



Military Despatches

Vol 42 December 2020

Roma invicta

Ten facts about the Roman Legion

Feared and respected

Four World War II American legends

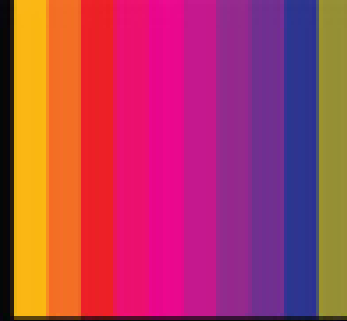
A pretty penny

The biggest modern wastes of military money

Kurt Student

Father of the WWII German Fallschirmjäger

For the military enthusiast



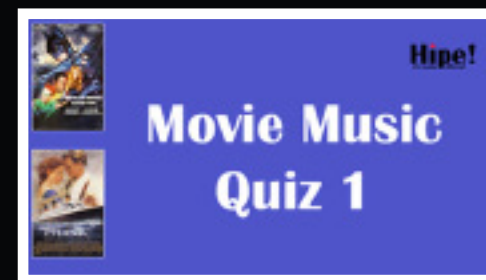
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How much do you know about movie theme songs? Take our quiz and find out.



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



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



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



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

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

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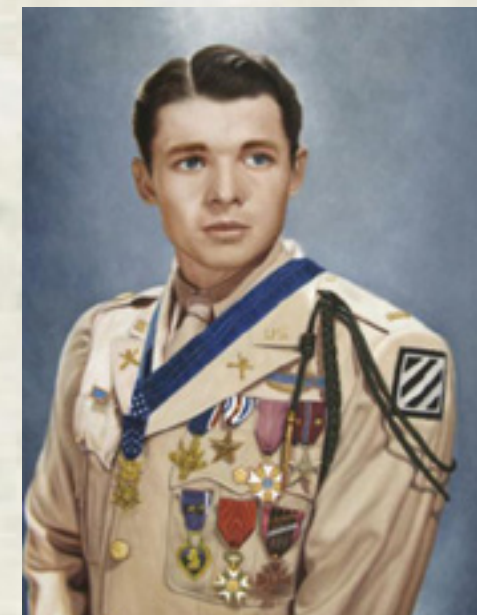
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Editor's Sitrep

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas, and if the white runs out I'll drink red.

It really is hard to believe that we're in the last month of the year. This seems to be happening far more quickly than it used to.

I suspect that Christmas may be a bit different this year. Being Irish I have my Christmas Lunch on Christmas Eve - Gammon, roast potatoes, chicken, veggies and trifle. And the odd bit of alcohol. It does make sense in a weird way. It means on Christmas Day there is no cooking the needs to be done. I just pig out on gammon sandwiches and can spend the day relaxing.

Normally I invite a bunch of people around but I guess that with social distancing and all that, the list will be far shorter this year. Not that there will be any less food, or alcohol for that matter.

That is, of course, if Uncle Cyril or the Minister of Funny Hats doesn't decide to ban alcohol or even cancel Christmas.

I also find it hard to believe that this is already issue 42 on Military Despatches. Have I really been doing this for the past three and a half years? No wonder I drink so much.

The Remembrance Day Parades were very low-key this year,

but it was good to see that they still went on. I didn't attend any of the parades on Sunday 8 November because I was doing my radio show which I do every Sunday from 09h00 to 12h00.

On Wednesday 11 November, however, Zone Radio (the station I work for) did a special segment on the afternoon Drive Zone show about Remembrance Day.

My special guest was Robbie Roberts, Chairman of the South African Signals Association. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Robbie for being on the show and for his interesting information.

Last month I said that I wanted to get the magazine finished as early as possible. It is now 18 November and once I have finished this editorial the magazine is good to go.

This does not mean that I can sit back. I plan on getting as much of the January issue done which will give me a few weeks off. Hey, even I deserve a break now and again.

May I wish you a happy Christmas and everything of the best for the New Year.

Until next time.

Matt

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Front Cover

In some areas of the world even Santa needs an armed escort, but the spirit of Christmas lives on.



10 Facts about the Roman Legion

Some interesting facts about the Roman Legion.

Around the time of the beginning of Rome its army consisted of local farmers who would hurriedly be called into action, fighting skirmishes with neighbouring settlements.

All of this would change however when, in 390 BC, an army of Gauls defeated the Romans and descended on the city itself.

They continued on, sacking and pillaging for the next six months until finally they were paid off to leave.

It was a major wake-up call for the Romans. They spent the next few centuries training and perfecting their legions into a professional military machine the likes of which had never been seen before.

10. Military training

Training in the legion was tough to say the least. There were endless drills and marches to the point of exhaustion.

Weapons training was held every morning and they would practice mêlée combat with wooden swords, spears and shield twice as heavy as their real counterpart.

Part of their training included a daily 30 kilometre march that had to be completed in five hours. All while carrying their weapons, shield, rations, cooking pot, a short spade, and their

personal kit.

No other army in the world at that time received such rigorous training and this gave the Romans a huge advantage in waging war.

9. Harsh discipline

The military discipline of the legions was quite harsh. Regulations were strictly enforced, and a broad array of punishments could be inflicted upon a legionary who broke them.

There were both minor and major punishments. Minor punishments could include:

- *Castigatio* – being hit by the centurion with his staff.
- Reduction of rations or to be forced to eat barley instead of the usual grain ration.
- *Pecuniaria mulcta* – Reduction in pay, fines or deductions from the pay allowance.
- Flogging in front of the century, cohort or legion.
- Whipping with the *flagrum* or “short whip” – a much more brutal punishment than simple flogging.
- *Gradus deiectio* – Reduction in rank.
- *Missio ignominiosa* – Dishonourable discharge.
- Loss of time in service advantages.
- *Militiae mutatio* – Relegation to inferior service or

duties.

- *Munerum indictio* – Additional duties.

The two major punishments were:

- *Fustuarium* – a sentence for desertion or dereliction of duty. The legionary would be stoned or beaten to death by cudgels, in front of the assembled troops, by his fellow soldiers or those whose lives had been put in danger.
- *Decimation* – The Romans practiced this punishment in which a sentence was carried out against an entire unit that had mutinied, deserted, or shown dereliction of duty. One out of every ten men, chosen by lots, would be beaten to death, usually by the other nine with their bare hands. The remaining nine would be forced to live outside the camp and in some instances obliged to renew the military oath, the *sacramentum*.

8. Weapons and Armour

As the Roman Empire expanded, weapons and equipment became more standardised.

At first legionnaires wore chain mail armour but this was replaced during the first century AD by segmented plate armour known as *lorica segmentata*.



While it was heavier than chain mail, it offered better protection and was also more comfortable to wear.

The *scutum* (legionary shield) was a long rectangle that curved inward to form a part cylinder, giving greater protection to its wearer.

Not only did it offer protection from about chin level to ankle level, its weight meant that it could be used as a weapon.

Based on a short Spanish sword, the *gladius* had a narrow blade with a long point, making it effective for stabbing and thrusting.

The Roman military *pilum* (javelin) was a throwing weapon, designed so that its pointed

head would break off on hitting a target, making it impossible to hurl back.

The Roman helmet offered good protection with a broad neck guard and a wide cheek piece that protected the cheeks and neck, but did not cover the ears.

A centurion would normally have a plume on his helmet that identified his rank.

7. Tactics and Formations

What truly made the legions the best fighting force in the world was the structured nature of the army and the tactics and formations they used in battle.

A legion was comprised of 4,800 men divided into 10 co-

horts of 480, which in turn contained six centuries of 80 soldiers each commanded by a centurion.

Most of the Barbarians they came up against fought in loose arrangements and each warrior sought individual glory.

The Romans, however, used tight, disciplined formations where each man knew exactly what his task was.

A typical assault would begin at long range with catapults showering the enemy with boulders and iron bolts.

Then the soldiers would move forward in tight formation until they were close enough to throw their pilum. Then they would close up, shoulder to shoulder

with their shields protecting their front and use the gladius to either stab over the top of the shields, or use the shields to push the enemy off balance before stabbing.

