



Military Despatches

Vol 53 November 2021

We must remember them

The significance of Remembrance Day

Eugene Bullard

The first black fighter pilot



Up close and personal

Trench weapons of World War I

The smiling doc

The unassuming doctor nominated 34 times for the Victoria Cross in World War I

For the military enthusiast



Military Despatches YouTube Channel



Click on any video below to view



Paratrooper Wings Quiz

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

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

Army Speak 101

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

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



New videos each week

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

So remember to bookmark the channel and keep an eye out for new content.



Military Firearms Quiz

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



Elite Military Units Quiz

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

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



Who said that?

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

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

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This month we look at some of the weapons of World War I. Some are easy, while others are not so easy. How many can you identify?

Please remember to subscribe to our channel.

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



Editor's Sitrep

It's halfway through October and the November issue of the magazine is good to go.

This doesn't mean that I can now sit back and rest on my tattered laurels. I need to start working on the December edition of the magazine.

This means that in November I can work on the January 2022 issue of *Military Despatches*. Ultimately this means that I may even be able to take December off.

An update on my woes of last month. I mentioned that my television was not working and that I had taken it in for repair. Naturally it could not be repaired and I had to fork out money for a new television.

I got myself a Samsung 70" flat-screen plasma 4k OLED Smart TV. Remember the days when you bought a television, plugged it in, and watched one of the three channels available. Not these days.

This thing does everything but make the coffee. I haven't finished going through the manual yet, so perhaps it does that as well.

The television is directly connected to the Internet so not only

do I get DSTV, I also have Showmax, Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Britbox. The remote has a built-in microphone, so instead of pressing a button to change channels and can just speak into the microphone. And people still expect me to get work done.

In October I went to a MOTH meeting for the first time in ages. In fact when I went to my last meeting before that I think Moth 0 was still the Old Bill. And we're still not finished with COVID-19 yet.

You may notice that this issue is all about World War I. It's hard to believe that the 'War to end all Wars' (it wasn't) has been over for 103 years.

Then again the war the many of us fought in has been over for more than four decades. It's no wonder that so many of us are looking a bit rough around the edges.

I trust that you will enjoy this issue and please remember that you are all free to send in articles. I would appreciate it and it makes my life just a little easier.

Until next time.

Matt

Hipe!

media

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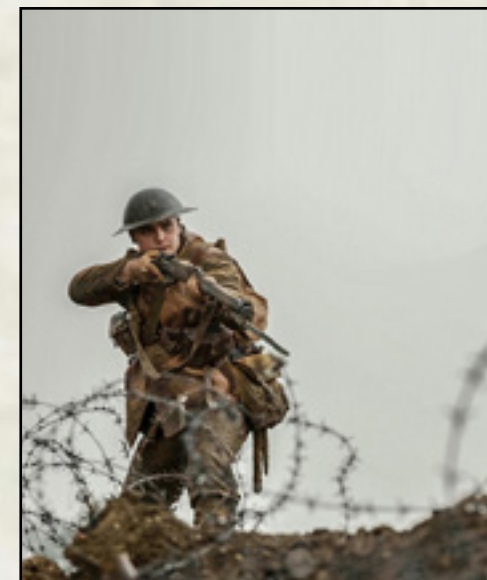
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We fear naught but God

The pictorial history of the South African Special Forces by Paul J. Els.

Front Cover

A still image from the 2020 movie "1917". The movie is set in April 1917 where two soldiers have to deliver a message that will stop 1,600 British troops from walking into a trap.



Ten notable characters of WWI

More than 70 million military personnel were mobilised to fight during the four years of World War I. Many of those that served were already famous, others would go on to become famous. Here are ten notable characters that served during the 'Great War'.

From 1914 to 1918 many countries were involved in a conflict that at the time was known as 'The Great War', or 'The War to End all Wars'. It was the first time that a war was fought on a global scale.

Sadly, it was not 'The War to End all Wars'. A mere 21 years after 'The Great War' ended, the world was at it again on an even grander scale.

Many of those that took part in World War I were already famous, or would become famous because of the war.

This would include people such as the Archduke of Austria, Franz Ferdinand. While he did not take part in World War I, his assassination on 28 June 1914 is considered to be the spark that ignited the war.

Serbian teenager Gavrilo Princip, a militant armed and trained by a Serbian terrorist group known as the Black Hand, fired the shot that killed Archduke Ferdinand. It is widely considered to be the opening shot of World War I. Princip spent the war in prison, where he died of tuberculosis in 1918.

Winston Churchill will always be remembered as the man that led Britain during World War II. He was the first lord of the British admiralty during World War I and also served as the head of the Royal Navy.

That is until he was demoted in 1915 following the British failure at the Dardanelles. Shortly thereafter, Churchill resigned his post and went to serve on the western front as a battalion commander.

Dwight D "Ike" Eisenhower served in the infantry and later in the newly formed Tank Corps during World War I. He was frantic to be sent to Europe to take part in combat. The unit under his command eventually received orders to France, but he was thwarted when the armistice was signed a week before his departure date. During World War II he would become the Supreme Commander for Operation Overlord and after the war he would become the 34th President of the United States.

Adolf Hitler served as a dispatch runner with the Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment 16 on the Western Front in France and Belgium. He was awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class and Iron Cross 1st Class for bravery. He was wounded in the left thigh by a shell splinter and was later temporarily blinded in a mustard gas attack. Of course we all know the role Hitler played in World War II.

Many others that took part in World War I would go on to play an important role in World War II.

These include Americans such as Douglas MacArthur, George S. Patton Jnr and Omar Bradley.

On the British side were individuals such as Bernard Law Montgomery and Edmund Allenby.

German leaders that cut their teeth in World War I include Erwin Rommel, Alfred Jodl, Erich Raeder, Walter Model, Wilhelm Keitel, Karl Doenitz, Heinz Guderian and Hermann Göring, who was a World War I flying ace.

In this month's Top Ten we look at 10 individuals that were famous, or became famous, for other reasons.

Thomas Hart Benton



Born in 1889, Thomas Hart Benton was an American painter and muralist of the American Regionalism art movement in

the 1930s and 1940s.

During World War I, he served in the U.S. Navy and was stationed at Norfolk, Virginia. His war-related work had an enduring effect on his style.

He was directed to make drawings and illustrations of shipyard work and life, and this requirement for realistic documentation strongly affected his later style. Later in the war, classified as a "camoufleur", Benton drew the camouflaged ships that entered Norfolk harbour.

His work was required for several reasons: to ensure that U.S. ship painters were correctly applying the camouflage schemes, to aid in identifying U.S. ships that might later be lost, and to have records of the ship camouflage of other Allied navies.

Benton later created several famous navy paintings, including "Cut the Line" and "She's off."

Benton died in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1975.

Humphrey Bogart



Born in 1899, Humphrey Bogart was an American actor known for films such as "Casablanca" and "The Maltese Falcon."

With no viable career options, Bogart enlisted in the United States Navy in the spring of 1918 (during World War I), and served as a coxswain.

Bogart was recorded as a model sailor, who spent most of his sea time after the armistice ferrying troops back from Europe. Bogart left the service on June 18, 1919 at the rank of Boatswain's Mate Third Class.

He may have received his trademark scar and developed his characteristic lisp during his naval stint. There are several conflicting stories.

In one, his lip was cut by shrapnel when his ship (the USS Leviathan) was shelled. The ship was never shelled, however, and Bogart may not have been at sea before the armistice.

Another story, held by long-time friend Nathaniel Benchley, was that Bogart was injured while taking a prisoner to Portsmouth Naval Prison in Kittery, Maine.

While changing trains in Boston, the handcuffed prisoner reportedly asked Bogart for a cigarette. When Bogart looked for a match, the prisoner smashed him across the mouth with the cuffs (cutting Bogart's lip) and fled before he was recaptured and imprisoned.

In an alternative version, Bogart was struck in the mouth by a handcuff loosened while free-

ing his charge; the other handcuff was still around the prisoner's wrist.

David Niven said that when he first asked Bogart about his scar, however, he said that it was caused by a childhood accident.

According to Niven, the stories that Bogart got the scar during wartime were made up by the studios. His post-service physical did not mention the lip scar, although it noted many smaller scars.

Bogart died from oesophageal cancer in Los Angeles in 1957.

F. Scott Fitzgerald



Born in 1896, F. Scott Fitzgerald was an American writer most famous for the novel "The Great Gatsby."

In 1917, Fitzgerald dropped out of Princeton to join the Army and was commissioned as a second lieutenant.

But Fitzgerald never saw combat, as the armistice was signed shortly before he was

deployed.

Before the war ended, Fitzgerald was nervous that he would die in battle and often wrote in his spare time in the hopes of leaving a legacy. These writings were the groundwork for his later novel "This Side of Paradise."

Fitzgerald was also friends with Ernest Hemingway, and the two writers spent much time as expatriates in Paris during the 1920s. The two friends were also part of what Gertrude Stein dubbed the "Lost Generation," a term she coined to define the generation that came of age during the Great War.

Fitzgerald died of a heart attack in Hollywood in 1940.

Robert Graves



Born in 1895, Robert Graves was an English poet and novelist who wrote more than 120 books, including the novel "I, Claudius."

At the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Graves enlisted almost imme-

diately, taking a commission in the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers as a second lieutenant (on probation) on 12 August.

He was confirmed in his rank on 10 March 1915, and received rapid promotion, being promoted to lieutenant on 5 May 1915 and to captain on 26 October.

He published his first volume of poems, *Over the Brazier*, in 1916. He developed an early reputation as a war poet and was one of the first to write realistic poems about the experience of frontline conflict.

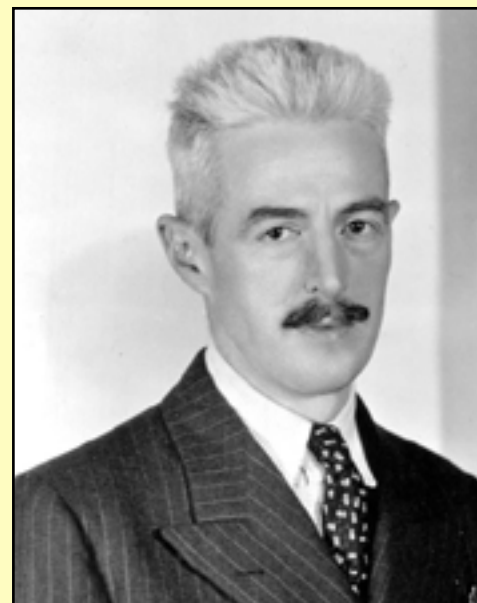
In later years, he omitted his war poems from his collections, on the grounds that they were too obviously "part of the war poetry boom." At the Battle of the Somme, he was so badly wounded by a shell-fragment through the lung that he was expected to die and was officially reported as having died of wounds. He gradually recovered and, apart from a brief spell back in France, spent the remainder of the war in England.

One of Graves's friends at this time was the poet Siegfried Sassoon, a fellow officer in his regiment. They both convalesced at Somerville College, Oxford, which was used as a hospital for officers.

"How unlike you to crib my idea of going to the Ladies' College at Oxford," Sassoon wrote to him in 1917.

Graves died from heart failure on 7 December 1985 at the age of 90 years.

Dashiell Hammett



Born in 1894, Dashiell Hammett was an American novelist who wrote "The Maltese Falcon" and "The Thin Man."

He left school when he was 13 years old and held several jobs before working for the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. He served as an operative for Pinkerton from 1915 to February 1922, with time off to serve in World War I.

Hammett enlisted in the United States Army in 1918 and served in the Motor Ambulance Corps. He was afflicted during that time with the Spanish flu and later contracted tuberculosis.

He spent most of his time in the Army as a patient at Cushman Hospital in Tacoma, Washington, where he met a nurse, Josephine Dolan, whom he married on July 7, 1921, in San Francisco.

Hammett devoted much of his life to left-wing activism. He was a strong antifascist throughout the 1930s, and in

1937 joined the Communist Party.

In early 1942, following the attack on Pearl Harbour, Hammett again enlisted in the United States Army. He was a disabled veteran of World War I, a victim of tuberculosis, and a Communist, but he pulled strings to be admitted.

He served as an enlisted man in the Aleutian Islands and initially worked on cryptanalysis on the island of Umnak. For fear of his radical tendencies, he was transferred to the Headquarters Company where he edited an Army newspaper entitled *The Adakian*.

Hammett died in Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan on 10 January 1961, of lung cancer, diagnosed just two months before. A veteran of both world wars, Hammett is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Ernest Hemingway



Born in 1899, Ernest Hemingway was a leading American journalist and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist.

In December 1917 he attempted to enlist in the US Army, but was rejected for poor eyesight.

Hemingway responded to a Red Cross recruitment effort and signed on to be an ambulance driver in Italy.

In May 1918, he sailed from New York, and arrived in Paris as the city was under bombardment from German artillery. That June he arrived at the Italian Front.

On 8 July he was seriously wounded by mortar fire, having just returned from the canteen bringing chocolate and cigarettes for the men at the front line.

Despite his wounds, Hemingway assisted Italian soldiers to safety, for which he was decorated with the Italian War Merit Cross, the *Croce al Merito di Guerra*. He was still only 18 at the time.

He underwent an immediate operation at a distribution centre, and spent five days at a field hospital before he was transferred for recuperation to the Red Cross hospital in Milan where he spent the next six months.

Hemingway covered the Spanish Civil War as a journalist. During World War II he also worked as a war reporter.

In July 1944 he attached himself to "the 22nd Infantry Regiment commanded by Col. Charles "Buck" Lanham, as it drove toward Paris", and Hemingway became de facto leader to a small band of village militia in Rambouillet outside of Paris.

Paul Fussell, an officer with the 103rd Infantry Division, remarked: "Hemingway got into considerable trouble playing infantry captain to a group of Resistance people that he gathered because a correspondent is not supposed to lead troops, even if he does it well."

