthofen.

Others claim that Gunner Robert Buie (also of the 53rd Battery) may have fired the fatal shot.

These sources have been rejected because of the angle of the bullet that killed Von Richthofen.

Manfred von Richthofen, the Red Baron, had 80 confirmed kills when he died. This made him the leading fighter ace of World War I. There were also unconfirmed victories that would put his actual total as high as 100 or more.

Thompson Submachine Gun

From back alley to battlefield

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

With nearly three million weapons produced, it has become both famous and infamous around the world.

It has been used by the military and paramilitary forces of 38 countries and was popular with non-state groups ranging from American organized crime syndicates to the Provisional IRA. The weapon in question is the Thompson submachine gun, a weapon that was forged in battle.

It was also known informally as the 'Tommy Gun', 'Annihilator', 'Chicago Typewriter', 'Chicago Piano', 'Chicago Style', 'Chicago Organ Grinder', 'Trench Broom', 'Trench Sweeper', 'The Chopper', and simply 'The Thompson'.

Development

It was 56 year old Kentucky blacksmith John Taliaferro Thompson that came up with the concept of a portable hand-held machine gun in 1915.

He was a veteran of America's war with Spain. He was also an inventor and founded the Auto-Ordnance Corporation in 1916.

When America entered World War I in 1917, Thompson reenlisted and served as the Director of Arsenal for the U.S. Army's

Ordnance Corps.

Like many, he saw the deadlock of trench warfare on the Western Front. This made him even more determined to produce a weapon that could act as a 'trench broom' - one that would enable an infantryman to sweep a whole dugout of enemy troops within seconds.

After the war Thompson retired from military service and he continued to work on his idea.

In 1920 he patented a .45 calibre machine pistol that he considered naming the 'Persuader' or the 'Annihilator'. In the end he settled on simply calling it the Thompson submachine gun.

Early use

Production began with the Model 1921. This would be followed by more than a dozen variants of the weapon.

The Thompson was an expensive weapon, selling for \$200. In today's terms that would be equal to \$3,500 (nearly R48,000).

Among the first customers were the United States Postal Service. The Thompson's were used to protect the mail from a spate of robberies.

Also among the first customers was the United States Ma-

rine Corps. Several police departments in the United States also purchased a few.

The Thompson was available to civilians. Some of the first batches of Thompson's were bought in America by agents of the Irish Republic. A total of 653 were purchased, but 495 were seized by US customs authorities in New York in June 1921.

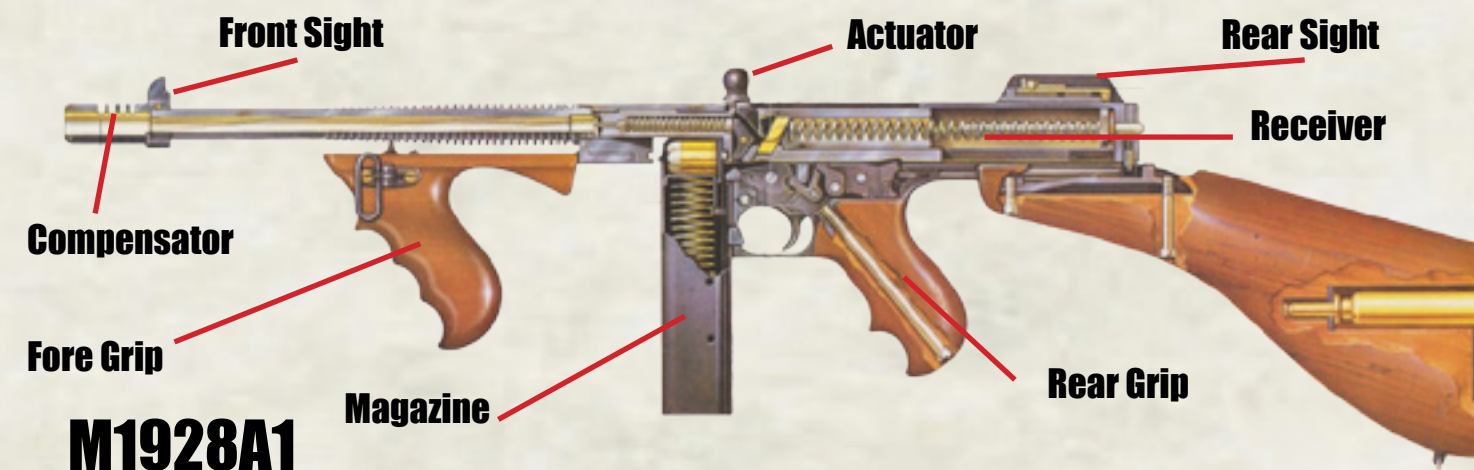
The Thompson would become infamous in the hands of Prohibition and Depression-era gangsters. One of the most notably incidents was the St Valentine's Day Massacre.

On February 14, 1929 seven members of the Irish American North Side gang were lured into a garage in Chicago by members of the Italian South Side gang led by Al Capone.

The seven men were gunned down and two of the weapons used were Thompson submachine guns.

Tommy guns were also used by the likes of John Dillinger, 'Baby Face' Nelson, the Barker gang and 'Pretty Boy' Floyd.

It was not until 1935 that the American Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) purchased 115 Thompson's. However the vast majority of outlaws that the FBI had initially bought the Thompson to combat were al-



ready dead or behind bars.

In 1925, Auto-Ordnance approached Britain's Birmingham Small Arms Company to produce Thompson's under license for sale in Europe. Despite successful demonstrations in the U.K., France and Belgium, no orders were forthcoming for the British Thompson. Production was halted in 1930.

Saved from bankruptcy

By 1929 Auto-Ordnance was on the verge of liquidation. They had only sold 10,300 guns and were more than \$2 million in debt. Thompson's son refused

to shut down the plant and kept the struggling business going.

They managed to hold on for nine years until, in 1938, the US military adopted the Thompson submachine gun. A year later the world was once again at war and the orders began to pour in.

There were two military types of Thompson SMG and over 1,5 million were produced during World War II.