An ingenious Roman tactic was the use of the *testudo* or tortoise formation.

In the *testudo* formation, the men would align their shields to form a packed formation covered with shields on the front and top.

The first row of men, possibly excluding the men on the flanks, would hold their shields from about the height of their shins to their eyes, so as to cover the formation's front. The shields would be held in such a way that they presented a shield wall to all sides.

The men in the back ranks would place their shields over their heads to protect the formation from above, balancing the shields on their helmets, overlapping them.

If necessary, the legionaries on the sides and rear of the formation could stand sideways or backwards with shields held as the front rows, so as to protect the formation's sides and rear; this reduced the speed and mobility of the formation, but offered consistent defensive strength against opposing infantry and excellent protection against arrows and other missile attacks.

6. Naval warfare

While the Roman legions were formidable on land, they were all at sea when it came



IRON TORTOISE: The *testudo* formation offered excellent protection, especially against arrows and other missiles.

to naval tactics. As Rome took control of most of the Italian peninsula they turned their attention out to sea.

Here they met the Carthaginians and in 264 BC the first Punic War had begun. This 23 year long conflict between the two Mediterranean super powers was fought over the control of the strategic islands of Sicily and Corsica.

Not only did the Carthaginians have a large fleet, they were a true naval power. To counter this the Romans began to build their own fleet. They used a design that they had copied from the Carthaginians.

Still lacking any seafaring experience and while waiting for the ships to be built the legionnaires began practicing rowing in unison while still on dry land.

Since they were experts in

mêlée combat, the Romans came up with an ingenious invention to turn sea battles into land battles. This was the *corvus* (meaning “crow” or “raven” in Latin).

This device acted as a bridge 1.2 metres wide and 10.9 metres long, with a small parapet on both sides.

The device was usually used in the prow of the ship, where a pole and a system of pulleys allowed the bridge to be raised and lowered.

There was a heavy spike shaped like a bird's beak on the underside of the device, which was designed to pierce and anchor into an enemy ship's deck when the boarding bridge was lowered.

This allowed a firm grip between the vessels and a route for the Roman legionaries (who

serve as specialized naval infantry called *marinus*) to cross onto and capture the enemy ship.

5. Bellum Gallicum

The *Bellum Gallicum* or Gallic Wars were a series of campaigns by the Roman legions under Julius Caesar waged against the Gauls living in what today is France, Belgium and parts of Switzerland.

These wars lasted from 58 BC to 52 BC and culminated with a definite Roman victory and expansion of the Roman Republic over the whole of Gaul.

But these wars were not waged for the glory of Rome per se, but rather for the political ambitions of Caesar himself.

He recruited and paid his own legions, which made the soldiers highly devoted to him and him alone.

Even though the region was home to between 15 and 20 million people, Caesar's success was due to the fact that the Gauls were a loose conglomeration of small tribal armies with no structure or discipline.

This meant that Caesar had to fight each band of warriors as he encountered them and the campaign lasted far longer than he had anticipated.

Vercingetorix, leader of the Arverni, finally managed to rally the Gauls against Caesar, but it was too little, too late.

At the Battle of Alesia in 52 BC Vercingetorix almost prevailed against Caesar but eventually lost the battle. By the

time the conquest of Gaul was over, almost one million Celts lay dead and another 500,000 were sent into slavery.

4. Ranks

Aside from the rank and file legionary (who received the base wage of 10 assēs a day or 225 denarii a year), the following list describes the system of officers which developed within the legions from the Marian reforms (104 BC) until the military reforms of Diocletian.

Senior Ranks

- *Legatus Augusti pro praetore*, Imperial Legate: The commander of two or more legions.
- *Legatus legionis*, Legion Legate: The overall legion commander.
- *Tribunus laticlavus*, Broad Band Tribune: Named for the broad striped tunic worn by men of senatorial rank, this tribune was appointed by the emperor or the Senate.
- *Praefectus castrorum*, Camp Prefect: The Camp Prefect was third in command of the legion.
- *Tribuni angusticlavii*, Narrow Band Tribunes: Each legion had five lower ranking tribunes, who were normally from the equestrian class and had at least some years of prior military experience.

Centurions

The rank of centurion was an officer grade that included many ranks, meaning centurions had very good prospects for promotion. The most senior centurion

in a legion was known as the *primus pilus* (first file or spear), who directly commanded the first century of the first cohort and commanded the whole first cohort when in battle.

Lower ranks

- *Optio*: One for each centurion (59–60), they were appointed by the centurion from within the ranks to act as his second in command and were paid twice the basic wage.
- *Tesserarius*: (Guard commander) One for each century. They acted as seconds to the Optios and were paid one and a half times the basic wage.
- *Decurion*: Commanded a cavalry unit (*turma*) of 10 to 30 *eques legionis*.
- *Decanus*: Commanded a *contubernium* or ten men tent party, eight soldiers and two non-combatants.

3. Military engineering

The military engineering of Ancient Rome's armed forces was of a scale and frequency far beyond that of any of its contemporaries. Indeed, military engineering was in many ways institutionally endemic in Roman military culture, as demonstrated by the fact that each Roman legionary had as part of his equipment a shovel, alongside his *gladius* (sword) and *pila* (spears).

Fabri were workers, craftsmen or artisans in Roman society and descriptions of early Roman army structure (*Phalanx*, the Legion came around



ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME: The Romans were brilliant engineers and the legion were responsible for building roads as they invaded enemy territory. This allowed swift reinforcement and resupply.

the conquest of Greece) attributed to king Servius Tullius describe there being two centuries of fabri under an officer, the *praefectus fabrum*.

Roman military engineering took both routine and extraordinary forms, the former a proactive part of standard military procedure, and the latter of an extraordinary or reactionary nature.

Each Roman legion had a military legionary fort as its permanent base. However, when on the march, particularly in enemy territory, the legion would, after a day's marching, construct a fortified camp or *castra*, requiring as raw materials only earth, turf and timber.

Camp construction was the responsibility of special engi-

neering units to which specialists of many types belonged, officered by *architecti* (engineers), from a class of troops known as *immunes* since they were excused from or, literally, immune from, regular duties.

These engineers would requisition manual labour from the soldiers at large as required. A legion could throw up a camp under enemy attack in as little as a few hours.

Judging from the names, they probably used a repertory of camp plans from a set textbook, selecting the one appropriate to the length of time a legion would spend in it: *tertia castra*, *quarta castra*: "a camp of three days", "four days", etc.

The engineers also built bridges from both timber and

stone depending on required permanence and time available.

Although most Roman siege engines were adaptations from earlier Greek designs, the Romans were adept at engineering them swiftly and efficiently, as well as innovating variations such as the repeating ballista.

When invading enemy territories, the Roman army would often construct roads as they went, to allow swift reinforcement and resupply, as well as a path for easy retreat if necessary. Roman road-making skills are such that some Roman roads survive to this day.

The Roman army also took part in building projects for civilian use. There were sound reasons for the use of the army in building projects: primarily,

that if they weren't directly engaged in military campaigns, the legions were largely unproductive, costing the Roman state large sums of money.

But the involvement of the soldiers in building works, kept them not only well accustomed to hard physical labour, but also kept them busy, since it was the widely held belief that busy armies weren't plotting to mutiny, whereas idle armies were.

2. Marian reforms

The Marian reforms (of Gaius Marius) enlarged the centuries to 80 men, and grouped them into six-century "cohorts" (rather than two-century maniples).

Each century had its own standard and was made up of ten units (contubernia) of eight men who shared a tent, a millstone, a mule and cooking pot.

Following the reforms of the general Marius in the 2nd century BC, the legions took on the

second, narrower meaning that is familiar in the popular imagination as close-order citizen heavy infantry.

At the end of the 2nd century BC, Gaius Marius reformed the previously ephemeral legions as a professional force drawing from the poorest classes, enabling Rome to field larger armies and providing employment for jobless citizens of the city of Rome.