This was in fact in contravention of the Geneva Convention, and Hemingway was brought up on formal charges; he said that he "beat the rap" by claiming that he only offered advice.

In 1947, Hemingway was awarded a Bronze Star for his bravery during World War II. He was recognized for having been "under fire in combat areas in order to obtain an accurate picture of conditions", with the commendation that "through his talent of expression, Mr. Hemingway enabled readers to obtain a vivid picture of the difficulties and triumphs of the front-line soldier and his organization in combat".

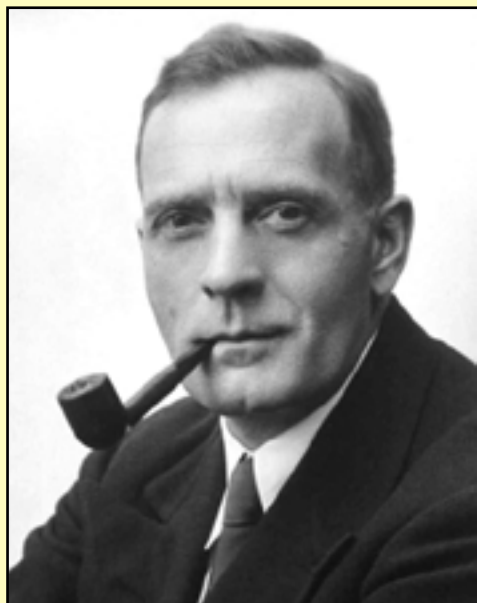
Hemingway received the 1954 Nobel Prize in Literature. He committed suicide in Ketchum, Idaho, in 1961 by shooting himself with a double-barrelled shotgun.

It is interesting to note that Hemingway's father had also committed suicide. His brother Leicester and his sister Ursula also killed themselves.

It was later believed that they all suffered from hereditary hemochromatosis, whereby the excessive accumulation of iron in tissues culminates in mental and physical deterioration.

TOP TEN

Edwin Hubble



Born in 1889, Edwin Hubble was an American astronomer and cosmologist who observed in 1929 that the universe was expanding. He played a crucial role in establishing the fields of extragalactic astronomy and observational cosmology.

After the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, Hubble rushed to complete his Ph.D. dissertation so he could join the military. Hubble volunteered for the United States Army and was assigned to the newly created 86th Division, where he served in 2nd Battalion, 343 Infantry Regiment.

He rose to the rank of Major, and was found fit for overseas duty on 9 July 1918, but the 86th Division never saw combat. After the end of World War I, Hubble spent a year at Cambridge University, where he renewed his studies of astronomy.

Hubble also worked as a civilian for U.S. Army at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland during World War II as

the Chief of the External Ballistics Branch of the Ballistics Research Laboratory during which he directed a large volume of research in exterior ballistics which increased the effective firepower of bombs and projectiles.

His work was facilitated by his personal development of several items of equipment for the instrumentation used in exterior ballistics, the most outstanding development being the high-speed clock camera, which made possible the study of the characteristics of bombs and low-velocity projectiles in flight.

The results of his studies were credited with greatly improving design, performance, and military effectiveness of bombs and rockets. For his work there, he received the Legion of Merit award.

Hubble had a heart attack in July 1949 while on vacation in Colorado. He was cared for by his wife and continued on a modified diet and work schedule. He died of cerebral thrombosis (a blood clot in his brain) on 28 September 1953, in San Marino, California.

Among his many awards are the Newcomb Cleveland Prize in 1924, Bruce Medal in 1938, Franklin Medal in 1939, and the Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1940.

The famed Hubble Space Telescope, which was launched in 1990, is named after him.

Horace Pippin



Horace Pippin was a self-taught African American artist who painted a range of themes, including scenes inspired by his service in World War I, landscapes, portraits, and biblical subjects. Some of his best-known works address the U.S.'s history of slavery and racial segregation.

In World War I, Pippin served in K Company, the 3rd Battalion of the 369th infantry regiment, known for their bravery in battle as the famous Harlem Hellfighters.

The predominately Black unit faced enormous racism, especially before they were transferred to the command of the French Army. They were the longest serving U.S. regiment on the war's frontlines, holding their ground against enemy fire almost continuously from mid-July until the end of the war.

The regiment as a whole was awarded the French *Croix de Guerre*. In September 1918,

Pippin was shot in the right shoulder by a German sniper.

The injury initially cost him the use of his arm and always limited his range of motion. He later used his left hand to guide his right when painting.

He was honourably discharged in 1919. He was retroactively awarded a Purple Heart for his combat injury in 1945.

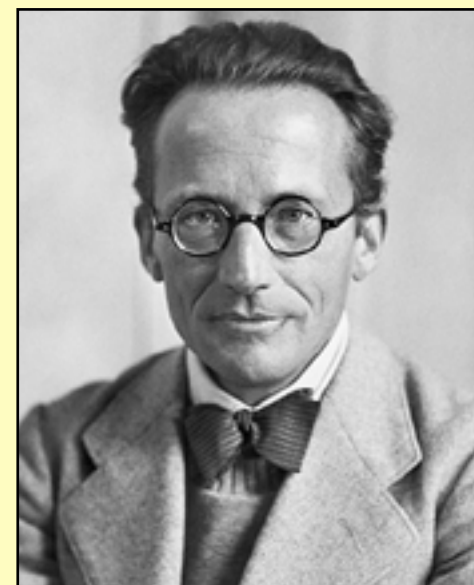
He said of his combat experience: "I did not care what or where I went. I asked God to help me, and he did so. And that is the way I came through that terrible and Hellish place. For the whole entire battlefield was hell, so it was no place for any human being to be."

After the war, Pippin created four memoirs - one illustrated - that describe his harrowing military service in detail.

He returned to war subjects periodically throughout the 1930s and 1940s, and later said that WWI "brought out all the art in me".

He died in Pennsylvania in 1946.

Erwin Schrödinger



Born in 1887, Erwin Schrödinger was a Nobel Prize-winning Austrian-Irish physicist who developed a number of fundamental results in quantum theory: the Schrödinger equation provides a way to calculate the wave function of a system and how it changes dynamically in time.

He's also well known for his 1935 thought experiment known as Schrödinger's cat. In quantum mechanics, Schrödinger's cat is a thought experiment that illustrates a paradox of quantum superposition. In the thought experiment, a hypothetical cat may be considered simultaneously both alive and dead as a result of its fate being linked to a random subatomic event that may or may not occur.

In 1914, Schrödinger was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian military, and later served as an artillery officer in Italy.

When Schrödinger received the Nobel Prize in 1933, he said the award would have gone to Friedrich Hasenöhrl, a physicist who had influenced Schrödinger, if he had not died during the war.

In 1933, Schrödinger decided to leave Germany because he disliked the Nazis' anti-Semitism.

On 4 January 1961, Schrödinger died of tuberculosis, aged 73, in Vienna.

Margaretha Zelle



Born in 1876, Margaretha Zelle was a Dutch exotic dancer and spy. She is far better known by her stage name, Mata Hari.

In the early 1900s, after a troubled marriage, Zelle moved to Paris where she took on the stage name Mata Hari and became an exotic dancer and diplomat's mistress.

Zelle's "temple dance" performance and garb quickly gained her notoriety and she traveled Europe performing.

In 1916, Hari accepted a large sum of money from a German official to spy on France, but she never went through with it.

After falling in love with an injured Russian captain, Hari agreed to spy on Germany for France, but French officials later betrayed her, unjustly suspecting her of still working for Germany.

Hari was executed by firing squad in Paris in 1917.

Special Forces - Sturmtruppen

Part thirty-one of a series that looks at Special Forces around the world. This month features the World War I Sturmtruppen or Stormtroopers.

Shortly after 04h00 on 21 March 1918, more than 6,500 German heavy guns and 3,500 mortars unleashed one of the most devastating artillery bombardments in the history of warfare - all of it concentrated on a tiny 150-square-mile patch of the Allied lines along the Somme. The Kaiser's Spring Offensive on the Western Front, code-named Operation Michael, had

begun.

In less than five hours, nearly 3.5 million shells had pounded British command posts and gun batteries, while salvo after salvo of deadly chlorine and

mustard gas rained down on the trenches.

As the bombardment came to an abrupt end, the shell-shocked British troops staggered back to the parapets, waiting for the attack that was sure to come.

They watched in dismay as a wave of heavily armed enemy infantry charged out of the smoke. But these attackers weren't ordinary German soldiers, they were the Kaiser's elite

sturmtruppen or "stormtroopers" - handpicked men, heavily armed and specially trained for close combat.

Within minutes, the raiders had overwhelmed the Allied defenders at key points and were already racing through the openings to sow chaos behind the lines.

Their assault had cleared the

way for a half-million regular German soldiers who would soon be pouring through the gaps along the 40-kilometre front.

By morning's end, British and French forces were falling back in disarray; after nearly four years of war, victory for the Kaiser suddenly seemed tantalizingly within reach.

And while the Spring Of-



fensive eventually fizzled, the stormtroopers' onslaught staggered the Allies. What's more, this new style of fighting had effectively rewritten the book on infantry tactics. In fact, armies to this day still use their techniques on the battlefield.

Background

The rise of Germany's stormtroopers is perhaps one of the most fascinating stories of World War One.

Stormtroopers were notorious for their radical Hutier infiltration tactics - named for Oskar von Hutier, the visionary German general that championed their aggressive combat style.

Forceful, sophisticated, even surgical, this revolutionary approach to trench warfare was a clear departure from the unimaginative and costly practice of using sustained, sector-wide barrages followed by frontal assaults by massed infantry.

Stormtrooper attacks typically began with quick and incredibly violent artillery bombardments on narrow segments of the enemy trenches.

Then came rapid onslaughts across No Man's Land by squads of heavily armed commandos. The fast-and-furious assaults would target only those areas that had been softened up by the shelling.

Just like the Nazi Blitzkrieg of World War Two, stormtroopers would roll over the defenders at key points, bypassing concentrations of Allied troops, and then speed into the rear areas to confuse and paralyse the enemy.

Only then were the regular infantry sent forward to widen

the gaps in the front, mop up resistance and secure captured territory.

Advanced weapons

While stormtroopers were considered 'light infantry,' each was equipped with a small arsenal of weaponry.

Although many eschewed the standard Gewehr 98 rifle in favour of shortened cavalry carbines, the raiders' chief weapon was the hand grenade - they carried sandbags full of them into action.

They would often tape three *stielhandgranate* together and these would be thrown into a bunker.

NCOs and officers armed themselves with rapid-fire pistols like the Mauser C-96 or the P08 Luger outfitted with shoulder stocks and high capacity magazines.

Support teams using Danish Madsen LMGs and even captured British Lewis guns helped cover advancing squads. Some units were known to rely on even heavier ordnance: flame throwers, trench mortars and even sawed-off 7.62 cm artillery pieces carried or rolled into No Man's Land by the assault teams.

During the 1918 Spring Offensive some stormtroopers were armed with history's first submachine gun - the MP-18.

Not a new idea

The idea of the stormtrooper was not new. In fact the concept emerged in 1914, the first year of the war.

The first stormtroopers were from the Calsow Assault Detachment, a pioneer outfit with

Germany's Eighth Army. Established in March 1915, its role was to eradicate enemy bunkers and machine gun nests using portable 37 mm artillery pieces.

Oddly, this novel concept was never battle tested; the unit was decimated after being rushed to the Western Front to help stem an Allied offensive.

An army captain named Willy Rohr later took command of the battered detachment and spent the rest of the year modifying the outfit's tactics.

After a successful demonstration to the German crown prince and General Ludendorff,



TRAIN HARD - FIGHT EASY: Regarded as the elite of the German Army, stormtroopers would spend many hours training and becoming physically fit.

the high command warmed to the concept.

In 1916, the top brass ordered every corps on the Western Front to scour its ranks for the fittest and bravest to man experimental assault teams.

By the end of the year, 30 German divisions had established battalions of shock troops. Even the navy had formed a detachment.

The units became known as "storm men", "raiding troops" and even "hunting commandos", before the term *sturmtrooper* or stormtrooper took hold.

They were combat veterans

The first major stormtrooper offensive of the war took place in the opening days of the disastrous Verdun offensive of 1916.

The following year, German assault units would punch through Italian lines at the Battle of Caporetto and would even retake ground captured by Allied tanks at the Battle of Cambrai.

The results of these early forays were so encouraging that stormtroopers became a key element in the 1918 Spring Offensive or *Kaiserschlacht* (Kaiser's Battle).

Right from the start, the stormtroopers were considered the elite of the German army - and they knew it. Celebrated in the national press for their dash and daring, stormtroopers were lavished with plentiful rations and comfortable living conditions.

Assault teams rarely if ever manned the trenches like their rank and file comrades. In fact, they were brought up to the front just prior to an action and were whisked to the rear when operations were complete.

Unlike ordinary infantry, stormtroopers travelled by truck to save their strength for combat. Veteran raiders flouted regulations and modified their uniforms as they saw fit, adding camouflage and leather patches on the knees and elbows, a

practice that raised eyebrows among the spit and polish brass.

But while the units were spared much of the horror and drudgery of trench warfare, they were expected to face certain death without hesitation when called upon. Not surprisingly, casualties among stormtrooper battalions were shockingly high.

Because of their fast-moving style of fighting, stormtroopers needed to be in peak physical shape at all times.

And in addition to a punishing fitness regimen, they also trained rigorously for battle, refining their tactics endlessly in mock assaults using live ammunition.

When most troops - be they German, British, French or later Americans - took part in an attack they had little idea of what the objectives were. This was known as "going over the top".

Their briefings were normally restricted to, "When I blow the whistle you will climb out of your trench, and advanced at a slow, steady pace towards the enemy."

They didn't need to add, "Until you are mown down by enemy machine gun fire."

This was not the case with the stormtroopers. When planning for an operation, the teams received detailed briefings. Stormtroopers were given intricate maps and aerial photography of their specific objectives and even rehearsed their assaults on life-sized replicas of their targets.