The M1928A1 had provisions for box and drum magazines. It had a Cutts compensator, cooling fins on the barrel, employed a delayed blowback action and its charging handle was on the

top of the receiver.

The M1 and M1A1 had a barrel without cooling fins, a simplified rear sight, provisions only for box magazines, employed a straight blowback action and the charging handle was on the side of the receiver.

Military users of the M1928A1 were not that enthusiastic about the 50-round drum magazine. In fact the British Army criticised their excessive weight and the rattling sound they made. They shipped thousands of the magazines back to the United States in exchange for box magazines.

To attach the drum magazine the Thompson had to be cocked with the bolt retracted, ready to fire.

It attached and detached by sliding sideways, which made magazine changes slow and also created difficulty in clearing a cartridge malfunction. Reloading an empty drum magazine was also a long and involved process.

In contrast, the 20-round box magazine was light and compact, it tended not to rattle, and could be inserted with the bolt safely closed. It was quickly attached and detached and was removed downward, making clearing jams easier. The



TOMMY'S GUN: John T. Thompson demonstrates his Thompson submachine gun.

RIGHT: M1928A1 with box magazine.



LEFT: M1928A1 with drum magazine.

box tripped the bolt open lock when empty, facilitating magazine changes. An empty box was easily reloaded with loose rounds.

However, users complained it was limited in capacity. In the field, some soldiers taped two 20-round magazines together in what would be known as “jungle style” to speed magazine changes.

World War II

John Thompson died on 21 June, 1940, just weeks before the US Government placed the largest order of the Thompson SMG on record.

The Thompson became a popular weapon with Allied troops. It was used as a weapon for scouts, non-commissioned officers, and patrol leaders.

In the European theater, the gun was widely utilized in British and Canadian commando units, as well as in the U.S. Army paratrooper and Ranger battalions, where it was issued more frequently than in line infantry units because of its high rate of fire and its stopping power, which made it very effective in the kinds of close combat these special operations troops were expected to undertake.

Under the US Lend-Lease program almost 140,000 Thompsons were sent to the

Soviet Union. After the famous PPSH-41 and PPs-43, the Thompson was one of Soviet Russia’s most widely issued submachine guns, but due to a shortage of appropriate ammunition, its use was not widespread.

The Lend-Lease program also played a role in the Pacific Theatre as well as in the Malayan and Burma Campaigns.

Thompsons were issued by the British Army, Indian Army, Australian Army infantry and other Commonwealth forces.

One criticism that the Thompson received was for its heavy weight and poor reliability.

In 1943 difficulty in supply led to the Australian Army replacing the Thompson with other submachine guns such as the Owen and the Austen.

The U.S. Marines also used the Thompson as a limited-issue weapon, especially during their later island assaults. The Thompson was soon found to have limited effect in heavy jungle cover, where the low-velocity .45 bullet would not penetrate most small-diameter trees or protective armor vests. They soon began employing the BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) in its place as a point defence weapon.

The Army introduced the U.S. M3 and M3A1 submachine

Specifications Thompson M1928A1

Weight: 4.9 kg (empty)

Length: 850mm

Barrel length: 270 mm

Cartridge: .45 ACP

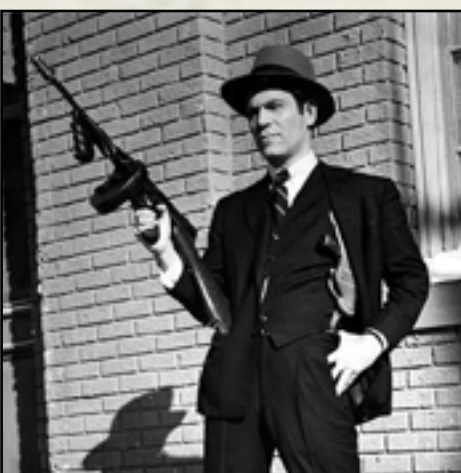
Action: Blislock or Blowback

Rate of fire: 1,500 rpm

Muzzle velocity: 285 m/s

Effective firing range: 150 m

Feed system: 20 or 30-round box magazine, 50 or 100-round drum magazine.



GANGSTER: American Depression-era gangster John Dillinger poses with a Thompson SMG.



TOMMY GOES TO WAR: A soldier from the Canadian Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment moves through a village in Italy. He carries a Thompson M1928A1. On his back is a PIAT Mk 1 (Projector, Infantry, Anti Tank).

guns in 1943 with plans to produce the latter in numbers sufficient to cancel future orders for



NOT A GANGSTER: No, this is not Al Capone but rather British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

the Thompson, while gradually withdrawing it from the first-line service. However, due to unforeseen production delays and requests for modifications, the M3/M3A1 never replaced the Thompson, and purchases continued until February 1944.

Post World War II

Thompson submachine guns were used by both sides during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Following the war, Thompsons were issued to members of Israel’s elite Unit 101, upon the formation of that unit in 1953.

During the Greek Civil War, the Thompson submachine gun was used by both sides and the Thompson also found service with the KNIL during their attempt to retake their former colony of Indonesia.

By the time of the Korean War the Thompson had been replaced as standard issue by the M3/M3A1. American troops were surprised to encounter Chinese Communist troops heavily armed with Thompsons, especially during surprise night assaults.

Many Thompsons were distributed to Chinese armed forces as a military aid before the fall of Chiang Kai-shek’s government to Mao Zedong’s Communist forces in 1949. Captured Thompsons were placed into service with American soldiers and Marines for the balance of the war.

During the Cuban Revolution, the Thompson submachine gun was used by some of Fidel Castro’s guerrillas.

During the Vietnam War, some South Vietnamese army units and defense militia were armed with Thompson submachine guns, and a few of these weapons were used by reconnaissance units, advisors, and other American troops. It was later replaced by the M16 assault rifle.

In the conflict in Northern Ireland, known as the Troubles (1969–1998), the Thompson was again used by the Irish Republican paramilitaries. According to historian Peter Hart, “The Thompson remained a key part of both the Official IRA and Provisional IRA arsenals until well into the 1970s when it was superseded by the Armalite and the AK-47.”