However, this put the loyalty of the soldiers in the hands of their general rather than the State of Rome itself. This development ultimately enabled Julius Caesar to cross the Rubicon with an army loyal to him personally and effectively end the Republic.

1. Praetorian Guard

The Praetorian Guard (Latin: *cohortes praetoriae*) was an elite unit of the Imperial Roman army whose members served as

personal bodyguards and intelligence for Roman emperors.

During the era of the Roman Republic, the Praetorians served as a small escort force for high-ranking officials such as senators or provincial governors like procurators, and also serving as bodyguards for high-ranking officers within the Roman legions.

With the republic's transition into the Roman Empire, however, the first emperor, Augustus, founded the Guard as his personal security detail.

Although they continued to serve in this capacity for roughly three centuries, the Guard became notable for its intrigue and interference in Roman politics, to the point of overthrowing emperors and proclaiming their successors. In 312, the Guard was disbanded by Constantine the Great, as he oversaw the destruction of their barracks at the Castra Praetoria.



Springbok

Journal of the South African Legion
Tydskrif van die Suid-Afrikaanse Legioen



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

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

Special Forces - Italian Special Forces

Part twenty two of a series that takes a look at Special Forces units around the world. This month we look at the Italian Special Forces.

The Italian Special Forces include special forces units from several

branches of the Italian Armed Forces: the *Esercito Italiano* (Army), the *Marina Militare* (Navy), the *Aeronautica Militare* (Air force) and the *Arma dei Carabinieri* (Carabineers).

Italian Armed Forces special units are divided into Special Forces (TIER 1) and Special Operations Forces (TIER 2), and the *Comando operativo interforze delle forze speciali* (Joint Special Forces Operations Headquarters) is responsible for the operations carried out in response to defence requirements.

Italian Army

Tier 1

- 9th Paratroopers Assault Regiment “Col Moschin”, is a SAS-like force trained for special operations in various environments. They carry the legacy of the Arditi units of the Italian Army, which operated on the Italian-Austrian Front during World War I.
- 4th Alpini Paratroopers Regiment, is a Ranger type infantry alpini regiment, special-

izing in mountain combat, and a special force trained for special operations in all kinds of environments, with special skills in skiing and climbing and resistance to cold, stress and fatigue. The 4th is best suited for high-altitude operations. It's operational battalion carries the legacy of the Alpine Skiers Battalion “Monte Cervino”, an elite battalion of the Alpini Corps, that distinguished itself during World War I and World War II.

- 185th Paratroopers Recon-

naissance Target Acquisition Regiment “Folgore”, is a long range reconnaissance paratroopers regiment.

Tier 2

- 3rd Special Operations Helicopter Regiment “Aldebaran” - Special operations aviation regiment
- 11th Signal Regiment - Military communications regiment
- 28th Regiment “Pavia” - Psychological operations regiment

Italian Navy Special Forces

The Italian Navy special forces unit is the Divers and Raiders

Grouping “Teseo Tesei” (Comando Raggruppamento Subacquei e Incursori Teseo Tesei - COMSUBIN). Specifically the 250-350 men of the Operational Raiders Group are the special forces section of the elite unit.

- GOI (Gruppo Operativo Incursori) - is the branch with raiders; they are trained for naval/land operation are also trained for special operations in all kinds of environments like British SBS, forward air controller, counter terrorism ...(but are also used on the mountains of Afghanistan in operation ISAF), are also equipped with special weapons over/under water vehicles for silent insertions.
- GOS (Gruppo Operativo Subacquei) - is the diver's branch for rescue tasks and



damage inspection / repair of vessels and/or submarines. They're even specialized as underwater E.O.D.

COMSUBIN's origins lie with the famous Italian special units "X MAS" (Italian acronym for Anti Submarine Motorboats). The name referred to an early vehicle employed by the units, an explosive-laden crewless motorboat ("barchino") which was aimed and launched against enemy submersibles (keep in mind that until well after World War II subs were essentially surface ships with the capability of temporarily diving underwater for attacks).

After World War I much study and development went into underwater raid techniques but the unit's name was never altered, leading to the false impression that Italian seafaring commandos were still relegated to anti-submarine warfare only. Instead many flotillas were armed and equipped to direct raids on enemy ships using explosive head-charges in guided torpedoes with two-man crews (Siluri a Lenta Corsa or S.L.C.), with hand explosive charges (by frogmen) or with small, fast, self-explosive boats (S.M.A.).

Special Operations Forces

Sometimes called upon to intervene for special operations the Special Company of the 1° San Marco Marine Regiment.

Also the raiders approached the target by means of submarines with special tanks installed on the external bridge containing the special vehicles (S.L.C.).

- Reparto Eliassalto REA (Heliborne Assault Unit)



Italian parachute wings

- special helicopters unit trained to support, supply, infiltrate/exfiltrate SF amphibious units in enemy territory.

Italian Air Force

Special Forces

- 17° Stormo Incursori the raiders corp of Italian Air Force. Its primary missions: raids on aeronautical compounds, forward air control, combat controlling, and combat search and rescue. Its origins are in the A.D.R.A. Arditi Distruttori Regia Aeronautica (Royal Air Force Brave Destroyers), a corp of World War II. They were used in not-well-known missions against bridges and allied airfields in North Africa after the fall of Tunisia. The only well-known mission reported the destruction with explosive charges of 25 B-24s & other airplanes and the killing of some bomber crew members.

Special Operations Forces

- 9° Stormo Francesco Baracca - a special helicopters unit trained to support, supply, infiltrate/exfiltrate SF and SOF units in enemy territory.

Carabinieri Corps

Special Forces

The Carabinieri is a corp of Gendarmerie with both (civil

and military) law-and-order police duties, military police, and military peacekeeping and war-fighting capabilities.

- The Carabinieri has its own special forces in the form of the Gruppo di Intervento Speciale or the Special Intervention Group. The GIS features some one hundred or so troops specially trained in counter-terrorism operations with a special emphasis on marksmanship.

Special Operation Forces

The special unit SOF is the "1st Company" of the 1st Carabinieri Airborne Regiment Toscana. It is a regiment of paratroopers for military police and anti-terrorism. The usual roles:

- military, common with all other airborne/special operation forces troops;
- law-enforcement, supporting the Carabinieri law-enforcement units in dangerous areas (homeland security e.g. mafia-controlled zones, violent criminal confrontations and any operation in which, translating from the official Carabinieri website, "extremely violent firearm clashes are foreseen") and VIP escort and security service.

Gruppo di Intervento Speciale

The Gruppo di Intervento Speciale (GIS) was formed in 1978, and is one of the world's most active counter terrorist units. Consisting of only 100 high trained operators drawn from the Carabinieri, the GIS is engaged in almost constant operations against the Sicilian Ma-

Weapons used by the Gruppo di Intervento Speciale



Heckler & Koch MP5



Beretta SC70/90



HK PSG-1



Franchi SPAS-12



Beretta 92 SB



Badge of the Gruppo di Intervento Speciale

fia, the Red Brigade and other Italian and international criminal organisations.

Becoming an operator with the GIS is extremely hard, and almost 40 per cent of potential candidates fail the entry test. These tests include exhaustive security checks, medical tests, psychiatric tests and intensive questioning by senior GIS officers.

Those that do pass the initial test move on to a two-week selection process, which is followed by a 10-month course that includes high-speed driving (on Ferrari's test track), combat shooting, and close-quarter battle.

Although most GIS operations take place out of the public eye, in May 1997 its operators carried out an assault on the 99 metre belltower in St Mark's Square, Venice, in front of millions of television viewers. The tower was occupied by 10 Italian separatists, who had stormed it by using an armoured vehicle as a battering ram.

GIS operators using helicopters and ground forces eventually removed the terrorists by force in a spectacular show.

A pretty penny

The biggest military wastes of money since World War II.

Many South African's tend to wring their hands and wail when they talk about how much our country spends on defence.

"How can we spend 52 billion Rands a year on defence," they cry. "That money can be spent on far more important things." Sure, like bailing out our national airline every few months.