Each member of the assault team knew exactly what was expected of them.

They changed war forever

Stormtrooper fighting techniques revolutionized modern warfare. The battalions pioneered many of the small-unit tactics that are still in use on battlefields to this day.

Assault detachments were also the first German soldiers to be equipped with the distinctive *stahlhelm* steel helmets. Up that point the Kaiser’s soldiers wore the largely useless spiked *pickelhaubes*.

They dabbled in now-ubiquitous body armour and were also the first soldiers to use sub-machine guns in combat, the MP-18.

Germany wasn’t the only army to apply stormtrooper tactics in World War One.

A French commander named André Laffargue penned a widely read essay on assault teams in early as 1915.

The following year, the Russians used concentrated artillery and precision infantry assaults to punch through Austrian lines at the Brusilov Offensive in Galicia. The attack nearly broke the Central Powers in the east.

The British army famously used both Canadian and Australian shock troops all along the Western Front with great success.

Italy’s Arditi performed a similar function and Austria Hungary formed its own stormtrooper detachments known as *Jagdkommandos*.

After the armistice, the fascination with stormtroopers lived on. Their battlefield successes fed into a popular post-war narrative in Germany that maintained the empire could have won the war were it not for defeatists on the home front.

The stormtrooper mystique would go on to inspire the paramilitary Friekorps of Weimar Germany and more famously the die hard Brown shirts of Adolf Hitler’s SA or Sturmabteilung. In fact, the term “stormtrooper” itself would become indelibly associated with the Nazi Party, eventually overshadowing the remarkable accomplishments of the Sturmtruppen of the First World War.



Bush War Books has probably one of the finest collections of military titles available. Especially on the South African Border War.

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“War does not determine who is right - only who is left”



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 two years ago 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 opposite) 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.

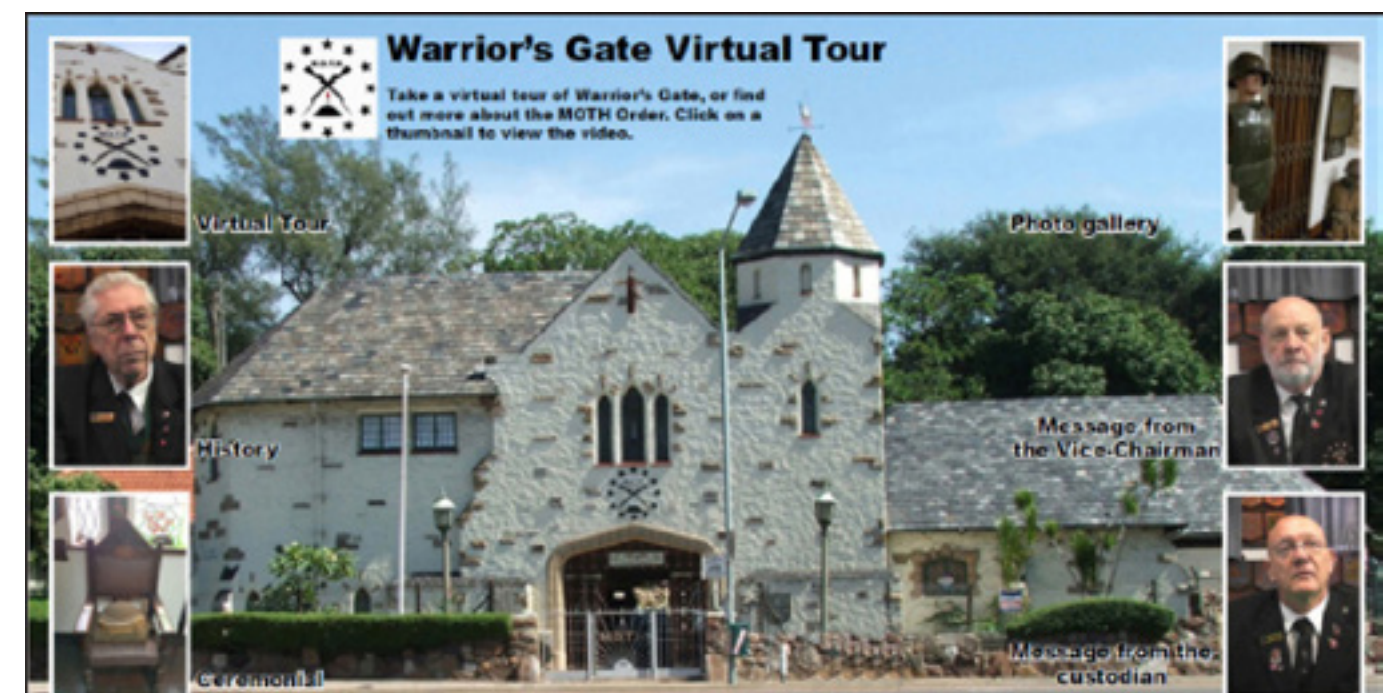
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,

We will remember them.



Memorable Order of Tin Hats

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





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Springbok

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Members of the United Kingdom and Europe Branch attending the Battle of Delville Wood Memorial Service at the Richmond Cemetery, Richmond, United Kingdom on 17 July 2023.

Springbok



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

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



Quiz

Weapons of World War I

This month we're taking a closer look at some of the weapons of World War I. Some of these are easy, while some are not that easy at all. How many of these can you identify? You'll find the answers on page 88.

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



14



15



13



Listen Live

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An unsung hero

Many will have heard of the Tuskegee Airmen, or General Benjamin O. Davis Junior. Yet not that many will have heard of Eugene Bullard, the man who came before all of them.

During World War II the pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group and the 477th Bombardment Group had one thing in common - they were all African-Americans. They were better known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

Benjamin Oliver Davis Junior was the commander of the Tuskegee Airmen. He would go on to become the first African-American general officer in the United States Air Force.

On December 9, 1998, he was promoted to four-star general by President Bill Clinton.

He was not the first in his family to break racial barriers. His father, Benjamin O. Davis Senior, was the first African-American general in the United States Army.

Yet while the history of the Tuskegee Airmen has been well recorded, this has not been the case with Eugene James "Jacques" Bullard.

Who, you may well ask, was Eugene Bullard? He was the first black fighter pilot.

Bullard was born in Columbus, Georgia on 9 October, 1895. He was one of ten children born to William Bullard, a black man from Martinique, and Josephine Thomas, a Creek Indian.

His father had fled from Haiti during the Haitian Revolution and, after reaching the United States, had taken refuge with

the Creek Indians.

While still in his teens Eugene had left Columbus and moved to Atlanta by himself. He had been told that the way to escape racial prejudice was to head for Europe. His father had also pointed out that Bullard was a French surname and that at least one of his ancestors had come from France.

He stowed away on a ship bound for Scotland and after arriving in Aberdeen he made his way south to Glasgow. From there he went to Paris.

He like what he saw and the way he was treated, so he decided to settle in France. He became a fairly good boxer and also worked in a music hall.

When World War I broke out in August 1914, Bullard had no hesitation in enlisting to fight for his new country.

At that stage he was not a French citizen and had to join the French Foreign Legion. He was assigned to the 3rd Marching Regiment of the 1st Foreign Regiment as a machine gunner, he saw combat near the Somme River.

It was during this time when he learned Americans and other volunteers were now allowed to transfer to Metropolitan French Army units, including the 170th French Infantry Regiment – nicknamed "*Les Hirondelles de la Mort*," or "The Swallows of Death."

The idea of being part of a unit with crack troops appealed to Bullard, so he put in his request to join the regiment. In February 1916, his request was granted just as the 170th Infantry was sent to Verdun, one of the largest and longest battles of the First World War on the Western Front between the German and French armies. The battle took place on the hills north of Verdun-sur-Meuse in north-eastern France.

It was during this battle that Bullard was severely wounded on March 5, 1916 and sent to a Parisian hospital where he spent the next six months recuperating. During convalescence, he was cited for acts of valour at the orders of the regiment on July 3, 1917 and was awarded the Croix de Guerre.

While convalescing in Paris, Bullard and his friend Jeff Davis Dixon had a bet. Dixon bet \$2,000 that Bullard would not be able to get into the French Air Force.

On 5 October, 1916, Bullard arrived at the French aerial gunnery school at Cazaux. It was there that he met fellow American Edmond Genet, who told Bullard about the *Lafayette Escadrille* and suggested Bullard become a pilot rather than a gunner.

In Mid-October he transferred to the flight school at Tours for pilot training. The training took



Eugene Bullard
9 Oct 1898 - 12 Oct 1961

a few more months, but it was inevitably given Bullard's persistence that it would pay off. Bullard earned his pilot's license and then Dickerson faithfully paid the \$2,000. It was a considerable sum at the time, especially for a gentleman's bet. Dixon admitted that he hated to lose the money, but was delighted that at least Bullard was from Dixie.

The result of the bet was to launch Eugene Bullard into history as a first ever African-American aviator.

After qualifying as a pilot he joined 269 American aviators at the Lafayette Flying Corps on November 15, 1916. American volunteers flew with French pilots in different pursuit and bomber/reconnaissance aero squadrons on the Western Front.

On August 27, he was assigned to the Escadrille N.93 based at Beauzee-sur-Aire south of Verdun. The squad-

ron was equipped with Nieuport and Spad VII aircraft that displayed a flying duck as the squadron insignia. He took part in over twenty air combat missions, and he is sometimes credited with shooting down one or two German aircraft. However, the French authorities could not confirm Bullard's victories. His Spad had an insignia lettered "All blood runs red" and his nickname became the "Black Swallow of Death".

When the United States entered the war, the United States Army Air Service convened a medical board to recruit Americans serving in the Lafayette Flying Corps for the Air Service of the American Expeditionary Forces. Bullard went through the medical examination, but he was not accepted, as only white pilots were allowed to serve.

Sometime later, on a short break from duty in Paris, Bullard allegedly got into an argument with a French commissioned officer and was punished by being transferred to the service battalion of to the 170th infantry Regiment of the French army. He was discharged in October 1919 and returned to Paris.

After the war he married and

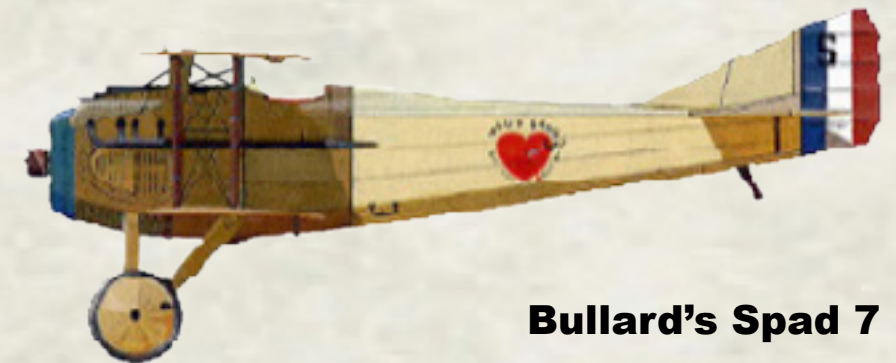
had two children. He bought a bar named "Le Grand Duc" on the north side of Paris.

In the late 1930s, prior to the outbreak of World War II, he was recruited by French intelligence to spy on the Germans who come by his bar. He remained very devoted to France and tried to join the French army but was considered too old. In 1940, he managed to find a way out of German occupied France, biked all the way down to Portugal and returned to the United States on a Red Cross ship. He settled in New York City.

In 1954, along with two other French veterans, he was invited by French Pres. Charles de Gaulle to light the flame of the Unknown Soldier at the *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris.

Eugene Bullard received fifteen decorations from the government of France. He was made a Knight of the Legion of Honour, France's most coveted award. He also was awarded the *Medaille militaire*, another top military distinction.

He died in New York City of stomach cancer on October 12, 1961 at the age of 66 with his achievements all but forgotten.



Bullard's Spad 7

Up close and personal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Luger P08



Colt New Service



Webley & Scott Mk VI

No. 36 Mills bomb

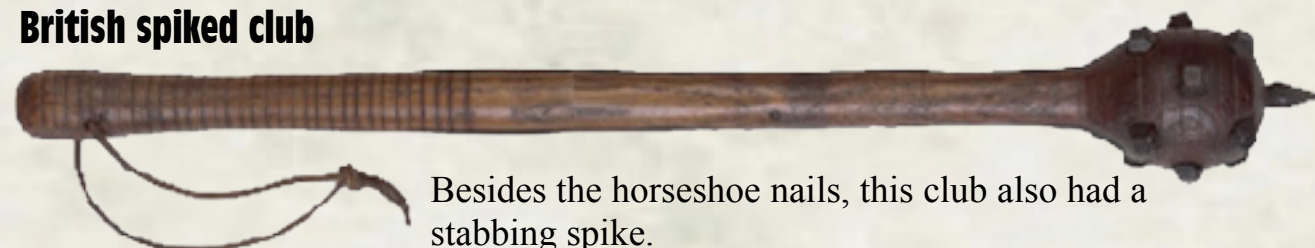


The German *stielhandgranate* became one of the Stormtroopers iconic weapons. The handle gave the thrower a significant range advantage over other grenades.