Because of their quality and craftsmanship, as well as their gangster-era and WWII connections, Thompsons are sought as collector’s items.

The Dieppe Raid

The plan was simple - seize a German-held port on the French Channel coast and hold it for the duration of at least two tides, and destroy enemy facilities and defences before withdrawing. The result, however, was a disaster.

There are a number of reasons why the Dieppe Raid was planned and executed.

First of all the Royal Air Force (RAF) was pressing for a raid to temporarily seize a French port. Since the fall of 1940, when the German Luftwaffe switched to night bombing, the day fighters of the RAF were little to do. They deployed on a series of search-and-destroy missions, flying over France to engage the Luftwaffe in combat.

A major problem for the RAF was that the Luftwaffe fighters declined to engage in combat over the French coast and instead operated inland, forcing the Spitfires to fly deep into France to engage in combat and thereby using up their fuel, placing the British aircraft at a distinct disadvantage when they finally encountered the Luftwaffe.

The RAF believed that if there was a raid on a French port the Germans would assume that it was the beginning of an invasion and that the Luftwaffe would be committed in force to stop the invasion.

One important consideration for the planners was that the port be within range of the Royal Air Force's fighter aircraft.

A second factor was that the British government was under pressure from the Canadian government to ensure that Cana-

dian troops saw some action. So it was important that Canadian troops be involved in the raid.

There was also intense pressure from the Soviet government to open up a second front in Western Europe. Joseph Stalin himself repeatedly demanded that the Allies create a second front in France to force the Germans to move at least 40 divisions away from the Eastern Front to remove some of the pressure on the Red Army.

The French coastal town of Dieppe was chosen as the target for the raid. It is built along a long cliff that overlooks the English Channel. The River Scie is on the western end of the town and the River Arques flows through the town and into a medium-sized harbour.

In 1942, the Germans had demolished some seafront buildings to aid in coastal defence and had set up two large artillery batteries at Berneval-le-Grand and Varengeville-sur-Mer.

The original plan was code named Operation Rutter and was conceived in April 1942 and approved by the chiefs of staff in May 1942.

The 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, commanded by Major General John Hamilton Roberts, was selected for the main force. They would make a frontal assault from the sea while British

parachute units would attack the artillery batteries on either side of them. The planned operation was cancelled.

Operation Jubilee

Four months later it was decided that the operation would take place. Now renamed Operation Jubilee it would be launched on 19 August 1942.

The plan to land parachute units was cancelled and instead the British No. 3 Commando and No. 4 Commando would land by sea and attack the artillery batteries.

The raid was planned by Vice-Admiral Lord Mountbatten of Combined Operations Headquarters, involving an attacking force of about 5,000 Canadians, 1,000 British troops and 50 United States Army Rangers.

Armoured support was provided by the 14th Army Tank Regiment (The Calgary Regiment (Tank)) with 58 of the new Churchill tanks, to be delivered using the new landing craft tank (LCT). In addition, three of the Churchills were equipped with flame-thrower equipment and all had adaptations enabling them to operate in the shallow water near the beach.

The Royal Navy supplied 237 ships and landing craft. However, pre-landing naval gunfire support was limited, consisting



DISMAL FAILURE: Landing craft burn in the background while Churchill tanks are bogged down on the beach.

of six Hunt-class destroyers with 100 mm guns. The Royal Air Force provided 74 squadrons of aircraft, of which 66 were fighter squadrons.

The plan called for a frontal assault, without any heavy preliminary air or naval bombardment. The planners of the raid feared that unjustifiable civilian losses would anger and further alienate the Vichy government; an unattractive option considering the intent of Operation Torch not three months later. Maj. Gen. Roberts, the military force commander, is also said to have argued that a bombardment would make the town streets impassable, and thus hinder the assault after it had broken out of the beaches.

The Dieppe landings were planned on six beaches: four in front of the town itself, and two to the eastern and western flanks respectively. From east to west, the beaches were code named Yellow, Blue, Red, White, Green and Orange. No. 3 Commando would land on Yellow beach, the Royal Regiment

of Canada on Blue. The main landings would take place on Red and White beaches by the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, the Essex Scottish Regiment, Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal, A Commando Royal Marines and the armour. The South Saskatchewan Regiment and the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada would land on Green beach, and No. 4 Commando on Orange.

Intelligence on the area was sparse. The beach gradient and suitability for tanks had been assessed by scanning holiday snapshots. Air reconnaissance photographs had failed to detect German gun positions dug into the cliffs.

Not only was Dieppe well defended, with a garrison of 1,500 troops, but the city and port were protected by a concentration of heavy weapons on the main approach (particularly in the myriad cliff caves), and with a reserve at the rear.

The Germans were also on high alert, having been warned by French double agents that the

British were showing interest in the area. They had also detected increased radio traffic and landing craft being concentrated in the southern British coastal ports.

Yellow Beach

The initial landings began at 04h50 on 19 August, with attacks on the two artillery batteries on the flanks of the main landing area.

No. 3 Commando, under Lieutenant Colonel John Durnford-Slater, was to conduct two landings 13 km east of Dieppe to silence the *Goebbels* coastal battery near Berneval. The guns had to be out of action by the time the main force approached the main beach.

The craft carrying No. 3 Commando were surprised by a German coastal convoy. The convoy had been detected by British radar stations at 21h30, but this was not conveyed to the raiding party.

German S-boats escorting a German tanker torpedoed some of the LCP (Landing Craft Personnel). The Germans were driven off but the group was dispersed, with some losses, and the German coastal defences were alerted.

Commandos from six craft landed at Yellow I but were pinned down. Unable to safely retreat or join the main force, they had to surrender.

Only 18 commandos managed to land on Yellow II beach. Unable to destroy the guns they harassed them with small arms fire until they had to eventually withdraw in the face of superior German forces.

Orange Beach

Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Lord Lovat No. 4 Commando, which included 50 US Army Rangers, carried out two landings 9.7 km west of Dieppe to neutralize the coastal battery *Hess* at Blancmesnil-Sainte-Marguerite near Varengeville.