Now to many people this sounds like a large amount of money. Yet there are 47 countries around the world, including five in Africa, that spend more money that we do on defence.

Obviously the country that spend the most money on defence every year is the United States of America. Their 2020 defence budget is a cool 750 trillion dollars.

The staggering amount of money available to the US Armed Forces has resulted in wasteful military spending on a grand scale and some of the worst military spending in history.

As technology changes and improves, new designs in tanks, planes, weapons, and vehicles have to be developed - all of which cost huge amounts. But the military is plagued by bureaucratic inefficiency, redundancy, procurement issues, changing priorities, and a process that simply takes too long.

As a result, the last 30 years are littered with futuristic, pointless military projects that

never saw a day of action. Lasers, stealth ships, high-tech tanks and guns, communications systems, even uniforms - all have been developed at massive costs, and done little to nothing to keep the nation or its armed forces safe.

Rampant military spending isn't a new phenomenon, as numerous European countries during after World War II wasted staggering sums on defences that provided no defence. But when it comes to wasting money, nobody can beat the US from the Cold War until now.

Here are but a few examples of the biggest wastes of money by the US Military.

Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II

The Joint Strike Fighter program was meant to produce a fighter that the Air Force, Marines, and Navy could all use - a fast, stealthy plane that could take off from anywhere, land on anything, and deploy almost any weapon.

Instead, it became a black hole of technical problems, delays, technology that was obsolete before being deployed, and above all, money. It's been estimated that the F-35 has cost a staggering \$1.5 trillion since its inception in 1996. This is more than the GDP of all but 11 countries on earth.

Meanwhile, the plane is plagued by issues, including

having trouble landing on aircraft carriers, issues winning dogfights, reliability problems and, ironically, vulnerability to lightning strikes.

Strategic Defence Initiative

Announced just a few weeks after Ronald Reagan's "evil empire" speech, the Strategic Defence Initiative, also known as the Star Wars Project, was meant to be a space-based system of lasers and satellites that would shoot down any Russian intercontinental or submarine-launched nuclear missile headed toward the United States.

What it became was a black hole of theoretical research, pop culture ridicule, political tension, and spent money. A staggering amount of money.

Estimates on the cost of SDI research and development start at \$100 billion, and run as high as \$150 billion. All for a system that was dependent on technology that was never developed past the theoretical stage.

Thankfully, some of the money was spent on basic science research, so it wasn't a total waste.

Ironically the Star Wars Project did have a positive spin-off for the USA - it brought about the fall of the USSR.

The Russians were convinced that the project worked and they spent billions trying to come up with a counter measure. They

spent so much money that it bankrupted the Soviet Union.

Rockwell B-1 Lancer

One of the most troubled and controversial programs in Air Force history, the B-1 was first developed in the early '70s as a replacement for the aging B-52. It was cancelled in 1977 after four prototypes were made. It cost a cool one billion dollars to develop.

Then it was revived by President Reagan, and development on it continued to the point where 100 were built, despite numerous problems with the plane's design and operation.

The planes didn't see combat in the Gulf War due to engine issues, and didn't drop a bomb in action until 1998. The planes have proved useful, but hugely expensive, at over a quarter of a billion dollars per plane.

MX Missile

A 1970s nuclear deterrent, the LGM-118 (or MX Missile, as the program was usually called) was a land-based ICBM that could carry up to 10 re-entry vehicles, each armed with a 300-kiloton W87 warhead.

It could deliver a devastating strike to the Soviet Union that could essentially win a nuclear war in one blow.

The program was cancelled and restarted several times due to issues with housing the missiles, before President Reagan approved

their deployment in hardened silos.

The program suffered massive delays and cost overruns, and the missiles themselves were hard to maintain and expensive to build. The MX ended up costing over \$25 billion to make just 114 missiles.

The last were taken out of service in 2003 - and the Cold War they were meant to win lasted just a few years after they were deployed.

Project Nike

Cold War paranoia over waves of Soviet bombers blasting the US into nuclear oblivion led to a staggering engineering and military project, code-named Nike.

It was a plan to build anti-aircraft missile batteries all over the country, concentrating on cities, military targets, and industrial bases.

The missiles were placed in batteries of two or three, with corresponding radars, barracks, underground storage bunkers,

elevators, and maintenance facilities.

Nike Ajax Missiles were replaced by Nike Hercules Missiles, which were replaced by Nike Zeus missiles. All the while, the Soviet Union was phasing bombers out, making the missiles useless.

Nike was ended in the mid 70s, and no missile was ever fired at an enemy. The cost of the program was enormous, at least \$20 billion, and probably much more.

Nike sites today mostly sit abandoned, with many of them posing severe environmental hazards.

Future Combat System

Work began on the Future Combat System (FCS) in 1999, with the intention of building an integrated set of manned and unmanned combat vehicles that would dominate the 21st century battlefield.

Then the 2001 September 11th attacks happened, and military priorities changed com-



Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II

pletely, requiring a redesign of the FCS.

Ballooning costs, technical problems, and the budgetary drain of the Iraq War sent the bill for the program sky high.

When it was finally cancelled in 2009, \$19 billion had been spent - and just eight prototype vehicles were built and slightly more than two billion dollars each. Way to go.

Zumwalt Class Destroyer

Likely the most sophisticated warship in existence, the Zumwalt-class destroyer is also one of the most expensive.

A stealth-guided missile destroyer intended to replace current US destroyers, many of which are three decades old, the DD(X) program that birthed the Zumwalt was so plagued with cost overruns that the initial order of 32 ships was cut to 10, then three.

Therefore, each ship costs over \$3 billion - so expensive that Navy officers are reluctant to use them in combat.

Boeing-Sikorsky RAH-66 Comanche

The Comanche was developed as a one-chopper-fits-all replacement for the Huey, Cobra, and Kiowa helicopters the Army had been using for decades.

Meant to be stealthy, fast, and able to execute a number of different missions, instead was a baulky and risky white elephant that literally had trouble getting off the ground.

As one test pilot remarked, "The RAH-66 was a nightmare. It had all the flying characteris-

tics of a concrete block."

Two prototypes were built, and the program was cancelled in 2004 - with almost \$7 billion spent.

M247 Sergeant York

Designed as a counterpart to mobile Soviet self-propelled anti-aircraft guns (SPAAG), the M247 was meant to deploy two 40mm cannons on a radar controlled turret.

The procurement process was plagued with arguments over what design to go with, and what cannons to use. Once a design was chosen, it had severe problems with its radar, including an inability to discern enemy helicopters from trees.

To save money, off-the-shelf parts were used, including World War Two era Bofors guns. But design and construction pressed on.

When the tank was finally unveiled, the fire control radar mistook a reviewing stand for a target, sending observers scrambling for cover, lest they be shot to pieces.

The M247 was finally cancelled after only 50 had been made, and most were bombed as targets.

All told, the US spent over \$6 billion on four different experimental SPAAG systems, none of which worked.

Army Combat Uniform

The US Army spent \$5 billion to develop and produce a uniform featuring a camouflage pattern that could be used in any environment.

The result, the ACU unveiled in 2004, was so unpopular and ineffective that soldiers in

combat environments simply stopped wearing it.

The Army had to buy uniforms from private contractors, while sinking more money into developing a new pattern.

New uniforms were finally approved in 2014 - but used a design the Army had actually been considering before the ACU.

XM2001 Crusader

Designed to be the Army's new self-propelled gun, the Crusader was intended to be lighter, faster, and more powerful than current artillery.

It turned out to be unsuitable for the post Cold War military - a mobile, precise cannon that wasn't mobile or precise enough.

It was cancelled in 2002, with over \$2 billion down the tubes. Concepts from the Crusader were used in the experimental XM-203 Line of Sight Cannon - which was also cancelled.

Space Based Infrared System

The US Air Force designated \$643 million of their 2019 budget for a program called the "Next Generation Overhead Persistent Infrared" to replace the Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS).

Spokesman Major Will Russell said that the new program was designated to ensure a "survivable missile warning capability by the mid-2020s to counter adversary advances."