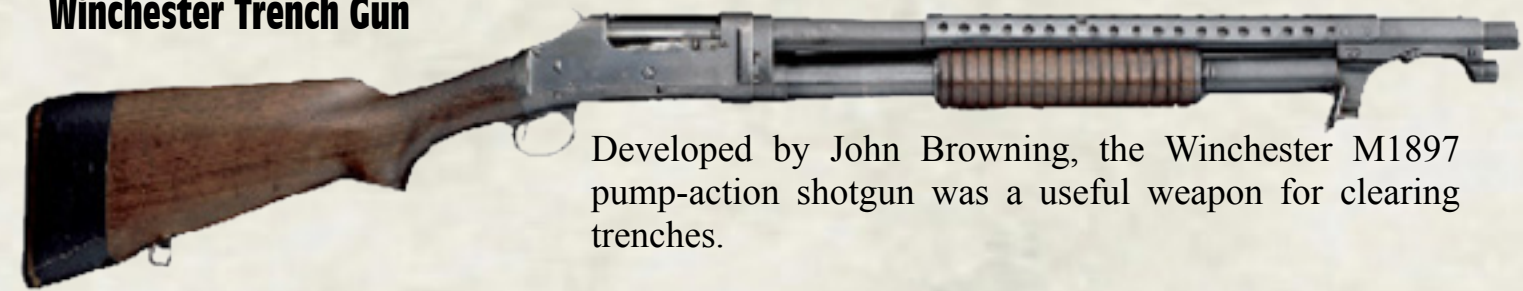
Stick grenade

British spiked club



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

Winchester Trench Gun



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



Nailed cosh

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



German 'Ersatz' knife bayonet

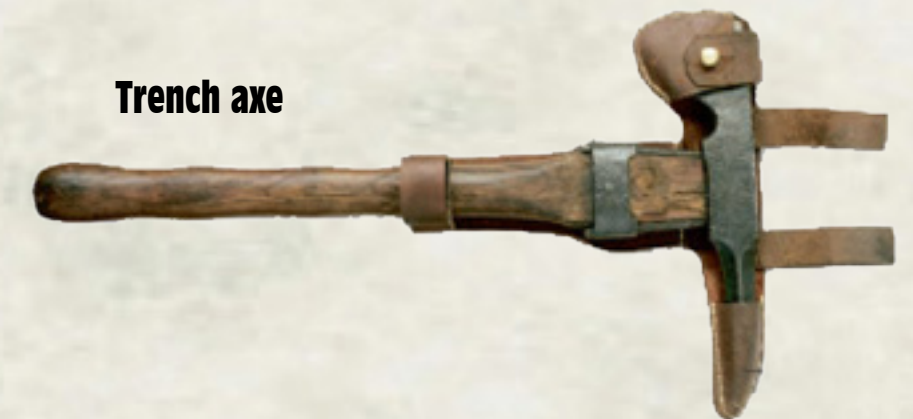


French trench knife



American knuckle-duster trench knife

Trench axe



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



SMLE Mk III Rifle with wire-cutting attachment

The Zimmerman Telegram

What was the Zimmerman Telegram and why was it, probably, the most significant Intelligence coup of World War I? By Paul Rosslee.

Before we go to that fateful day, 17th January 1917; let us begin on the 4th August 1914, the day that Britain declared war on Germany.

In the early hours of that morning, the British cable-ship Telconia, already stationed a few kilometres off the Dutch coast, cut the five main German transatlantic cables running through the English Channel, effectively cutting Germany's cable communication with the rest of the world. The burden of communication now fell on Nauen, a powerful radio station on the outskirts of Berlin. Unfortunately nothing stops an enemy from intercepting wireless messages, which is exactly what the cryptanalysis section of the British Admiralty (Directorate Naval Intelligence), known as "Room 40", run by Captain (later admiral) William Reginald ("Blinker") Hall, was able to do.

America's chosen position was one of strict neutrality which, however, did not stop her supplying Britain with arms and ammunition which she so sorely needed, or, as Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, British ambassador to America cynically said: "The majority want to make money and not make war".

President Woodrow Wilson had, through his personal envoy, Colonel Edward House, attempted, on four separate occasions between 1914 and 1916,

to make a negotiated peace between the powers but had been rebuffed each time. The Germans were prepared to accept peace terms, if they retained all that they occupied, the return of their captured colonies and be paid war reparation (this, from a country that started the war!); the Allies were not prepared to accept less than total surrender.

In 1915 Germany began sinking unarmed merchant ships on the open seas in an attempt to stop supplies reaching England. As these were often American ships (with American crews) President Wilson sent a sharply worded Diplomatic Note to Germany, which was simply ignored – as Lloyd George put it: "The click of the President's typewriter had no deadlier rattle behind it"!

On the 7th May 1915 the Lusitania was sunk with the loss of over 100 American lives. President Wilson again sent a Note of protest to Germany, Colonel House was in London at the time on another of his unsuccessful missions. His personal opinion was (by now) that America should enter the war on the side of the allies. This was not echoed by President Wilson who was determined to end the war with a negotiated peace.

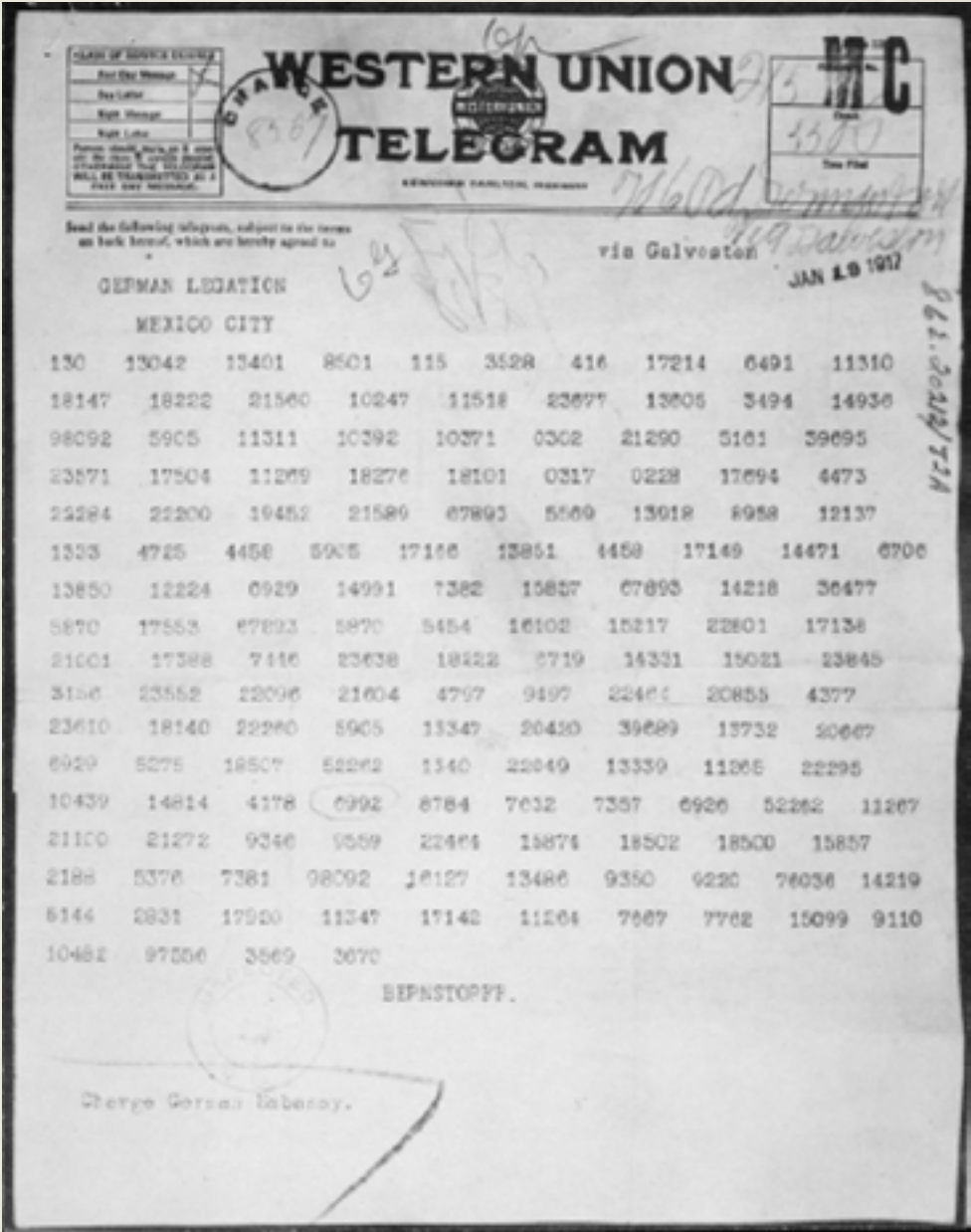
Despite all this, when the German Foreign Office appealed to the United States for use of their cable for diplomatic messages, as their telegraph cable

had been cut, President Wilson agreed, in the belief that such cooperation would create good relations with Germany, and that more efficient German-American diplomacy could assist Wilson's goal of a negotiated end to the war. The Germans would hand in messages to the United States embassy in Berlin, which were relayed to the embassy in Denmark and then to the United States by American telegraph operators. However, the United States placed the condition that all messages had to be in clear.

By 1917 both sides, the "Allies" (Britain, France, Russia, Italy) and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Ottoman Empire) were exhausted, millions had died on either side without appreciable gains. Germany was starving because of a successful naval blockade on shipping by Britain, who in turn, was slowly being strangled by German's submarine campaign which was sending food and military supplies to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. Fresh ideas were needed, which is exactly what Arthur Zimmerman, German Foreign Minister, had.

DNI had intercepted a long, non-military signal, from Berlin to the German Embassy in Washington and on the morning of 17th January 1917, was handed to a cryptologist, Nigel de Grey, to decode.

When eventually decoded, it was found that the signal was



The Zimmerman telegram

in two parts. The first part, was to inform Count von Bernstorff, German Ambassador in the United States, of the German intention to begin "unrestricted" submarine warfare as from 1 February 1917 (and only deliver this intention on the morning of 1 February to the US government) and part two was to be forwarded to Ambassador Heinrich von Eckhardt, German Ambassador to Mexico and to inform him that:

We intend to begin on the first of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavour in spite of this to keep the United States of America

neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal of alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The settlement in detail is left to you. You will inform the President of the above most secretly as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States of America is certain, and add the suggestion that he should, on his own initiative, invite Japan to immediate adherence and at the same time

mediate between Japan and ourselves. Please call the President's attention to the fact that the ruthless employment of our submarines now offers the prospect of compelling England in a few months to make peace.

Signed, ZIMMERMANN

This proposal was not as farcical as it sounds. Japan had supplied arms and ammunition to Mexico during her revolution in 1900 and Germany had, since 1915, been attempting to promote a war between Mexico and the United States and had sent Victoriano Huerta (a Mexican rebel leader) \$12 million for that purpose, which would have again tied down American forces and slowed the export of American arms to the Allies. German High Command also believed that, if America joined the war, she would then be able "strangle" Britain before an American army could be trained and brought to Europe.

Mexico was America's main trouble spot and where twice, since 1911, American forces had entered. General Pershing, with his force of 6,000 men, had only been ordered out in April 1916 after attempting to capture Pancho Villa, another Mexican rebel.

On the 16th January 1917, the German Government approached the U.S. Ambassador, James Gerard, with a request to accept the telegram in coded form (and authorised by Col House on behalf of the President) was transmitted by diplomatic cable first to Copenhagen and then to London, for onward transmission over transatlantic cable to Washington.

At 16:00 on the 31st January

1917 Ambassador Bernstorff informed American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, of Germany's decision to begin unrestricted submarine warfare from the next day 1st February 1917.

This caused diplomatic relations to be broken off on the 3rd January 1917 when the German Embassy was sent back.

Many ask why, despite that the disclosure of the Telegram would sway public opinion in the United States further against Germany, Hall waited three weeks before he handed the deciphered copy to the Foreign Office (Lord Balfour)? There are two probable reasons :

1. It took long to decipher; and
2. it had to be handled in such a manner that the American Government would not realise that Britain was reading her "mail".

The telegram was then (allegedly) handed to Lord Balfour by Admiral Hall on the 5th February 1917 who then contacted Walter Hines Page, the US Ambassador to Britain and on "Friday, February 23 (1917), the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs formally presented the Zimmerman telegram to the American Ambassador" [The Zimmerman Telegram, Barbara W. Tuchman, May 1966].

On the 10th February 1917 Sir Thomas Hohler, (then British ambassador in Mexico, in his autobiography) apparently obtained a copy of the telegram by bribing an employee of Western Union in Mexico City and forwarded it onto Adm Hall. This copy could now be shown to the American Ambassador without any embarrassing

confessions.

In any event Admiral Hall, on 19 February, Hall showed the telegram to Edward Bell, secretary of the United States Embassy in London. Bell was at first incredulous and thought it to be a forgery. Once Bell was convinced the telegram was genuine, he became enraged and it was arranged that Lord Balfour would present the telegram to Ambassador Page in person, so as to make it "country to country".

Lord Balfour then handed the telegram over to Ambassador Page on the 23rd February 1917, in what he later said, "was the most dramatic moment of my life".

Page, in turn forwarded it to Washington where it was received on 24th February at 09:00. Lansing, who had been alerted to an important telegram was waiting and immediately took it to President Wilson; who in turn told Lansing to thank Balfour for (the) "information of such inestimable value.....so marked an act of friendliness on part of the British government".

Wilson also instructed Lansing to inform the press and so Lansing gave the draft to E. Hood of Associated Press.

While popular feeling was somewhat anti-German (America just received news of the loss of the Laconia), there was also a notable Anti-British sentiment in the United States, particularly among German and Irish Americans; many other Americans simply wished to avoid the conflict in Europe.

When the story broke, Thursday 1st March 1917, it was widely believed at first, to be

an elaborate forgery perpetrated by British intelligence, seeing that the public was told (the cover story) that the telegram had been stolen in Mexico.

This belief, which was not restricted to pacifist and pro-German lobbies, was promoted by German diplomats as well as some American newspapers (especially the Hearst press empire, who on the 2nd March 1917, personally told his editors that the telegram was "a fake and a forgery").

Confirmation came (ironically enough) via the Hearst newspaper, a few days later, when William Bayard Hale, Berlin's Hearst correspondent (and a paid German agent on a \$15,000/year retainer) said to Zimmerman : "Of course your excellency will deny this story!" to which Zimmerman answered: "I cannot deny it...it is true".

This was followed when, on 29th March 1917, Zimmermann gave a speech in the Reichstag in which he admitted the telegram was genuine.