They landed, climbed the steep slope, and attacked and neutralised the six 150 mm guns. They withdrew at 07h30 as planned. This was the only success of Operation Jubilee.

Blue Beach

The landing by the Royal Regiment of Canada plus three platoons from the Black Watch of Canada was delayed by 20 minutes. The smoke screens that should have hidden their assault had already lifted and they had lost the elements of surprised and darkness.

The Germans, alerted by the earlier naval engagement, had manned their defensive positions.

As soon as they reached the shore the Canadians were pinned against the seawall, unable to advance or retreat.

The Royal Regiment of Canada was annihilated. Of the 556 men in the regiment, 200 were killed and 264 captured.

Green Beach

The South Saskatchewan Regiment's 1st Battalion landed on Green beach without being detected at the same time No. 4 Commando landed at Orange beach. There was, however, a problem.

Some of the landing craft had drifted off course and most of

the battalion found themselves west of the River Scie rather than east of it. Because they had been landed in the wrong place, the battalion, whose objective was the hills east of the village, had to enter Pourville to cross the river by the only bridge.

By the time they reached the bridge the Germans had positioned machine guns and anti-tank guns there which stopped their advance.

The South Saskatchewan and the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada, who had landed beside them, were unable to reach their target and were forced to withdraw.

Both battalions suffered more losses as they withdrew; only 341 men were able to reach the landing craft and embark, and the rest were left to surrender.

Red and White Beaches

The Essex Scottish and the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry were to carry out the main frontal assault.

As the landing craft approached the beaches four destroyers were bombarding the coast. They were joined at 05h15 by five RAF Hurricane squadrons who bombed the coastal defences and set a smoke screen to protect the assault troops.

The infantry were meant to be supported by Churchill tanks of the 14th Army Tank Regiment landing at the same time, but the tanks arrived on the beach late. As a result, the two infantry battalions had to attack without armour support.

They were met with heavy machine gun fire from emplacements dug into the overlooking cliffs. Unable to clear the obsta-

cles and scale the seawall, they suffered heavy losses.

When the tanks eventually arrived only 29 were landed. Two of those sank in deep water, and 12 more became bogged down in the soft shingle beach. Only 15 of the tanks made it up to and across the seawall. Due to a series of tank obstacles they were prevented entry into the town and were forced to return to the beach. None of the tanks managed to return to England. All the crews that landed were either killed or captured.

Unaware of the situation on the beaches because of a smoke screen laid by the supporting destroyers, Major General Roberts sent in the two reserve units: the Fusiliers Mont-Royal and the Royal Marines.

At 07:00 the Fusiliers under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Dollard Ménard in 26 landing craft sailed towards their beach. The Germans hit them with heavy machine gun, mortar and grenade fire, and destroyed them.

Roberts then ordered the Royal Marines to land. They first had to transfer from their gunboats and motor boat transports onto landing craft. The Royal Marine landing craft were heavily engaged on their way in with many destroyed or disabled. Those Royal Marines that did reach the shore were either killed or captured.

As he became aware of the situation the Royal Marine commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Phillipps, stood up on the stern of his landing craft and signalled for the rest of his men to turn back. He was killed a few moments later.

At 9:40, under heavy fire, the

withdrawal from the main landing beaches began and was completed by 14:00.

Three Victoria Crosses were awarded for the operation: to Captain Patrick Porteous, No. 4 Commando; the Reverend John Weir Foote, padre to Royal Hamilton Light Infantry; and Lieutenant Colonel Charles Merritt of the South Saskatchewan Regiment.

Battle in the Sky

Dieppe failed to register the knock-out blow against the Luftwaffe that the RAF was seeking.

The Allied air operation saw 48 fighter squadrons of Spitfires, eight squadrons of Hurricane fighter-bombers, four squadrons of reconnaissance Mustang Mk Is and seven squadrons of No. 2 Group light bombers being committed.

Opposing these forces were some 120 operational fighters of Jagdgeschwader 2 and 26 (JG 2 and JG 26), the Dornier Do 217s of Kampfgeschwader 2 and various anti-shipping bomber elements of III./KG 53, II./Kampfgeschwader 40 (KG40) and I./KG 77.

The raid on Dieppe saw the baptism by fire of the new Spitfire Mark IX, the only British fighter equal to the FW 190.[37] Six squadrons (four British, two Canadian) flew the Mark IX at Dieppe. During the battle, Fighter Command flew 2,500 sorties over Dieppe, and achieved a narrow victory over the Luftwaffe.

The intense air fighting prevented the Luftwaffe from making major attacks on either the landing or the evacuation of the Allied forces, who consequently

did not suffer very much from attacks from the air.

However, in achieving the goal of the "greatest air battle" that would cripple the Luftwaffe over France, Operation Jubilee was less successful. During the air battles over Dieppe, the Royal Air Force lost 91 aircraft shot down and 64 pilots (17 taken prisoner, the rest all killed) while the Royal Canadian Air Force lost 14 aircraft and nine pilots. Additionally, the British lost six bombers over Dieppe. The Luftwaffe lost 48 aircraft, another 24 seriously damaged with 13 pilots killed and seven wounded.

The Conclusion

Of the nearly 5,000-strong Canadian contingent, 3,367 were killed, wounded or taken prisoner, an exceptional casualty rate of 68%. The 1,000 British Commandos lost 247 men. The Royal Navy lost one destroyer (HMS Berkeley) and 33 landing craft, suffering 550 dead and wounded. The RAF lost 106 aircraft to the 48 lost by the Luftwaffe. The German Army had 591 casualties. Of the 50 US Army Rangers serving with different Commando units, six were killed, seven wounded, and four captured.

Although Dieppe was a dismal failure, the lessons learnt were invaluable. Dieppe essentially became the textbook of "what not to do" in future amphibious operations, and laid the framework for the Normandy landings two years later.

The Dieppe Raid highlighted:

- the need for preliminary artillery support, including aerial bombardment;

- the need for a sustained element of surprise;
- the need for proper intelligence concerning enemy fortifications;
- the avoidance of a direct frontal attack on a defended port city; and,
- the need for proper re-embarkation craft.