For years the Air Force has spent around \$1.7 billion on each of its SBIRS satellites which are intended to detect

threats with infrared technology and send early warnings to the US defence. Though the program has not been completely overhauled, it has considerably reduced costs.

Let's be honest though, it's not only the USA that has wasted money when it comes to military projects. Take the French prior to World War II.

Maginot Line

The trauma of the Great War led France to develop a defensive strategy, hoping to build strong enough defences to shore up an army weakened by a low birth rate.

The Maginot Line was designed to make the French/German border so impregnable that troops and tanks could be stationed on the Belgian border, where Germany had attacked France in 1914.

It could also be used as a basis for a counter-attack, and to hold the Germans off while France mobilized.

Secretly, the French also hoped that by funnelling an attack into Belgium, it would draw England into the conflict - exactly like 1914.

The cost of the Line was staggering - 7 billion Francs, or about a third of France's entire military budget.

The problem with the Maginot Line was that all the guns and defences faced forwards. The Germans simply went around the line, punching through the undefended Ardennes Forest in southern Belgium, and attacking the Maginot Line from the rear.

The poorly-led French Army

was defeated in just six weeks.

Hitler's Atlantic Wall

Considering how easily the Germans had dealt with the Maginot Line, you would have thought they knew better. Yet this was not the case.

Soon after Nazi Germany conquered France, Adolf Hitler ordered the building of fortification all along the Atlantic coast to protect it from Allied landings.

Fuehrer Directive 40 called for 15,000 individual emplacements to be manned by over a quarter of a million Germans and foreign conscripts - all in less than a year.

The cost of the Atlantic Wall was staggering, certainly in lives (much of the work was done by slave labour), but also in material and money. 1.2 millions tons of steel, enough to build 20,000 tanks, was used, along with 17 million cubic meters of concrete.

The total cost was the equivalent of \$200 billion in today's money, a cost that Germany could barely afford.

Famed General Erwin Rommel declared the Wall to be a farce in 1943, and he was right - it was breached in less than a day, with the vast majority of the emplacements either never finished or never used.

Albanian Bunkers

The tiny nation of Albania spent a crushing amount of money on a project that never fired a shot.

Albanian strongman Enver Hoxha was obsessed with defending his nation from what he saw as threats on both sides,

from both the West and East.

So he ordered the building of bunkers that could be defended by civilian reservists.

750,000 of the round concrete domes were eventually built, popping up everywhere from empty fields and farms, to tourist-friendly beaches, graveyards, and the middle of streets.

A quarter of Albania's budget went to its military, and the vast majority of that to the bunkers. Meanwhile, the country had a massive housing shortage, and crumbling roads.

When Hoxha died in 1990, the bunker program was stopped - leaving the country with hundreds of thousands of useless eyesores.

Airbus A400M Atlas

The A400M was meant to replace the variety of aging transports in Europe's air forces. Instead, it was plagued with delays, technical issues, and a bloated budget.

The plane was delayed so badly that England, France, and Germany all had to explore buying or leasing existing cargo planes from the US.

It was nearly scrapped several times, and Britain's Minister for Defence Procurement declared "The A400M is a complete, absolute wanking disaster, and we should be ashamed of ourselves. I have never seen such a waste of public funds in the defence field in the past 40 years."

The first Atlas finally entered service in 2013 - and was grounded when one of the 11 built planes crashed. The program has already cost at least \$10 billion.

Silent Night

On 24 December 1914 the guns along the Western Front fell silent. It was the first Christmas of the war and the opposing soldiers were determined to celebrate the fact. This story was printed in the first Christmas issue of Military Despatches, and will be printed every Christmas issue.

It was called the 'Great War' or 'The War to end all Wars'. It had begun in April 1914 and by the time it ended in November 1918 more than 10 million lives would be lost. Yet in 1939, a mere 21 years later, the world was at war once

again. This new conflict would become known as World War II and the 'Great War' of 1914-18 would be renamed World War I.

By December 1914 the war had become static. An elaborate trench system had been constructed by both the Germans and the Allies. In some places troops faced each other with less than 100m of 'no-man's

land' between them. December 1914 would also see the first Christmas of the war.

A few months earlier Pope Benedict XV had begged the warring governments to declare a truce for Christmas, "that the guns may fall silent at least upon the night the angels sang." The Germans gave it serious consideration but the British

angrily denounced the Pope. On 24 December 1914, Christmas Eve, German troops in the region of Ypres, Belgium, began decorating the area around their trenches by placing candles on trees. The British troops watched with a mixture of confusion and more than a little suspicion. Then the Germans began to sing *Stille Nacht*. While





FIRE: British guns fire at a German position. During the Battle of the Somme 1,738,000 shells were fired at the Germans. During this battle the British took over 60,000 casualties on the first day of the battle.

the words may have been unfamiliar the British troops could recognise the tune of *Silent Night*. The British troops responded by singing English carols.

The two sides began shouting Christmas greetings to each other. Many of the Germans had worked or studied in Britain and could speak English fluently.

There were calls for the two sides to meet in no-man's land. Tentatively, in ones and twos, troops began leaving the trenches on both sides. Normally if you showed the slightest part of your body above a trench it would be hit by a bullet within seconds. Now people were climbing out of trenches, exposing themselves to the other side.

It must have been a strange feeling for those involved. Earlier that day they had been trying to kill each other, as they had for the past nine months.

Now they were standing face to face with the enemy, shaking hands and greeting one another. Troops began to exchange small gifts such as whisky, jam, cigarettes, cigars and chocolate. The artillery in the region fell silent that night and, for the rest of the night, an eerie silence fell over the Western Front.

Mourning the dead

Early on Christmas morning troops began meeting in no-man's land again. Both sides took the opportunity to bury the many dead that lay in no-man's land. Proper burials were held and in many instances soldiers from both sides mourned the dead together and paid their respects.

In more than one sector informal football matches were arranged in no-man's land.

In many sectors, the truce lasted through Christmas night, but in some areas, it continued

until New Year's Day.

While the troops at the front may have been enjoying the break, the higher commands on both sides, especially the British, were furious. They ordered the artillery to open fire and gave orders for attacks to take place. After all, this was a war.

British commanders Sir John French and Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien vowed that no such truce would be allowed again, although both had left command before Christmas 1915. In all of the following years of the war, artillery bombardments were ordered on Christmas Eve to ensure that there were no further lulls in the combat.

Troops were also rotated through various sectors of the front to prevent them from becoming overly familiar with the enemy.



THANK YOU FRITZ: British and German soldiers met in no-man's land, exchanged greetings and gifts, and in some sectors even organised a game of soccer.

Celebrated and retold

The Christmas truce of 1914 has been celebrated and retold in songs (such as *Christmas 1914* by Mike Harding; *Christmas in the Trenches* by John McCutcheon; *Belleau Wood* by Garth Brooks; *Pipes of Peace* by Paul McCartney) film (*Joyeux Noel* and *Oh What a Lovely War*) and has also been the subject of a number of books.

In the final episode of *Blackadder Goes Forth*, the protagonists discuss events of the past that led them to their current situation, including the Christmas Truce. Captain Edmund Blackadder (Rowan Atkinson) was apparently still sore over being ruled offside during a football game with the Germans. He also cynically muses that "Both sides advanced further during one Christmas piss-up than they did in the next two-and-a half years of war."

During the final episode Blackadder tries to fake insanity to get himself sent back to

England. It doesn't work.

As they are about to go over the top, Private Baldrick tells Blackadder he has a plan to get them out.

"At the signal, company will advance! Well, I'm afraid it'll have to wait," Blackadder says.

"Whatever it was, I'm sure it was better than my plan to get out of this by pretending to be mad. I mean, who would have noticed another madman around here? Good luck, everyone. Charge!!!"

On 7 November 2006, Irish singer Chris de Burgh paid £14,400 at Bonham's auction house for an original 10 page letter from an unknown British soldier that records events and incidents with the Germans on that night describing "the most memorable Christmas I've ever spent".