On the 9th March 1917, after a further three ships were sunk by German submarines, Wilson invoked his Executive Authority, overthrew a Congress decision and ordered that merchant ships were to be armed.

On 2nd April 1917, at 20:30, America declared war on Germany.....and the rest, so they say, is History.

Lest we forget

Two powerful photographs that say more than words ever could.

The expression "A picture paints a thousand words" originated from a newspaper article that appeared in 1911.

The article was written by editor Arthur Brisbane and was a discussion about journalism and publicity.

"Use a picture. It's worth a

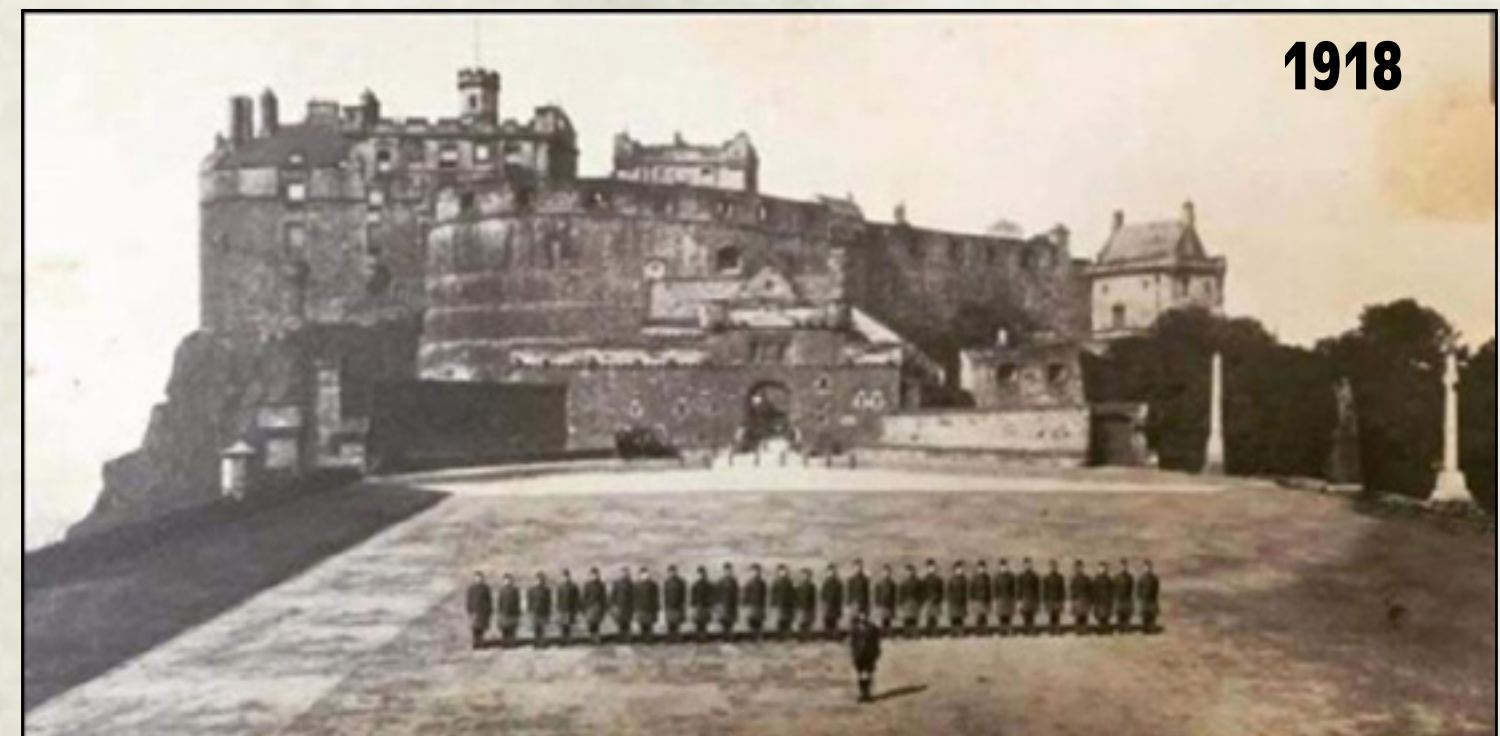
thousand words," Brisbane said in the article.

He was making a clear-cut case for the use of images to accompany stories.

Reverend Ralph Thornley sent me these photographs below. They in turn had been sent to him by Peter Napier.

The first photograph shows a battalion of the Cameron Highlanders in 1914, prior to being dispatched to the front line.

The second photograph is of the same battalion upon their return in 1918 after the Armistice. These photographs do indeed paint a thousand words.



Bloodiest battles of World War I

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

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

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

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

sumed dead.

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

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

Hundred Day Offensive

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

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

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

the Battle of St Quentin Canal on 29 September.

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

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

Casualties

There were 1,868,233 casualties in total.

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

USA 127,000.

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

Spring Offensive

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Casualties

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

Battle of Verdun

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Casualties

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

Battle of Passchendaele

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Casualties

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

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

Serbian Campaign

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

took through Albania; Austro-Hungarian occupation; Bulgarian occupation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Casualties

In 1914 Austria-Hungary suf-

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

Other notable battles included:

First Battle of the Marne

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

Casualties

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

Battle of Gallipoli

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

Casualties

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

Battle of Arras

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

Casualties

British - 158,000
German - 130,000

World War I - a few facts

It's been almost 103 years since 'The War to end all Wars' came to an end. In this article we look at a few facts that you may, or may not have known, about World War I.

Later this month, at 11h00 on 11 November, it will be 103 years since the Armistice was signed, bringing World War I to an end.

Once again at the eleventh hours on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, we will remember those that paid the ultimate sacrifice.

With this in mind, we will be looking at a few facts that you may, or may not, have known about World War I.

A good chance of surviving

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

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

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

The fact is that nine out of 10 British soldiers survived the trenches. Out of the approximately six million British soldiers mobilised, just over 700,000 were killed. Most of them during battles.

A bit of Beethoven

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

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

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

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

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

Many of the interned were the musicians from orchestras, and in one camp they were able to perform an entire Beethoven concert.

The Red Signaller

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

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

For over a year he spent his days stringing telegraph wires

along the western front, even earning himself an Iron Cross along the way.

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

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

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

Child Soldiers

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

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

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

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

No doing the dirty

Come on, let's get real. Most



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

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

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

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

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

More than 204,000 American troops were wounded during World War I. Yet more than 400,00 US soldiers were infected by STDs (Sexually Trans-

mitted Diseases), with many of them rendered unfit for duty.

Fake news is nothing new

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

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

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

Donkeys and Lions

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

The brave soldiers (lions) were led by incompetent generals (donkeys) who lived miles behind the front in luxury and

out of touch with reality.

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

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

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

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

Non sexist tanks

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

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

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

Big Bang

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Both sides came to the conclusion that if going over the top didn't work, why not go under?

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

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

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

Truce

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

The most famous one was the Christmas Truce of 1914. On Christmas Eve troops began shouting Christmas greetings

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

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

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

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

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



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

A global conflict

World War I was a war fought on a truly global scale. Even though there were over 35 million civilian and soldier casualties during the war, with 15 million killed and 20 million wounded, it was only the sixth deadliest conflict in human history.

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.

Millions of soldiers suffered "shell shock," or post-traumatic stress disorder, due to the horrors of trench warfare. Shell-shocked men often had uncontrollable diarrhoea, couldn't sleep, stopped speaking, whimpered for hours, and twitched uncontrollably. While some soldiers recovered, others suffered for the rest of their lives.

Even those civilians back

home suffered the effects of the war.

War work turned some women's skin yellow. When a generation of men went to fight the war, more than a million women took their place in the workforce. They worked long hours, often in poor conditions and with dangerous chemicals. The so-called 'canaries' were women who worked with TNT, which gave them toxic jaundice and turned their skin yellow.

Not everyone was equal

Even though the U.S. government didn't grant Native Americans citizenship until 1924, more than 200,000 African Americans served in World War I, but only about 11 percent of them were in combat forces.

The rest were put in labour units, loading cargo, building roads, and digging ditches. They served in segregated divisions (the 92nd and 93rd) and trained separately.

The 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.

For Valour

The Victoria Cross (VC) is the United Kingdom's highest military decoration for valour. During World War I the VC was awarded 628 times to 627 recipients.

Surgeon Captain Arthur Martin-Leake was awarded the VC in 1914. It was the second time he had been awarded the medal, having won a VC during the Boer War.

Captain Noel Chavasse, a doctor with the Royal Army Medical Corps, won the VC in 1915. In 1917 he was awarded a second VC, becoming one of only three people to be awarded the medal twice.

America's highest award for bravery is the Medal of Honour. During World War I 126 Medals of Honour were awarded.

120 of these were awarded to American soldiers, 34 of them were awarded posthumously. In addition, Congress awarded six Medals of Honour to unknown, unidentified soldiers of Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, Romania, and the United States to pay tribute to each country's unknown dead.

Sergeant William Shemin of the US Army was nominated for the Medal of Honour in 1918. Congress finally approved his medal in 2015.

Weapons & Equipment: WW I

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

British Army

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Infantry Equipment

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

German Army

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Infantry Equipment

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

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

Pickelhaube



French Army

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

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

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

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

bayonets, knives and stabbing weapons. They were crude stabbing spikes made by adding a point to a steel stake which had its rearmost section heated and bent into a crude handle. Three French Nail's could be made from a single Lebel bayonet.

The early M2 gas mask was not very effective and these were later replaced by the Ars gas mask.

Infantry Equipment

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

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

US Army

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

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

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

The AEF gas mask and respi-

rator was standard issue to US troops.

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

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

tion.

Infantry Equipment

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

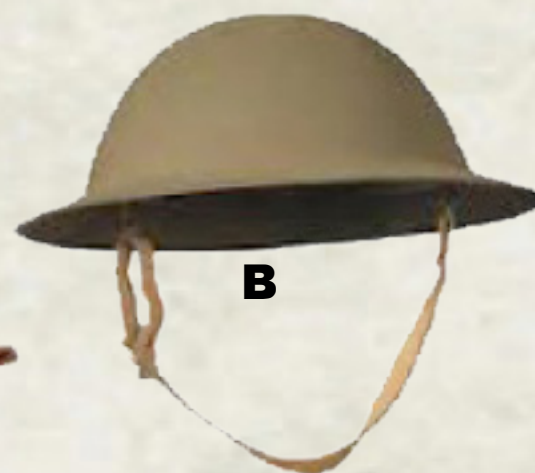




United Kingdom



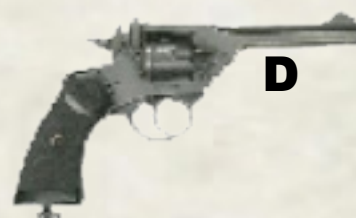
A



B



C



D



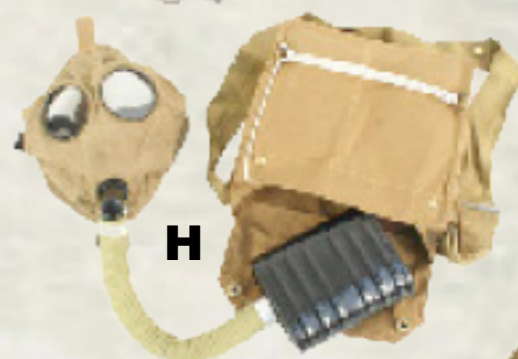
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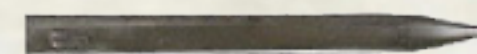
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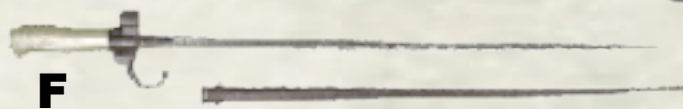
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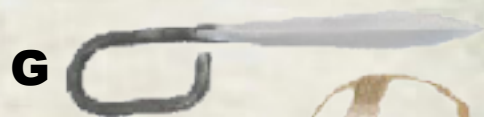
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L

Harold Ackroyd

The unassuming, bespectacled World War I medical officer that did everything in his power to save the lives of others.

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

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

Captain Arthur Martin-Leake, Captain Noel Chavasse, and Captain Charles Upham all won the VC twice.

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

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

Medical Career

Born in Southport, Lancashire on 18 July 1877, Harold Ackroyd was the young-

est son of Edward Ackroyd.

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

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

He completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1899 and con-

tinued his medical studies at Guy's Hospital, London. It was here that he was appointed as a House Officer.

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

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

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

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

They moved to Royston, Hertfordshire where their third child, Anthony, was born in 1914.



Military Career

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

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

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

The Somme

Harold was promoted to temporary captain on 15 February 1916. The 18th Division was now part of the Fourth Army (United Kingdom) under Sir Henry Rawlinson.

On 1 July the British launched

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

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

Part of the citation for his medal read:

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

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

that he cleared the whole wood of wounded British and Bosh as well."

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ypres

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

The battle commenced on 31 July 1917. The role of the 18th

Division was to leapfrog the 30th Division (United Kingdom) after they had taken what became known as “the Black Line” through Glencorse Wood.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Victoria Cross and the Military Cross from King George V.