The British developed a whole range of specialist armoured vehicles which allowed their engineers to perform many of their tasks protected by armour, most famously "Hobart's Funnies".

Because the treads of most of the Churchill tanks were caught up in the shingle beaches of Dieppe, the Allies started a new policy of learning what were the exact elements of every beach they intended to land upon, and devising appropriate vehicles for said beaches.

The operation also showed major deficiencies in RAF ground support techniques, and this led to the creation of a fully integrated Tactical Air Force to support major ground offensives.

It also forced the Allies to rethink the idea of seizing a major port for an invasion. Their revised view was that the amount of damage that would be done to a port by the necessary bombardment to take it, would almost certainly render it useless as a port afterwards. As a result, the decision was taken to construct prefabricated harbours, codenamed "Mulberry", and tow them to lightly defended beaches as part of a large-scale invasion.

The lessons learnt were applied two years later at Normandy.

TOTAL WAR ROME II — EMPEROR EDITION —

In many computer wargames you find yourself controlling an individual. You are either a troop in the field, or maybe at the controls of an aircraft. This is not the case in Total War - Rome II.

Here you will find yourself controlling thousands of troops and, more often than not, be up against even more enemy forces.

Total War - Rome II is what is known as a 'turn-based strategy, real-time tactics' game.

You control a faction against other factions that are either controlled by AI (Artificial Intelligence) or other human players if you are playing on-line multi-player.

Each faction receives a turn to plan and execute their strategy. You get to move your units (both on land and at sea), improve your cities and fortifications, recruit and train new troops, study new technologies, set up and protect trade routes and handle diplomatic negotiations.

Once all the factions have ended their turn, battles are fought using real-time tactics.

Total War - Rome II includes the Emperor Augustus Campaign Pack. This is set in 42 BC during the chaotic after-

math of Caesar's grisly murder. The republic remains whole, but its soul is divided as three great men, the members of the Second Triumvirate, hold the future of Rome in the palms of their hands.

- **Octavian**, Caesar's adoptive son and the heir to his legacy.
- **Marc Antony**, Caesar's loyal friend and most trusted lieutenant.
- **Lepidus**, Pontifex Maximus of Rome and the man who secured Caesar's dictatorship.

With the territories of The Republic divided between them and the military might of Rome at their beck-and-call, the members of The Second Triumvirate are each in a position to make a bid for leadership, and rule Rome as its first – and only – emperor.

However, external forces are on the move, looking to exploit the instability of Rome and expand their own territories. Will you fight as a defender of Rome and defeat the other members of the Triumvirate? Or lead another faction on a campaign of conquest and expansion, and take advantage of the chaos as the Roman civil war rages?

The campaign map extends

Emperor Matt O' Brien grabs his gladius and prepares his pilum as he sets off to do battle with the Barbarian Horde.

from Bactria (Afghanistan) to Lusitania (Portugal) and from Caledonia (Scotland) to Garamantia (in the Sahara), and is divided into 173 regions. The 57 provinces are groupings of up to four regions, and each region can be conquered separately.

Each province has a provincial capital with walls. Siege battles will only occur when fighting in a provincial capital.

The game features 117 different factions, each with its own unit roster and agenda, and overall bonuses and penalties.

There are over 500 different land units in the game, including mercenaries. In addition to traditional sieges and field battles, a myriad of battle types are available in Rome II. These include:

- **Combined naval/land battles:** These occur when assaulting a coastal city, or when two armies are near the coastline.
- **Settlement outskirts battles:** These are fought near regional capitals that are too small to have walls. The primary objective is to capture the city rather than destroy or rout the enemy army, although victory can still be achieved by routing your



- **opponent.**
- **Siege battles:** These occur when an army assaults a provincial capital or a fortified settlement. In these battles, the cities include multiple capture points which the defender has to defend in order to win the fight.
- **Encampment battles:** These are triggered when an army attacks another that is in defensive stance. The defending army has time to build fortifications around its perimeter, including wooden palisades or small forts.
- **River battles:** These are fought when an army tries to cross a major, navigable river and another tries to stop it. Navies can aid in this fight, although armies will be able to build transport ships of their own to cross rivers.
- **Ambushes:** These have been revamped in Rome II. The ambushing army can place traps, such as flaming boulders, spikes. The defending

army must find a way to escape the area, although it can also attempt to defeat the ambushing army. An ambush battle is also triggered when an army attacks an enemy that was sabotaged.

- **Port sieges:** These are triggered when a navy sails into an enemy coastal city with a port. The navy will attempt to land its army in the city, while heavier ships intercept any enemy vessels and provide supporting fire using catapults and other projectiles.

You are also able to recruit three different types of agent - the dignitary, the champion and the spy, and each culture has its own variants.

Generals also play an important role in the game. They can inspire or demotivate an army. They can be both military leaders and skilled politicians, depending on their traits and skill trees.

Total War - Rome II is a pret-

ty good game. Being successful does not rely on military might alone.

For those that enjoy a challenge or those that enjoy this period in history, try this game.



Publisher - Sega

Genre - Turn-based strategy, RTS

Platform - PC

Score - 8/10

Price - R589

Eight great World War I movies

This month, to coincide with Remembrance Day, we decided to do something a little different.

Instead of doing a movie review, we've decided to take a look at what we consider to be eight of the best movies about World War I.

There have been many good movies about World War II, Vietnam, and some of the mod-

ern wars. Yet there are not that many movies about The Great War.

The movies here were made between 1930 and 2011. They feature directors such as Stanley Kubrick, David Lean and Steven Spielberg.

Between them these films won nine Academy Awards, six Golden Globe Awards, four BAFTA Awards, and three

Emmy Awards.

You can still purchase many of these movies on DVD or find them on media such as Netflix.

To watch the trailer of each of the movies below, use your mouse to left click on the movie poster.

If you think there are any World War I movies that we've left out, drop us an e-mail and tell us about them.