The letter begins:

This will be the most memorable Christmas I've ever spent or likely to spend: since about tea time yesterday I don't

think there's been a shot fired on either side up to now. Last night turned a very clear frost moonlight night, so soon after dusk we had some decent fires going and had a few carols and songs. The Germans commenced by placing lights all along the edge of their trenches and coming over to us-wishing us a Happy Christmas etc.

They also gave us a few songs etc. so we had quite a social party. Several of them can speak English very well so we had a few conversations. Some of our chaps went over to their lines. I think they've all come back bar one from 'E' Co. They no doubt kept him as a souvenir. In spite of our fires etc. it was terribly cold and a job to sleep between look out duties, which are two hours in every six.

First thing this morning it was very foggy. So we stood to arms a little longer than usual. A few of us that were lucky could go to Holy Communion early this morning. It was celebrated in a ruined farm about 500 yds behind us.

I unfortunately couldn't go. There must be something in the spirit of Christmas as to day we are all on top of our trenches running about. Whereas other days we have to keep our heads well down. We had breakfast about 8.0 which went down alright especially some cocoa we made. We also had some of the post this morning.

I had a parcel from B. G's Lace Dept containing a sweater, smokes, under clothes etc. We also had a card from the

On 21 November 2005, the last remaining Allied veteran of the truce, Alfred Anderson died in Newtyle, Scotland at the age of 109.

Queen, which I am sending back to you to look after please. After breakfast we had a game of football at the back of our trenches! We've had a few Germans over to see us this morning. They also sent a party over to bury a sniper we shot in the week. He was about a 100 yds from our trench. A few of our fellows went out and helped to bury him.

About 10.30 we had a short church parade the morning service etc. held in the trench. How we did sing. 'O come all ye faithful. And While shepherds watched their flocks by night' were the hymns we had. At present we are cooking our Christmas Dinner! so will finish this letter later.

Dinner is over! and well we enjoyed it. Our dinner party started off with fried bacon and dip-bread: followed by hot Xmas Pudding. I had a mascot in my piece.

Next item on the menu was muscatels and almonds, oranges, bananas, chocolate etc followed by cocoa and smokes. You can guess we thought of the dinners at home.

Just before dinner I had the pleasure of shaking hands with several Germans: a party of them came 1/2 way over to us so several of us went out to them. I exchanged one of my balaclavas for a hat. I've also got a



HELLO: Descendants of Great War veterans, in contemporary uniform, shake hands at the 2008 unveiling of a memorial to the truce.

button off one of their tunics. We also exchanged smokes etc. and had a decent chat. They say they won't fire tomorrow if we don't so I suppose we shall get a bit of a holiday-perhaps. After exchanging autographs and them wishing us a Happy New Year we departed and came back and had our dinner. We can hardly believe that we've been firing at them for the last week or two-it all seems so strange. At present its freezing hard and everything is

covered with ice...

There are plenty of huge shell holes in front of our trenches, also pieces of shrapnel to be found. I never expected to shake hands with Germans between the firing lines on Christmas Day and I don't suppose you thought of us doing so. So after a fashion we've enjoyed? our Christmas. Hoping you spend a happy time also George Boy as well. How we thought of England during the day. Kind regards to all the neighbours.

The last living veteran of World War I was Florence Green, a British citizen who served in the Allied armed forces, and who died 4 February 2012, aged 110. The last combat veteran was Claude Choules who served in the British Royal Navy and died 5 May 2011, aged 110.

With much love from Boy.

On 11 November 2008, the first official Truce memorial was unveiled in Frelingheien, France, the site of a Christmas

Truce football game in 1914.

On 21 November 2005, the last remaining Allied veteran of the truce, Alfred Anderson died in Newtyle, Scotland at the age of 109.

Counting the cost

Nearly 8.5 million soldiers lost their lives during World War I. Germany suffered the highest loss with 1,773,700 followed by Russia with 1,700,000. France suffered 1,357,800 casualties and the British Empire, which included Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa, suffered 908,371. The United States of America, who entered the war in 1916, lost 116,516 men.

During World War II the casualty figures were even higher. More than 30 million

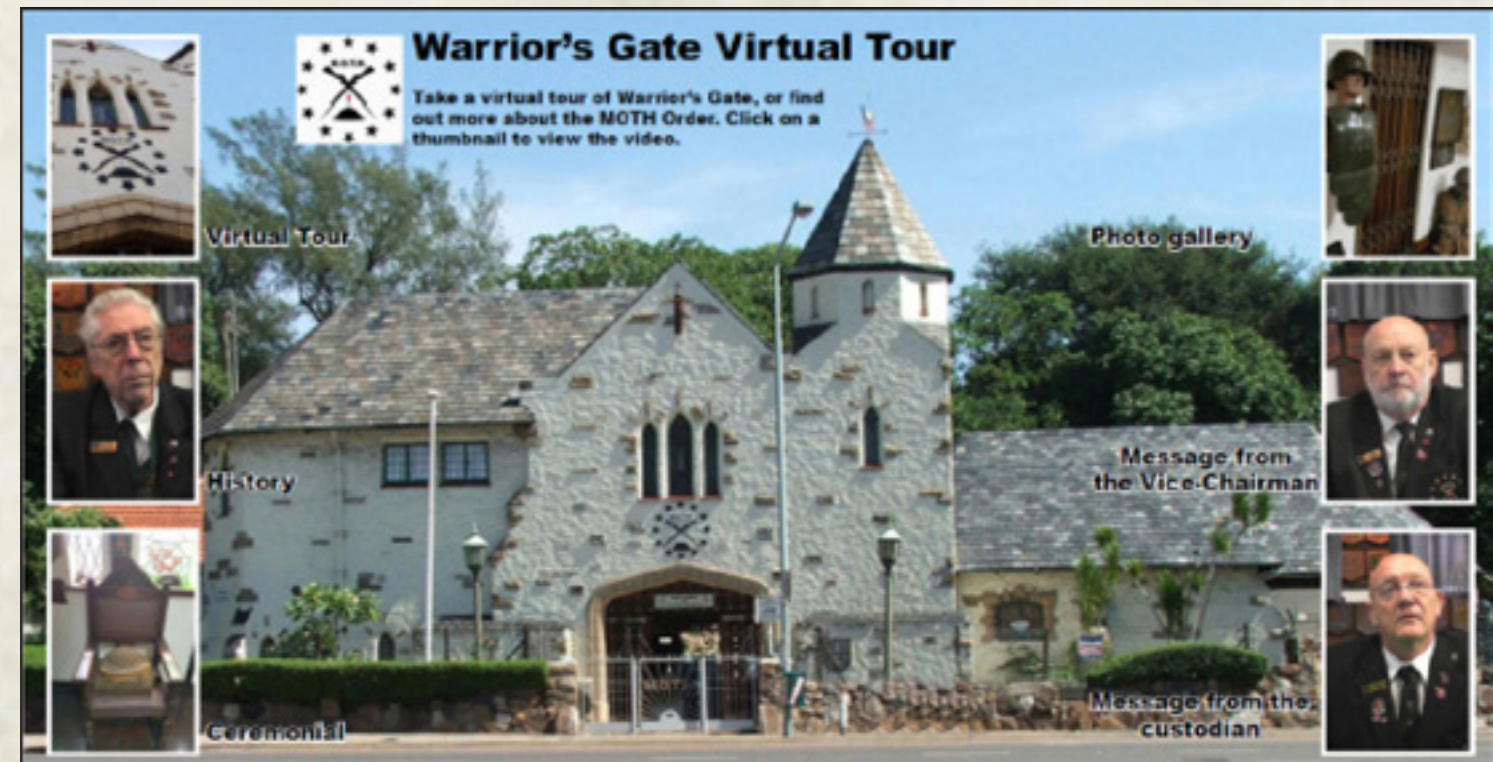
soldiers died, as did millions of civilians. The Russians alone lost more than 13 million troops.

Let us remember the spirit of the Christmas Truce and pray that our generation and generations to come never have to experience a war and that we never have to calculate the cost of World War III.