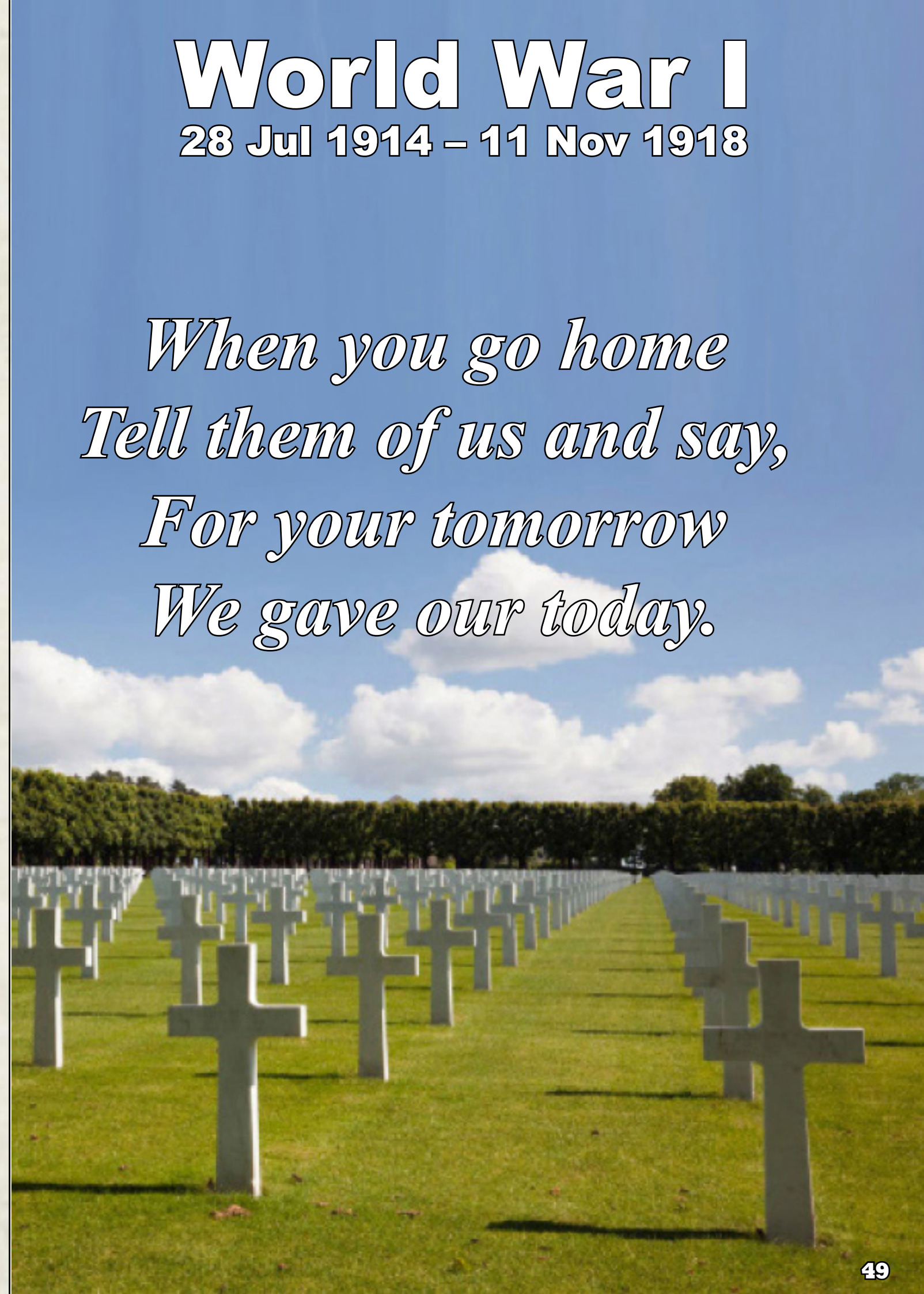
Part of the citation for his medal reads:

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

World War I

28 Jul 1914 – 11 Nov 1918

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



WW I Tanks

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

kers, often made of concrete.

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

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

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

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

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

normally have taken heavy casualties doing so.

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

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

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

The conceptual roots of the tank go back to ancient

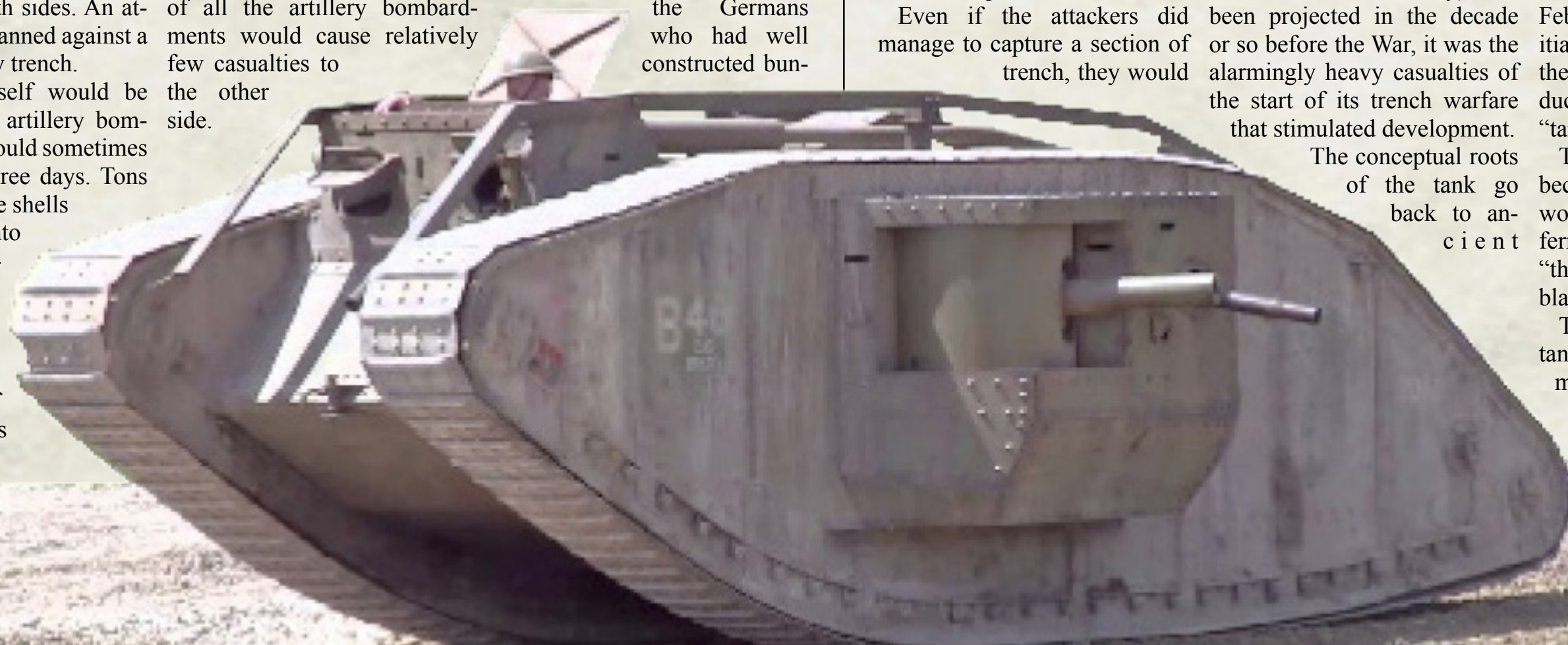
times, with siege engines which were able to provide protection for troops moving up against stone walls or other fortifications.

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

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

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

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



batants combined.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

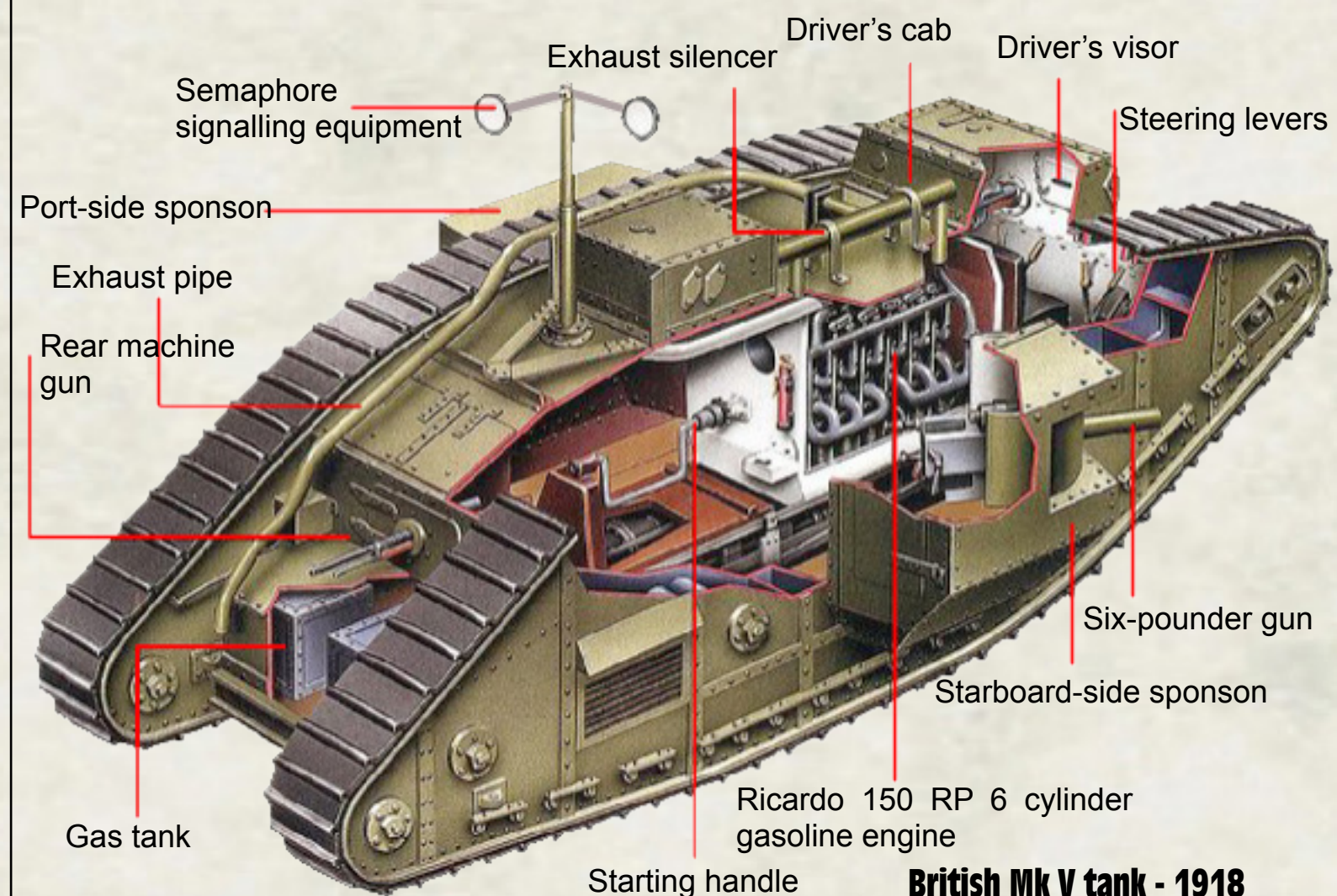
practice, their speed on broken ground could be as little as 1,6 km/h.

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

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

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

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



British Mk V tank - 1918

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

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

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

barbed wire.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

enough to defeat the standard German armour-piercing bullet.

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

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

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

tanks to battle in that year.

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

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

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

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

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



Renault FT

The Battle of Amiens was the opening phase of the Allied Offensive that began on 8 August 1918. It was a battle that would ultimately lead to the end of World War I. Amiens was also one of the first major battles involving armoured warfare.

The signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the now revolutionary-controlled Russia meant that the Germans were no longer fighting a war on two fronts. This meant that the Germans were able to transfer thousands of troops from the Eastern Front. If gave them a significant, albeit temporary advantage in manpower and material.

On 21 March 1918 the German Army launched Operation Michael, the first in a series of attacks planned to drive the Allies back along the length of the Western Front.

Operation Michael was intended to defeat the right wing of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), but a lack of success around Arras ensured the ultimate failure of the offensive. A final effort was aimed at the town of Amiens, a vital railway junction, but the advance had been halted at Villers-Bretonneux by British and Australian troops on 4 April.

Subsequent German offensives - Operation Georgette (9-11 April), Operation Blücher-Yorck (27 May), Operation Gneisenau (9 June) and Operation Marne-Rheims (15-17 July) - all made advances elsewhere on the Western Front, but failed to achieve a decisive breakthrough that the Germans were looking for.

By the end of the Marne-Rheims offensive, the German manpower advantage had been spent and their supplies and troops were exhausted.

The Allied general, General Ferdinand Foch, ordered a counter-offensive which led to victory at the Second Battle of the Marne, following which he was promoted to Marshal of France.

The Germans, recognising their untenable position, withdrew from the Marne to the north. Foch now tried to move the Allies back onto the offensive.

Foch disclosed his plan on 23 July 1918, following the allied victory at the Battle of Soissons. The plan called for reducing the

Saint-Mihiel salient and freeing the railway lines that ran through Amiens from German shellfire.

The Plan

The commander of the British Expeditionary Force, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, already had plans in place for an attack near Amiens.

When the British retreat had ended in April, the headquarters of the British Fourth Army under General Sir Henry Rawlinson had taken over the front astride the Somme. Its left hand corps was the British III Corps under Lieutenant General Richard Butler, while the Australian Corps under Lieutenant General John Monash held the right flank and linked up with French armies to the south.

On 30 May, all the Australian infantry divisions were united under the corps HQ, for the first time on the Western Front.

The Australians had mounted a number of local counter-attacks which both revealed the suitability of the open and firm terrain south of the Somme for a larger offensive, and established and refined the methods which were to be used.

Rawlinson had submitted Monash's proposals to Haig in July and Haig had forwarded them to Foch. At a meeting on 24 July, Foch agreed to the plan but insisted that the French First Army, which held

the front to the south of the British Fourth Army, should participate.

Rawlinson opposed this as his and Monash's plans depended on the large-scale use of tanks, now finally available in large numbers, to achieve surprise, by avoiding a preliminary bombardment.

The French First Army lacked tanks and would be forced to bombard the German positions before the infantry advance began, thus removing the element of surprise.

Eventually, it was agreed that the French would participate, but not launch their attack until 45 minutes after the Fourth Army. It was also agreed to advance the proposed date of the attack from 10 August to 8 August, to strike the Germans before they had completed their withdrawal from the Marne salient.