Paths of Glory (1957)

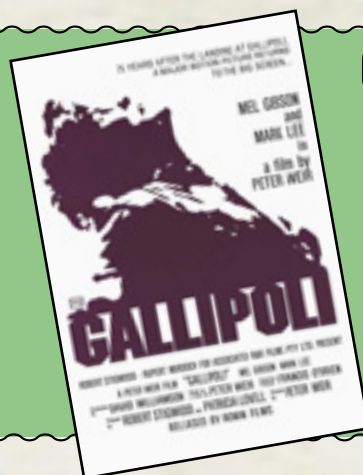
One of director Stanley Kubrick's early films, Paths of Glory is an American anti-war film. It is based on the novel of the same name by Humphrey Cobb.

Colonel Dax (Kirk Douglas) is the commanding officer of French troops who refuse to continue a suicidal attack on German positions. Dax attempts to defend them against a charge of cowardice in a court martial.

Lawrence of Arabia (1962)

Directed by David Lean, it went on to win seven Academy Awards. The film is based on the life of T.E. Lawrence (Peter O'Toole) and it depicts his experiences in the Arabian Peninsula during World War I.

He is torn between his allegiance between his native Britain and his new-found comrades within the Arabian desert tribes. It also stars Alex Guinness, Anthony Quinn and Omar Sharif.



Gallipoli (1981)

Starring Mel Gibson and Mark Lee the film centres on several young rural Australian men who enlist in the army during World War I.

They take part in the Gallipoli Campaign and slowly lose their innocence about the purpose of war. The climax of the movie occurs on the Anzac battlefield at Gallipoli and depicts the futile attack at the Battle of the Nek on 7 August 1915.

All Quiet on the Western Front (1930)

Based on Erich Maria Remarque book, the film follows a group of German schoolboys who are talked into enlisting by their teacher.

The story is told through their eyes and is not about heroism but about drudgery and futility and the gulf between the concept of war and the actuality.

The first film to win the Academy Awards for both Outstanding Production and Best Director.



The Blue Max (1966)

Lt. Bruno Stachel (George Peppard) is a commoner that has left the trenches in World War I to become a fighter pilot.

He wants nothing more than to achieve 20 kills and win the converted *Pour le Mérite* medal (The Blue Max). He will do whatever it takes to win the medal, much to the disgust of his commanding officer and fellow pilots.

Flyboys (2006)

Before the United States enters World War I a number of Americans volunteered for the French military as pilots. They formed the *Lafayette Escadrille*, whose exploits and heroism become the stuff of legend.

While a fictional version the characters in the film are based upon real people. Jean Reno is brilliant as Captain Georges Thénault, the commander of the squadron.



War Horse (2011)

Directed by Steven Spielberg the film is set before and during World War I.

It tells of the journey of Joey, a bay Thoroughbred horse raised by British teenager Albert (Jeremy Irvine), as he is bought by the British Army, leading him to encounter numerous individuals and owners throughout Europe, all the while experiencing the tragedies of the war happening around him.

The Lost Battalion (2001)

A made-for-television movie, the roughly 550 men, of the United States Army 77th Infantry Division have been completely cut off and surrounded by German forces a short distance away in the Argonne Forest.

The Germans give them two options: "Surrender or die." They choose a third option - fight.



The fine art of gypoing

The South African Defence Force had their own language - a mixture of English, Afrikaans, slang and techno-speak. One of the first worlds new conscripts learnt was "gypo" - the way to get out of work or make life easier.

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

One of the expressions that would often be heard was "gypo". Basically the word meant to avoid duties or work, or to find a way to make the work easier. A *gypo gat* (gypo arse) was someone that was lazy. You could even have gypo guts (diarrhoea).

For as long as there have been soldiers, there have been soldiers that are experts at finding an easier way to do things. More often than not these methods would be frowned upon by the military.

Here are a few examples of how troops would find a way to gypo.

Gary was 17 when he did his national service at 3 South African Infantry Battalion (3 SAI) in 1975. He tells the following story.

Besides weekend pass, one of the most important things for a troop was to receive mail from

home. Whether it was a letter from your parents, one of your relatives, or even from a friend, those letters let you know that people were thinking about you.

Of course the best was to receive a letter from you girlfriend.

During basic training the arrival of post for a national servicemen was too good an opportunity to let slip by.

After supper our corporal used to come to our bungalow with the post.

He would put the letters on a table and then pick up an envelope and read out the name. If your name was called you had to go forward and stand at attention in front of the corporal.

Before we were given our letters we had to go through the same process.

"Drop and give me twenty," the corporal would tell us.

We were expected to do twenty push-ups for each letter we received. Imagine if your girlfriend, mother and grandmother had all written you a letter. It would cost you 60 push-ups before you received them.

I came up with the perfect gypo. I contacted my girlfriend and all of the friends and relatives that used to write to me. I told them to seal their letter in an envelope but not to include

a stamp.

Then they used to deliver the letters to my parents. My parents would take all the letters for me and place them in a large envelope and this was posted to me.

So I would only receive 'one' letter and only have to do 20 push-ups. In reality I used to get ten to twelve letters in that envelope.

As we saw in last month's "On the lighter side", in the article "Ready for inspection", troops were not very fond of morning inspections.

They would constantly be looking at ways to gypo inspections. Kobus (18) did his basic training at the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg. Some of the members of his squad came up with what they thought was a perfect gypo.

One of the things that was always a pain in the butt was making your bed for inspection.

It sounds easy. After all, you just pull your blanket and sheets straight and there you go. Not in the army.

Your bed had to be made in a precise way. And the blanket had to have what was known as 'hospital corners' and it had to be pulled so tight that it was



CARRYING HANDLE GYPO: When marching with the rifle in the shoulder-arms position, the carrying handle of an R1 rifle could be tucked into your web belt, taking the strain of the 4,3 kg weapon off your forearm.

square. So it took valuable time and effort just to make your bed.

Our idea was to make the bed, get it perfect, and then make sure that it stayed that way. In order to this some of us decided to sleep on the floor next to the bed. Of course according to standing orders this was illegal.

Some of the guys even managed to organise a spare mattress. During the day these were stored up in the ceiling.