In closing I would like to quote the words of the Memorable Order of Tin Hats (MOTH) Credo, as it is very fitting.

They shall grow not old,
As we who are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them,
Nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun,
And in the morning,
We will remember them.

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.



Surviving the Arctic Convoys

Remembering the heroism of the Arctic Convoy veterans of the Great Patriotic War. Article and photographs by Regine Lord.

This year, 2020, marks the 75th anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War.

This is the term used in Russia and some former republics of the Soviet Union to refer to the conflicts between the then Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, from 22 June 1941 to 9 May 1945, along the Eastern Front of World War II.

In honour of this day, Russia traditionally celebrates Victory Day on 9 May every year. This year, however, due to the global coronavirus pandemic, the celebrations were delayed until 24 June 2020.

This date had been chosen to recall the day, 75 years earlier, when the victors of the Great Patriotic War celebrated with a parade along the Kremlin Wall. In his speech, Russian President Vladimir Putin promised to remember the heroism and courage of those who fought during the Great Patriotic War and World War II:

“Dear veterans, our gratitude to you is immeasurable. You have proven with your life and your fight how important it is to be able to defend the values of peace, humanism and justice. We will do everything in our power to ensure that the memory of your heroic accomplishments never fades. It is our duty of conscience and our responsibility to the present and the future.”

Over the last seven decades,

the government of the Russian Federation has awarded numerous medals to these military veterans, two of whom happen to live in Cape Town! Mr Joseph Wilkinson (94) and Mr Trevor Gordon Peter Poland (97) are the last two surviving veterans of the Arctic convoys living in South Africa.

On Monday 21 September 2020, the Russian Ambassador to South Africa, His Excellency Mr Ilya Rogachev travelled from Pretoria to Cape Town especially, to award the Jubilee medal commemorating “75 Years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945” to Mr Joseph Wilkinson and Mr Trevor Poland.

It is particularly fitting that they received these medals just a few days before South Africa held its annual Heritage Day celebrations on 24 September. We owe these men – and all their compatriots, many of them

also just young lads barely out of school – an enormous debt of gratitude, and it is appropriate to remember and honour what they did.

The Arctic convoys operated between Iceland and Britain, and northern ports of the Soviet Union – specifically Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. Nazi Germany had launched its invasion of the Soviet Union with Operation Barbarossa on 22 June 1941, thus creating the Eastern Front.

This operation involved a staggering number of about three million soldiers along a 2,900 km long front with 600,000 motor vehicles and over 600,000 horses for non-combat operations. Faced with this onslaught, the Soviet Union had called on the West for assistance.

The United States thus began ferrying supplies of tanks, fighter planes, fuel, ammunition, raw materials and food, etc., to the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union as part of the so-called Lend-Lease Agreement.

The route through the Arctic was extremely hazardous, and many ships and their crews perished in the icy waters during battles with the German *Luftwaffe* and *Kriegsmarine*. But these supplies provided an extremely important lifeline for the Soviet Union in their resistance to the Nazi invasion.

The government of the Russian Federation has thus award-



HELLO: His Excellency Ambassador Ilya Rogachev, the Russian Ambassador to South Africa, awards the Jubilee Medal commemorating “75 Years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945” to Mr Joseph Wilkinson.

ed medals to many of the men who served on these Arctic convoys, in grateful acknowledgement of their heroism.

A Soviet medal dating back to 1944, the Medal of Ushakov, honours all Naval personnel and officers for bravery and courage in naval theatres of military operations.

It is named after Fyodor Ushakov, an 18th century naval commander who never lost a battle and is in fact the patron saint of the Russian Navy.

Since 2013, this Medal of Ushakov has been presented to a number of foreign recipients too, specifically for personal courage and valour shown during World War II while participating in the Arctic convoys.

In 2014, according to British sources, 3,300 Arctic convoy veterans were found, and President Vladimir Putin signed an

order to decorate them with the Medal of Ushakov. It was a challenging task and took several years.

By 2019, 100 veterans were still supposed to receive it; all were at an advanced age and some had sadly passed away in the interim.

The Russian government has also issued various medals to commemorate the anniversaries of “Victory in the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945”. Both Mr Trevor Poland and Mr Joseph Wilkinson have received several of these, i.e., the 40-year medal, the 50-year medal, the 60-year medal, the 65-year medal, the 70-year medal, and now the 75-year commemorative medal. In 2020, 550 Arctic convoy veterans were awarded the 75-year Jubilee medal; in the United Kingdom, some were awarded this medal in per-

son, but most had to be sent by post.

It was a crisp spring day, when Ambassador Rogachev and his wife Elena Vysotskaya met with Mr Joseph Wilkinson at the Oasis Retirement Resort at Century City. Mr Wilkinson’s son Brian and his granddaughter Emma-Jane, as well as Dr Elina Komarova Tagar, a member of the Russian Club Cape Town, were also in attendance at this special occasion.

Later that afternoon, the Ambassador and his wife visited Mr Trevor Poland at his home in Constantia, to hand him his medal in person too. These meetings had been organised by the Russian Consulate General in Cape Town.

As the Ambassador congratulated Mr Wilkinson on receiving this special Jubilee medal, he gratefully acknowledged the sacrifices that he and his fellow military veterans had made during the Second World War II; speaking on behalf of the Russian people, he emphasised sombrely, “We remember.” Reflecting on the significance of this event afterwards, the Ambassador stated:

“We made tremendous efforts to defeat the Nazis, millions sacrificed their lives on the altar of the Victory. Russia remembers all heroes of the Second World War – both Soviet and Allied forces. The lessons of that scary time must never be forgotten and any attempts to rewrite history must be prevented without any delay.”

In the spirit of this project to remember, several young Russian journalists, Anastasia Shkitina and her team from



BRICS TV, produced a special documentary this year, titled “Unknown Stalingrad”. It is freely available on YouTube.

In the preceding months, they had interviewed numerous World War II veterans from the five BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. They included Mr Joseph Wilkinson and fellow World War II veteran Mr Sydney Ireland, who celebrated his 99th birthday on the 9th of March 2020.

In August 2020, this documentary won First Prize in the VIIth International Patriotic Film Festival in Kazan, Russia.

The documentary’s title is a reference to the Battle of Stalingrad (23 August 1942 to 2 February 1943), in which Nazi Germany fought the Soviet Union for control over the city of Stalingrad.

The defence of Shanghai (1937) was referred to by Danish journalist Peter Harmsen in his book as “Stalingrad on the Yangtze”; the Battle of Kohima (1944) between Japan and besieged British and Indian troops was described as “Stalingrad of the East” by authors Martin Dougherty and Jonathan Ritter; and even the battles at Monte Castello in Italy (1944-1945) and at El Alamein in Egypt (1942) have been compared with Stalingrad, thus making this an enduring symbol of World War II.

The awarding of these 75-year Jubilee medals is therefore a good opportunity to remember – and honour – the military service of Mr Trevor Poland and Mr Joseph Wilkinson.

Born in July 1923, Mr Trevor

Gordon Peter Poland entered the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth as a Cadet in January 1937 at the age of 13, and was only two months past his 17th birthday, when he joined his first ship, HMS Nelson, in early September 1940. A month later, he transferred to the just-commissioned battleship HMS King George V, on which he served until April 1942, initially as midshipman of the watch.

Mr Trevor Poland had a passion for the sea his entire life, and wrote numerous books about it over the years. His memoirs of serving in the Royal Navy, available on Amazon, are titled *Hands to Action Stations – Memoirs of a Very Young Naval Officer (1939 – 1945)*. The subtitle describes it, fittingly, as “The Story of a Boy becoming a Man in the War that shook the Globe.” It is a compelling narrative that provides an extraordinary eyewitness account of some of the most significant actions of World War II.

As a young midshipman, for instance, he participated in the naval blockade of Brest harbour in occupied France, which successfully prevented the two German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau from sailing into the Atlantic in March 1941, in order to disrupt Allied shipping convoys between the United States and Europe. Royal Air Force bombers repeatedly bombarded both vessels while they were in dry dock, delaying their repairs and their return to service.