Rawlinson had already finalised his plans in discussion with his Corps commanders (Butler, Monash, Sir Arthur Currie of the Canadian Corps and Lieutenant General Charles Kavanagh of the Cavalry Corps) on 21 July.

For the first time, the Australians would attack side by side with the Canadian Corps. Both had a reputation for aggressive and innovative tactics and a strong record of success over the past two years.

The tactical methods had been tested by the Australians in a local counter-attack at the Battle of Hamel on 4 July. The German defenders of Hamel were deeply dug in, and their position commanded a very wide field of fire. Similar po-

sitions had resisted capture for two months in the Battle of the Somme.

The Australians had used surprise rather than weight at Hamel. The artillery had opened fire only at the moment the infantry and tanks advanced, and the Germans were rapidly overrun.

A key factor in the final plan was secrecy. There was to be no artillery bombardment a significant time before the attack, as was the usual practice, only fire immediately prior to the advance of Australian, Canadian, and British forces.

For most of the war the standard method of launching an offensive was pretty much the same. Prior to the offensive the attackers would launch an artillery bombardment on the enemy.

These bombardments would often last for days, with tens of thousands of shells being fired off.

During the Battle of the Somme in 1916 the Allied bombardment on the German positions lasted for seven days and a staggering 1,738,000 shells were fired at the Germans.

The problem was that these bombardments were not that effective. The Germans had bunkers, often made of concrete, dug into the sides of the trenches. As soon as the bombardment began, the Germans would take cover and wait for the artillery to stop.

Once the bombardment had ceased, the Germans would then leave the safety of their bunkers and set up machine guns in preparation for the infantry attack they knew would

be coming.

More often than not they would have ample time to set up and prepare for the infantry that now attempted to advance over no-man's land.

In the television sitcom 'Blackadder goes forth', which was set in the trenches of World War I, Captain Edmund Blackadder makes a poignant comment about the effect of the artillery.

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

This time, however, the plan was to be different.

The final plan for the Fourth Army involved 1,386 field guns and howitzers and 684 heavy guns,[3] making up 27 medium artillery brigades and thirteen heavy batteries, in addition to the infantry divisions' artillery.

The fire plan for the Fourth Army's artillery was devised by Monash's senior artillery officer, Major General C. E. D. Budworth. British sound ranging advances in artillery techniques and aerial photographic reconnaissance made it possible to dispense with "ranging shots" to ensure accurate fire.

Budworth had produced a timetable which allowed 504 out of 530 German guns to be hit at "zero hour", while a creeping barrage preceded the infantry.

There were also to be 580 tanks. The Canadian and Australian Corps were each allocated a brigade of four battalions, with 108 Mark V fighting

tanks, 36 Mark V “Star”, and 24 unarmed tanks intended to carry supplies and ammunition forward. A single battalion of Mark V tanks was allocated to III Corps. The Cavalry Corps were allocated two battalions each of 48 Medium Mark A Whippet tanks.

The Allies had successfully moved the Canadian Corps of four infantry divisions to Amiens without them being detected by the Germans.

This was a noteworthy achievement and reflected well on the increasingly efficient staff work of the British armies.

A detachment from the Corps of two infantry battalions, a wireless unit and a casualty clearing station had been sent to the front near Ypres to bluff the Germans that the entire Corps was moving north to Flanders.

The Canadian Corps was not fully in position until 7 August. To maintain secrecy, the Allied commanders pasted the notice “Keep Your Mouth Shut” into orders issued to the men, and referred to the action as a “raid” rather than an “offensive”.

The Battle

The battle began in dense fog at 04h20 on 8 August 1918. Under Rawlinson’s Fourth Army, the British III Corps attacked north of the Somme, the Australian Corps to the south of the river in the centre of Fourth Army’s front, and the Canadian Corps to the south of the Australians.

The French 1st Army under General Debeney opened its preliminary bombardment



ADVANCE: A British Mark V tank of the 2nd Battalion, Tank Corps, advanced near Lamotte-en-Santerre on 8 August 1918.

at the same time, and began its advance 45 minutes later, supported by a battalion of 72 Whippet tanks.

Although German forces were on the alert, this was largely in anticipation of possible retaliation for their incursion on the sixth and not because they had learned of the preplanned Allied attack.

Although the two forces were within 460 metres of one another, gas bombardment was very low, as the bulk of the Allied presence was unknown to the Germans. The attack was so unexpected that German forces only began to return fire after five minutes, and even then at the positions where the Allied forces had assembled at the start of the battle and had long since left.

In the first phase, seven divisions attacked: the British 18th (Eastern) and 58th (2/1st London), the Australian 2nd and 3rd, and the Canadian 1st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions. Parts of the American 33rd Division

supported the British attackers north of the Somme.

The attackers captured the first German position, advancing about 3.7 km by about 07h30. In the centre, supporting units following the leading divisions attacked the second objective a further 3.2 km away.

Australian units reached their first objectives by 07h10, and by 08h20 the Australian 4th and 5th Divisions and the Canadian 4th Division passed through the initial breach in the German lines.

The third phase of the attack was assigned to infantry-carrying Mark V tanks. However, the infantry was able to carry out this final step unaided.

The Allies penetrated well to the rear of the German defences and cavalry now continued the advance, one brigade in the Australian sector and two cavalry divisions in the Canadian sector. Aircraft fire by the new RAF and armoured car fire kept the retreating Germans

from rallying.

The Canadian and Australian forces in the centre advanced quickly, pushing the line 4.8 km forward from its starting point by 11h00. The speed of their advance was such that a party of German officers and some divisional staff were captured while eating breakfast.

A gap 24 km long was punched in the German line south of the Somme by the end of the day.

The British Fourth Army took 13,000 prisoners, and the French captured a further 3,000. Total German losses were estimated to be 30,000 on 8 August. The British, Australian and Canadian infantry of the Fourth Army sustained about 8,000 casualties.

German Army Chief of Staff Paul von Hindenburg noted the Allies’ use of surprise and that Allied destruction of German lines of communication had hampered potential German counter-attacks by isolating command positions.

The German General Er-

ich Ludendorff described the first day of Amiens as the “*Schwarzer Tag des deutschen Heeres*” (“the black day of the German Army”), not because of the ground lost to the advancing Allies, but because the morale of the German troops had sunk to the point where large numbers of troops began to capitulate.

He recounted instances of retreating troops shouting “You’re prolonging the war!” at officers who tried to rally them.

Five German divisions had effectively been engulfed. Allied forces had pushed, on average, 11 km into enemy territory by the end of the day. The Canadians gained 13 km, Australians 11 km, the French 8 km, and the British 3.2 km.

Aftermath

The Battle of Amiens was a major turning point in the tempo of the war. Armoured support helped the Allies tear a hole through trench lines, weakening once impregnable

trench positions: the British Third Army, with no armoured support, had almost no effect on the line, while the Fourth, with fewer than a thousand tanks, broke deep into German territory.

The British war correspondent Philip Gibbs noted Amiens’ effect on the war’s tempo, saying on 27 August that, “the enemy...is on the defensive” and, “the initiative of attack is so completely in our hands that we are able to strike him at many different places.”

Gibbs also credits Amiens with a shift in troop morale, saying, “the change has been greater in the minds of men than in the taking of territory. On our side the army seems to be buoyed up with the enormous hope of getting on with this business quickly” and that, “there is a change also in the enemy’s mind. They no longer have even a dim hope of victory on this western front. All they hope for now is to defend themselves long enough to gain peace by negotiation.”



BATTLEFIELD 1

*Meet the true horror of the 'Great War'. His name is **Private Matt 'Baldrick' O'Brien** and without him the war would probably have been a lot shorter.*

Last month I was boasting that we had only ever reviewed five first-person shooter games in Military Despatches. And now I'm doing number six.

To be fair, it was not easy finding a game that dealt with World War I. There are plenty of games that deal with World War II, but the Great War really seems to be overlooked. One really good World War I game, however, is Battlefield 1.

Over the years I played all the Battlefield games and I must confess that I spent way too much of my time playing Battlefield 3 online.

I found Battlefield 4 and Battlefield Hard Line not that good. Battlefield 1, however, is a different story.

Battlefield 1 is a first-person shooter game that emphasizes teamwork. It is set in the period of World War I, and is inspired by historical events.

Players can make use of World War I weapons, including bolt-action rifles, submachine guns, automatic and semi-automatic rifles, artillery, flamethrowers, and poison gas to combat opponents.

Melee combat was reworked, with the introducing new melee weapons such as sabres, trench clubs, and shovels into the game. These melee weapons

were divided into three groups: heavy, medium and light.

Players can also take control of various armoured vehicles, including light and heavy tanks, armoured trucks, cars, torpedo boats, bi- and tri-plane aircraft, an armoured train, reconnaissance vehicles, a dreadnought and an M-class zeppelin, as well as ride horses into battle.

Destructible environments and weapon customization, features present in the previous games, returned in Battlefield 1 and are more dynamic.

During the single-player campaigns, the player controls six different characters from a first-person perspective over six different chapters.

Unlike previous campaigns in the series, Battlefield 1's single-player story mode is composed of six separate "War Stories", each shown through the eyes of separate allied soldiers from different nationalities,

- Storm of Steel – the prologue of the game which is set in France through the eyes of several Harlem Hellfighters.
- Through Mud and Blood – set in France through the eyes of a British tank driver.
- Friends in High Places – France and the UK as a Royal Flying Corps fighter pilot.
- Avanti Savoia – Italy as

a mournful survivor and member of the Arditi.

- The Runner – the Gallipoli Peninsula (part of European Turkey) through an ANZAC runner.
- Nothing is Written – set in Kingdom of Hejaz through the eyes of a Bedouin warrior under the command of Lawrence of Arabia.

The single player campaign is the main reason I bought the game and it covers a large cross-section of the war.

In the first 'war story' - Storm of Steel - you do not play as a single character. When the character that you are playing is killed (which will happen a lot) you transfer to a different character. A name and date of birth of a real person that died in the actual battle will briefly appear on the screen.

Each war story is well done and gives a good feel for the terrain and conditions.

For example in the story where you play the part of a British tank driver, you get an idea of the conditions of being in a tank during the war.

They are slow and very prone to breaking down. In one part you have to leave the tank and try and salvage spark plugs from other British tanks that have been captured by the Germans.



Trying to fly a World War I bi-plane is tricky to start off with. It takes a bit of time getting used to the controls. Once you get it right, it's a lot of fun.

I found the story "Avanti Savoia" (which translates as 'Forward savoy') interesting. It was the first time I have ever played an Italian soldier in a game.

Besides the single-player campaign, there is also the popular online game. Here you can play with as many as 64 other players in a number of scenarios that include: Conquest; Domination; Rush; Operations; Team Deathmatch; War Pigeons; Frontlines; Supply Drop; Air Assault; and, Shock Operations.

In the online game you can play as different classes. Each class has different skills and is initially armed with different weapons. The classes are: Assault, Medic, Support, and Scout.

There are also vehicle classes

that you can choose and these are Tanker, Pilot and Cavalry.

DICE, the developers of the game, released four downloadable content expansions for Battlefield 1; They Shall Not Pass, In the Name of the Tsar, Turning Tides, and Apocalypse.

They Shall Not Pass adds new weapons and vehicles, as well as new melee-oriented "Trench Raider" elite class for the online game.

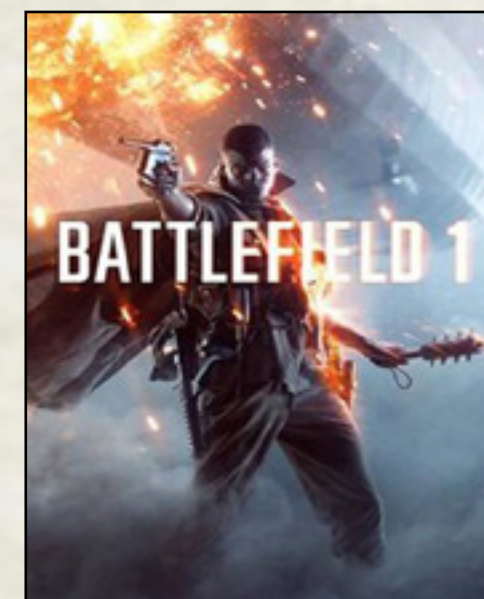
In the Name of the Tsar focuses on the Russian Empire during the Great War. The Scout class for the Russian Empire faction features a female soldier representing the Women's Battalion. It also adds 11 new infantry weapons to the game and various new vehicles.

Turning Tides is focused on aspects of the naval and amphibious combat during World War I.

Apocalypse is centred around some of the most brutal battles of the Great War. It introduced

some new weapons and gadgets to the game.

Battlefield 1 is well worth playing. Although the game costs R650, you can often find it on sale on the Steam website. I picked it up for R78.



Publisher - Electronic Arts

Genre - First Person Shooter

Score - 8.5/10

Price - R649.95 (on Steam)



Movie Review

Flyboys

Released: 2006

Running time: 138 minutes

Directed by: Tony Bill

Flyboys is a 2006 war drama film set during World War I, starring James Franco, Martin Henderson, Jean Reno, Jennifer Decker, David Ellison, Abdul Salis, Philip Winchester, and Tyler Labine. It was directed by Tony Bill, a pilot and aviation enthusiast.

The screenplay about men in aerial combat was written by Phil Sears, Blake T. Evans and David S. Ward with the story by Blake T. Evans. Themes of friendship, racial prejudice, revenge and love are also explored in the film.

The film follows the enlistment, training, and combat experiences of a group of young Americans who volunteer to become fighter pilots in the *Lafayette Escadrille*, the 124th air squadron formed by the French in 1916. The squadron consisted of five French officers and 38 American volunteers who wanted to fly and fight in World War I before the United States' entry into the war in 1917.