For two weeks our gypo seemed to be working. Then, one morning at about 2.00 am, the lights were switched on in the bungalow and our corporal, along with five or six other corporals, stormed in.

We were kicked awake and the offenders had to get dressed in our browns (nutria uniform) with our webbing, *staaldak* (steel helmet) and rifles and fall in outside.

From 2.30 to 6.00 am we were chased around the obstacle course. I thought I was going to die.

We were really stupid. Did we think that our corporals didn't know about the gypo of sleeping on the floor?

Of course there were occasions when a gypo would not go according to plan.

Mark was 18 when he did his basic training at 5 SAI in Lady-smith.

One night we were busy cleaning the floors for inspection the next morning. I was polishing the tile floor with some stuff that was called Dri-Brite.

It was a thick, creamy liquid and I spilled some of it on my boot. I wiped it off with a cloth and then noticed that it left my boot shinning.

I though I had discovered a new gypo. Instead of going to all the trouble of shinning my boots until they gleamed for inspection, I would use some of this Dri-Brite on them.

About half an hour before inspection I smeared this stuff on the toes of my boots and rubbed it over with a cloth. My boots were gleaming.

I was standing next to my bed for inspection. The corporal took one look at my boots and went ballistic.

"And that," he shouted, pointing down at my boots.

I looked down and nearly had a heart attack. Once the Dri-Brite had soaked into my boots and then become dry it left a milky white residue across the toes of my boots.

"Ja Mister Dri-Brite," the

corporal said. "You and I are going to have a good chat at the obstacle course."

Now I knew why no-one else had tried the Dri-Brite gypo.

The SADF liked to make sure that troops weren't left sitting around with nothing to do. If there was nothing to do, they would find something for you to do. And normally it would be something mundane and unpleasant.

Of course there were always people that found a way around this.

Brian did his national service at One Parachute Battalion. He remembers someone that perfected the art of gypoing.

I was a signaller and was in O-Company (Support Company). There was another national serviceman in my company, a lance corporal by the name of Kim.

Whenever I would see him he would be walking around the unit with a clipboard. Sometimes he would stop and count things and then write something down on his clipboard.

About two years after I finished national service I bumped into Kim when I was on holiday in Cape Town. We had a beer together and chatted about old times.

I asked him what his actual function was when he was at the unit. I remembered him and his clipboard.

"My actual function was to do as little as possible," Kim laughed. "I would wander around with my clipboard and, because it looked as if I had obviously been given a job to do,

no-one bothered to stop me and ask what I was actually doing. I looked busy, so everyone naturally assumed that I was busy."

Brian also remembers an incident when he was doing his PT course when he was caught gyping.

While on PT course a mate and myself got bust for gyping. One of the favourite things for the instructors to do was chase us around the parachute packing building.

This was just above the parachute training hangar and it was quite a big building. We would be standing in front of the hangar and one of the instructors would tell us to run around the parachute store.

"*Een minuut om die pakhuis. Cheers!*" (One minute around the stores. Cheers!)

Now the only way you could make it around the parachute stores was to sprint as fast as possible. It was almost impossible for everyone to finish in under a minute. So you would get sent again.

"Oh," the instructor would say, "Your mates don't want to work together. You are saying screw the corporal. Well the corporal says screw you. Around the stores, one minute. There you go."

This little game could go on for some time and it was not uncommon to make six or seven trips around the parachute packing stores. The more trips you made, the more tired you became.

Anyway, on this one occasion we got chased around the parachute stores and my mate and



LEOPARD CRAWL: A pair of extra socks could be used to protect the elbows when doing leopard crawl.

I decided to be clever. On the first run around the building we dropped out and sat down behind the stores.

We reasoned that we always had to run at least four times before the instructor tired of the game. So what we would do was sit and wait until everyone came around for the fourth time and then we would join the group again.

True to my luck, the RSM of the unit came to give everyone a pep talk just as they got back from the first trip around the building. He spoke to them for a few minutes and the instructors then ran everyone down to the parade ground for another PT exercise.

After about ten minutes my mate and I realised that something was amiss. We sneaked around the side of the parachute stores and, to our dismay, saw that there was nobody outside the hangar.

We looked like two total idiots as we tried to sneak down the road and find the rest of

the group. Of course we were dressed in PT smocks, so anyone could see that we were from the PT course.

We finally saw them on the parade ground but had no chance of joining them without being seen.

"Oh yes," said one of the instructors as we approached the group, "and just where have we been? Took a quick holiday in the Bahamas maybe?"

That evening when everyone else was dismissed my mate and I had to report for an extra hour of PT training. I can't remember how many times we were chased around the obstacle course.

Tim was 17 when he did his basic training at 5 SAI in Lady-smith.

I hated it when we had to go to the shooting range. I enjoyed the shooting part of it, it's all the other crap that went with it that I was not fond of.

If we weren't actually shoot-



KEEP IT CLEAN: Lining the inside of your dixies with a plastic Jiffy Bag would ensure that you didn't need to wash them.

ing then our instructors would keep us occupied with stuff like leopard crawling all over the place.

The ground was always full of small stones and they used to kill my elbows. A mate of mine showed me a good gypo for it.

When we went to the shooting range I would take two sets of old army socks with me. The toes had been cut off and I would pull these over my elbows. It helped a hell of a lot.

Another gypo that my mate showed me was when we were out doing field training. We would have to eat out of our dixies. The biggest problem was cleaning them after each meal.

The food was often greasy and thought the cooks would put out a drum of hot water to wash our dixies, the water wouldn't stay hot for very long. And it would soon become greasy.

We would take a plastic Jiffy Bag and use it to line the inside of the dixie. After you had eaten you just threw the Jiffy bag away and your dixie was left spotless.

Marching any amount of time while carrying a rifle in the shoulder arms position could be a strain on the arm. Of course some troops found a way around this. Kevin was one of them.

During basics most morning would be spent on the parade ground doing drill.

Once we were issued with our rifles, they were R1s back then, we would have to drill with our rifles. Often you would spend 30 to 40 minutes marching up and down doing left turns, right turns, about turns, mark time and slow march.

The R1 weighed 4,3 kg and after a while it would feel as if it weighted 40 kg. Your left forearm would take strain.

We had a perfect gypo for it. The R1 had a carrying handle and we would tuck the handle into our web belt. That way all you needed to do was use your hand to make sure it stayed upright.

Of course it was too good to last. We all had to hand our rifles into the weapons tiffie (armourer) and when we got them back the next morning all of the carrying handles had been cut off.

Back in the days before mobile phones, troops would have to make use of a coin-operated public telephone if they wanted to call home or speak to their girlfriend. These public tele-

phones were known as 'tickey boxes'.

If you were calling long distance it could cost a fair amount of money. Especially if you were living off a national serviceman's salary.

So naturally a method was found to gypo the phone.

One of the things that just about any national serviceman could tell you about was the 'long tickey'.

This was an ingenious method that was used to save money when using the public telephones.

A piece of cotton thread was attached to a coin, usually a one rand coin, with the aid of a piece of tape.

The coin was then inserted into the coin slot on the telephone and the loose end of the thread was wrapped around the button that had to be pushed to deposit the coin.

The button was then pressed, allowing the coin to drop into the telephone. As it dropped into the phone, the coin depressed a lever that would register the fact that a coin had been deposited, as well as the denomination of the coin. The coin would then drop into a deposit box inside the phone.

What would happen with a 'long tickey' was that the coin would depress the lever but would not drop into the coin receptacle.

When the telephone required more money to continue a call you just pressed the button again and the same coin would depress the lever once again.

In this manner a single coin could be used to register hun-

dreds of rands worth of calls.

Naturally this was highly illegal and the telephone service company, which was the Post Office at that time, instructed the SADF to keep a wary eye out for this type of activity. If you were caught using a 'long tickey' you would find yourself in serious trouble.

Wednesday afternoons in the SADF were dedicated to sports parade.

There was a long list of sports that you could participate in and they would also try and accommodate sports that were not on the list.

Naturally sports parade was the perfect opportunity to gypo. A fair number of permanent force members would claim that they took part in sports that were off the base. Instead of actually taking part in these sports, they would use the time as an afternoon off.

For national servicemen this was not so easy. But there were those that made a plan.

Todd did his national service at the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg. He remained at the unit for his entire two years. His gypo worked for the entire time he was there.

During our first sports parade we were told what sports were available. I told them that I played ice hockey. Not only that, but I was about to be selected to play at provincial level and was almost certain to be selected to play at national level.

If you played any sport at that level they would go to great lengths to try and accommodate you.

Obviously there was no ice rink at the Army Gymnasium. There wasn't even an ice rink in Heidelberg. In fact the nearest ice rink was the Carlton Sky Rink in Johannesburg, 45 km away.

I had a letter from my club to say that not only did I play for them, but I was a valuable and essential member of the team.

The letter also stated that we had hockey practice on a Wednesday afternoon from 3.00 to 6.00 and on Saturday mornings from 9.00 to 11.00 and that we played our matches on Saturday afternoon from 3.00 to 4.00.

During basic training we were not allowed to keep our own cars on base. So they arranged that the duty driver would take me through to Johannesburg, drop me off at the ice rink, and then fetch me again just after 6.00.

On Saturday morning my girlfriend would drive through from Johannesburg to fetch me and then drop me off again on Saturday evening.

After basics I was allowed to keep my own car on the base and would drive through to Johannesburg on Wednesday afternoons.

We would also have a weekend pass every second week, so that was no problem. On the weekends when I didn't have a pass I could still go through on a Saturday morning and had to report back by 8.00 on the Saturday evening. I had a special sports pass. It was a great arrangement.

The thing is that I never played ice hockey. The fact is that I couldn't even skate. It



TICKEY BOX: A 'long tickey' could be used to gypo a public telephone.

was all a gypo.

My girlfriend's brother did play ice hockey. In fact he went on to play for South Africa. He arranged the letter for me from his coach who thought it was a good laugh.

On Wednesday afternoon my girlfriend would skip class at university, meet me in Johannesburg, and we would either go to a movie or she would take me through to her house where we had our own sports parade.

No matter where soldiers are, not what army they are in, they will always find ways to make life easier.

If any of our readers know of any good gypo's that they can remember, drop me an e-mail and we can do a follow-up story at some stage.



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Coming up in next month's issue



Next month, as you have probably realised, is December and that means it's Christmas.

In lieu of a Christmas gift, Military Despatches will be bringing you a bumper edition.

All our regular features will be there, plus a few other articles which we hope that you will find interesting or amusing.

Our lead feature article will

be about The Christmas Truce of 1914. We trust that you will enjoy the November issue of the magazine and that you look forward to the December issue.

Parachute Wings - Quiz Answers

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Israel | 9. French Foreign Legion |
| 2. Austria | 10. Russian Federation |
| 3. Serbia | 11. Luftwaffe Fallschirmjäger WWII |
| 4. US Army | 12. Rhodesian Selous Scouts |
| 5. Chile | 13. Uganda |
| 6. British army | 14. French |
| 7. Italy | 15. US Navy |
| 8. South Africa | |

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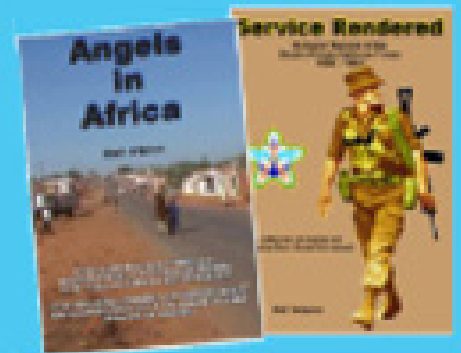
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Flip book magazines with pages that can be turned.



E-books

Produced in any electronic format required.



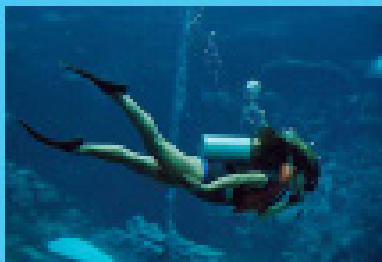
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