In 1916, a group of young Americans go to France to serve in the French Air Service, *L'Aéronautique militaire* during World War I. The recruits are under the command of French Captain Georges Thenault (Jean Reno), with veteran flying ace Reed Cassidy (Martin Henderson) as their mentor.

The pilots struggle with the demands of flying, preparing for

the aerial dogfights that dominate missions to the front lines. Pilot Blaine Rawlings (James Franco) meets a young woman named Lucienne (Jennifer Decker) after his plane runs out of fuel and crashes during a practice flight, and over time they grow a relationship despite her hesitations about his risky profession.

On their first mission, escorting bombers to attack a German ammunition depot, the rookie pilots are ambushed by Germans. Two are killed in the battle, and a third successfully makes an emergency landing, but is killed on the ground by "The Black Falcon", a German pilot flying a black aircraft; the more chivalrous German pilot Franz Wolford shakes his head in disapproval.

During a later battle, Rawlings' machine gun jams; Wolford – the pilot he was chasing – flies beside him and salutes before banking away, sparing his opponent's life as penance for the unfair killing of Nunn on the ground. Higgins is killed during the battle, and Jensen breaks that night, unable to fly anymore due to shock.

Eddie Beagle (David Ellison) is accused of being a spy due to faked personal information, but comes clean about a crime he committed in the states and is allowed to stay on.

The film ends with an epi-

logue that relates the fate of each American pilot to the real-life Lafayette Escadrille pilot upon whom his character was based.

Eugene Skinner (Abdul Salis) is based on Eugene Bullard, the first African-American military pilot.

The movie did not receive positive reviews by film critics and lost money at the box office. It cost \$60 million to make the movie and only made \$17.8 million in return.

Still, Flyboys is not a bad movie if you're not looking for a historically accurate film. There are worst ways to spend two hours than watching this.



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

We fear naught but God

The first ever Special Forces for the SADF started with a small group of eleven men under the command of Commandant Jan Breytenbach all hand picked by him in 1970. They commenced their training in Oudtshoorn.

The group was changed to a Special Forces Unit in 1972 known as 1 Reconnaissance Commando. In 1974 they moved to Durban.

This book on South African Special Forces is the forth edition and the first pictorial version of the history of the South African Special Forces, Operators and Operations.

There are more than 2,000 photographs showing events never before captured in one print.

It deals with the history of the Special Forces from their start

in 1970, the establishment of 1 Reconnaissance Commando in 1972, and the move to Durban in 1974.

It was later decided to form an airborne element (1 Reconnaissance Commando in Durban), a seaborne element (4 Reconnaissance Commando in Langebaan) and a pseudo element (5 Reconnaissance Commando in Dukuduku, Zululand and then later in Phalaborwa).

A Citizen Force unit, 2 Reconnaissance Commando, was established in 1975.

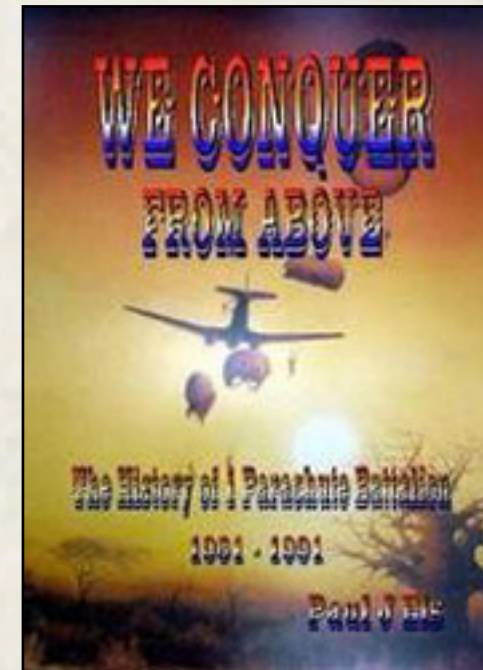
This book is a must for those interested in Special Forces and for military collectors.

Paul Else, the author, served in Special Forces as a signaller for 5 Reconnaissance Regiment and



then Special Forces Headquarters for a number of years. He did his parachute course with other support personnel at the age of 35.

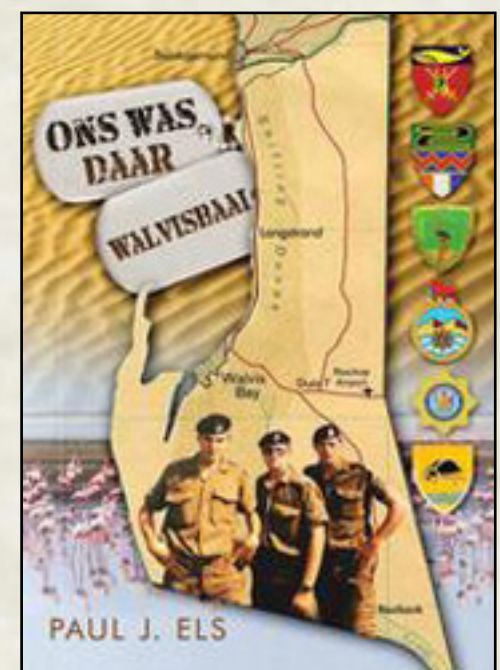
R600



We Conquer From Above
R395



Boys At War
R395



Ons Was Daar - Walvisbaai
R495

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

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

1 November

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

in Cairo) have wreaked destruction across the Algerian district of Aures. This day later became known as Revolution Day.

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

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

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

2 November

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

recapture Ft Vaux.

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

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

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

Paul W. Tibbets Jr.



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

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

3 November

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

Zambezi.

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

tions west of Suez Canal.

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

4 November

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

for the invasion of North Africa.

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

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

- **1980** - Lieutenant (Doctor) Peter William Geddes from the Medical Training Centre was Killed in Action while attached to 53 Battalion at Okotopi. He was 28.
- **1981** - Corporal Johan Louis Potgieter from 1 SAI, attached to 61 Mech was Killed in Action during Ops Daisy. He was 23.
- **1981** - Rifleman A. Dala from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Ops Daisy. He was 22.
- **1981** - Lieutenant Gerrit van Zyl from 61 Mech was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces during Ops Daisy. He was 23.
- **1982** - Rifleman Lionel Gerald Brown from 3 SAI was killed in a private motorcycle accident in Port Elizabeth. He was 20.
- **1991** - Gunner Grant Mann from 14 Artillery Regiment was accidentally killed while at 10 Artillery Brigade. He was 21.
- **1996** - The former South African defence minister, General Magnus Malan, and several former high-rank-

ing officials are arrested and charged with murder. All were acquitted after a trial in 1995.

5 November

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



Magnus Malan

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

without injury.

6 November

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

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

7 November

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

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

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

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

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

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



Erich Raeder

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

8 November

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

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

9 November

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

cruiser SMS 'Emden' in the Cocos Islands.

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

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

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

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

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

10 November

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

Adolf Hitler



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

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

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

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

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

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

11 November

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

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

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

Republic of Angola.

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

- **1987** - Rifleman Pieter Marthinus Schutte from 4 SAI was Killed in Action during Ops Modular. He was 20.

- **1992** - The Goldstone Commission raids offices of the SADF's Directorate.

12 November

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

Ian Smith



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

by former Brigadier-General Thomas Quiwonlpa.

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

13 November

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

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

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

14 November

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

dies in St Omer, France.

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

near Omutwewondjaba in Southern Angola. He was 27.

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



Samuel Doe

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

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

the Taliban.

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

15 November

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

ated up to 500,000.

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

Koopmansfontein. He was 19.

16 November

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

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

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

17 November

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

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

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



Erwin Rommel

- **1980** - Sapper Hendrik Johannes Jacobus Jacobs from 1 Construction Regiment was shot dead by a Sentry on guard duty at Chetto Base in Sector 20 after he entered a restricted area during the night and failed to identify himself after being challenged by the Sentry. He was 18.
 - **1981** - Rifleman Gert Johannes de Lange from 4 Vehicle Reserve Park was accidentally killed after suffering shrapnel wounds in an accidental hand grenade explosion at the Maryland Training Base. He was 20.
 - **1986** - Corporal James Eric Cooper from Group 46 was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop carrier overturned at Kwanobuhle. He was 26.
 - **1986** - Rifleman W. Mbandjeu from 102 Battalion SWATF was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.
 - **1987** - Lance Corporal Johann Redelinghuys from the South African Medical Corps was attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was killed in action during Operation Modular. He was 20.
 - **1988** - Private Alwyn Lubbe from 1 Maintenance Unit was accidentally killed when he fell off a moving vehicle while in a convoy that was travelling from Kimberley to Eenhana. He was 19.
 - **1988** - A SA woman, Olivia Forsyth, allegedly a spy for the SA government against the ANC, who has been holed up in the British Embassy in Luanda since May, leaves for London after being granted an exit visa by the Angolan authorities.
 - **1993** - Military rule is re-imposed in Nigeria when General Sani Abacha ousts civilian leader Ernest Shonekan.
 - **1993** - The United Nations opened its first war crimes tribunal since the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials following World War II. Judges from 11 nations were sworn in to examine recent mass murders in Yugoslavia characterized as ethnic cleansing.
 - **1997** - Six militants open fire at the Temple of Hatshepsut in Luxor, Egypt, killing seventy-four people, sixty-one of them foreign tourists. The attackers are killed by police.
- 18 November**
- **1914** - Naval Battle of Cape Sarych: the Russian Black Sea Fleet defeats a Turk-German squadron.
 - **1916** - During World War I, Allied General Douglas Haig called off the First Battle of the Somme after five months. The Allies had advanced 201 square kilometres at a cost of 420,000 British and 195,000 French soldiers. German losses were over 650,000 men.
 - **1936** - Germany & Italy recognized Franco government

in Spain.

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

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

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

19 November

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

comes the supreme commander of NATO.

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

20 November

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



Olivia Forsyth

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

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

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

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

22 November

- **1847** - General Jacobus Herculaas de la Rey, known as Koos de la Rey, is born.
- **1890** - Charles De Gaulle was born in Lille, France. He led the Free French against the Nazis during World War II and later became President of France, serving from 1958-69.
- **1914** - Ypres burns under German bombardment.
- **1917** - German L59 Zeppelin starts flight from Bulgaria to Khartoum carrying much needed supplies to General von Lettow in East Africa.
- **1943** - The Cairo Conference occurred as President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek, met to discuss the war in the Pacific against Japan.
- **1963** - US President John F. Kennedy is assassinated.
- **1980** - Two members from Infantry School were killed in a private motor vehicle accident between George and the Wilderness while they were on a weekend pass. The casualties were: Corporal Ferdinand Johannes Louw (20). Corporal

Andre Seaman (21).

- **1988** - Rifleman Felokwakhe Andreas Magagula from 121 Battalion died in the King Edward VIII Hospital from injuries received when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned while on an operational patrol at Kwa Ngwanase. He was 28.
- **1988** - South African government announces it has joined Cuba and Angola in endorsing a plan to remove Cuban troops from Angola.
- **1990** - Lance Corporal Sibusiso Dlomo from Natal Command was killed in a military vehicle accident in Durban. He was 30.
- **1991** - Airman Martin Jacobsz from the Air Force Gymnasium was killed in a private motor vehicle accident after his vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with another vehicle on the Delmas to Pretoria Road. He was 19.

23 November

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

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

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

Charles De Gaulle



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

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

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

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

24 November

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 November

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

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

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



William L. Calley

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

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

ern Angola. He was 20.

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

26 November

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

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

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

27 November

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

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

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

28 November

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

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

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



Heinrich Himmler

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

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

aides. Eighteen people are killed.

29 November

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

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

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

30 November

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

his sword, Saigon.

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

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

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

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

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





Weapons of World War I

1. Webley Mk IV (British)
2. Gewehr 98 (Germany)
3. M1911 pistol (USA)
4. Ruby pistol (Italy)
5. Vickers machine gun (British)
6. Star Model 14 (France)
7. Hebel Model 1894 flare gun (Germany)
8. Chauchat LMG (France)
9. Mauser C96 (Germany)
10. Nagant M1895 (Russian)
11. Lee-Enfield Mk I (British)
12. Hotchkiss Mle 1914 machine gun (France)
13. Steyr M1912 pistol (Germany)
14. Fiat-Revelli Modello 1914 (Italy)
15. M1917 Browning machine gun (USA)



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.

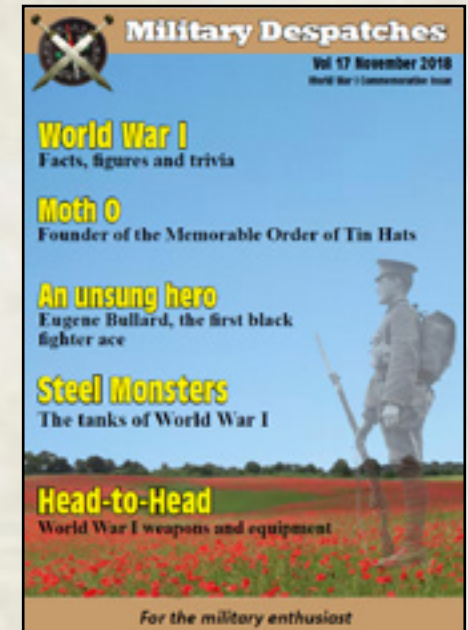


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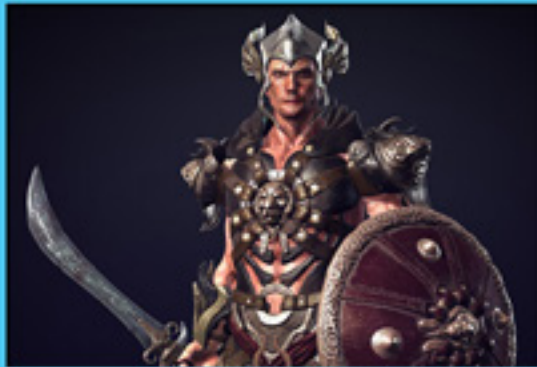
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