Two months later, on 27 May 1941, Midshipman Poland in his role as tankey (navigator’s

assistant) observed the action from the bridge of HMS King George V, as they, together with HMS Rodney and the two heavy cruisers HMS Norfolk and HMS Dorsetshire, relentlessly pursued and destroyed the largest warship in the world, the powerful German battleship Bismarck, the pride of the Kriegsmarine.

Some days earlier, the Bismarck had departed from northern Germany, accompanied by the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen. Both had sailed far north into the Norwegian Sea, before looping southwest towards the Denmark Strait between Iceland and Greenland. Pack ice reduced the width of the strait, and bad weather limited visibility; nonetheless, the two ships were picked up by the new radar onboard the British heavy cruiser HMS Suffolk and then HMS Norfolk, another heavy cruiser. Several hours later, they were approached by the huge battlecruiser HMS Hood and the smaller newly commissioned battleship, HMS Prince of Wales. Both sides began firing. When the two British ships turned to fire broadsides at the two German vessels, HMS Hood was hit, sinking within minutes. The other three ships all incurred damage to varying degrees.

In his memoirs, *Hands to Action Stations*, Mr Poland recalls learning that, of the crew of 1,418, only three men onboard the HMS Hood had survived when a direct hit from one of the Bismarck’s salvos caused the ship’s magazine to explode and rip apart the ship.

One of the survivors was a



HELLO: His Excellency Ambassador Ilya Rogachev and his wife with Mr Trevor Poland [Photo by Russian Embassy]

midshipman he knew who had been one term below him at Dartmouth. One of the shells hitting the HMS Prince of Wales during the same engagement had killed another midshipman and a tankey (his counterpart) on the bridge. As HMS King George V and HMS Rodney approached the Bismarck for the final confrontation on 27 May 1941, Mr Poland’s thoughts were:

“At any moment three battleships would be hurling broadsides weighing over fifteen tons at each other. Though I had no doubt of the outcome of the battle, it was inevitable that someone would get hurt in the process. The fate that had befallen my opposite number in the ‘P.O.W.’ was too close for peace of mind.” (Location 1202)

It was a sobering thought, but one that he successfully put aside during the heat of the battle itself. For almost two hours, hundreds of shells pounded down on the burning Bismarck, the last ones at point blank range, before the British ships – by then running very low on

fuel – were ordered to return to port. Realising their inevitable fate, the German sailors detonated scuttling charges and began to abandon their ship. After a final salvo of torpedoes from HMS Dorsetshire, the Bismarck sank beneath the waves. Of her original complement of 2,400 sailors, only 115 survivors were picked up by various ships in the area. The remaining survivors perished in the sea, abandoned to their fate.

Sometime later, while studying the casualty list in the Times newspaper, Midshipman Poland he had a sudden realisation of his own mortality:

“Virtually half of my immediate friends and contemporaries killed in just one day. I studied the list more closely. There were many more names from my term on the list [at Dartmoor] but from other houses. ... If so many of my immediate friends could go in one day like that, I wondered what hope the rest of us had of surviving.” (Location 1306, and Location 1340).

During September and October 1941, Midshipman Poland served on the Tribal class

destroyer HMS Punjabi for six weeks, protecting the Russian Arctic convoys en route past the coast of Norway. Here he was second officer of the watch; he really enjoyed his brief time on-board the destroyer.

Mr Poland also recalled his almost-encounter with the sister ship of the Bismarck, the Tirpitz. At the time, HMS King George V was part of the fleet protecting the Arctic convoys. Mr Poland’s action station was now in the starboard forward director, controlling the starboard battery of 5.25-inch guns as rate officer. In early March 1942, the Tirpitz and her escorting destroyers were spotted leaving one of the Norwegian fjords, Fættenfjord near Trondheim, in order to intercept two Allied Arctic convoys – QP 8 (homebound) and PQ 12 (outbound).

Although the German ships came under attack by torpedo bombers from the aircraft carrier HMS Victorious, they managed to elude the rest of the fleet, including HMS King George V, and return to safety. The Tirpitz was only put out of action completely in November 1944, while stationed at Håkøya island in Tromsø fjord, Norway, when British Lancaster bombers scored two direct hits with Tallboy bombs, causing a massive explosion and capsizing the ship.

Mr Poland’s participation in Operation Torch in November 1942 is described in absorbing detail in his memoirs. He had left HMS King George V in April 1942, having been promoted to Sub Lieutenant, before undergoing Comman-

do training and several short courses in preparation for Operation Torch. This was the Allied invasion of French North Africa; the French colonies in the region were formally aligned with Germany, but with mixed loyalties, and it was anticipated that they would ultimately support the Allies. American General Dwight D Eisenhower thus planned a simultaneous three-pronged attack on Casablanca (the Western Task Force), Oran (the Center Task Force) and Algiers (the Eastern Task Force). While the American troops carried out the assault itself, naval and air support came from the British.

Despite his young age (he was only 19 at the time), then-Sub Lieutenant Poland found himself unexpectedly in command of a flotilla of landing craft, ferrying American servicemen to the beaches near Algiers, and thereafter marching his crew to Algiers after their landing ship Strathnaver had sailed away, leaving them behind. A few days later, he again led his flotilla for the landing at the port of Bougie, during which they came under relentless aerial bombardment by the Luftwaffe. He survived unharmed and, shortly before Christmas 1942, returned home to England.

At the end of December 1942, he was originally appointed to HMS Wild Goose, the same ship that Mr Wilkinson would join some months later in April/May 1943. However, their paths did not cross, as then-Sub Lieutenant Poland asked to be placed instead on HMS Matchless, a fast and powerful Lightning class destroyer, under

Lieutenant Commander John Mowlam.

His fellow recipient of the 75-year commemoration medal, Mr Joseph Wilkinson, born in July 1926, had left school to enlist in the Royal Navy in 1943.

After undergoing basic training, he was trained as a radio operator at a special Royal Navy Wireless Telegraphy Training School in Aberdeen, Scotland; his rating was Telegraphist (Trained Operator). Mr Wilkinson too was only 17 years old, when he reported to HMS Wild Goose (U45) under Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander David Edward Gillespie ('Dicky') Wemyss in April/May 1943. It was a Black Swan class sloop, on which he served as a radio operator for most of World War II. HMS Wild Goose was part of the Royal Navy's 2nd Escort Group (referred to as the 2 EG, 2nd EG or 2 SG), a British anti-submarine formation formed not long before Mr Wilkinson joined the ship.

During World War II, the United States and Canada supplied armaments to Britain, by sending convoys of large merchant ships across the Atlantic Ocean. The Germans tried to intercept and sink these with their own fleets of surface ships, planes and submarines. The American, Canadian and Royal navies responded by escorting the supply ships across the Atlantic; these escorts included minesweepers and anti-submarine vessels.

During the long drawn out Battle of the Atlantic, some 3,500 merchant vessels and

175 Allied warships were lost, and 757 Axis U-boats were destroyed. The human cost was devastating: some 36,200 Allied sailors and airmen, 36,000 Allied merchant seamen and 30,000 German seamen perished.

The young Mr Wilkinson thus found himself on HMS Wild Goose in the middle of the storm-tossed Atlantic, with the small sloop rolling and pitching, and the waves crashing onto the deck sounding like torpedo explosions down below. Initially, he did not have a bunk or a hammock, but slept on the lockers in the mess at the front of the ship; it was uncomfortable, and he frequently slid off onto the wet and dirty floor when the ship picked up speed or the waves became heavy.

He was grateful when he was finally allocated a hammock, as this stayed more or less level, no matter how much the ship was tossed about.

As a radio operator on HMS Wild Goose, Mr Wilkinson spent most of his time at sea listening for inter-escort messages with one earpiece, and for convoy messages with the other.

The 2 EG under the command of the legendary Captain Frederic John ('Johnnie') Walker was the most successful anti-submarine unit of World War II, destroying 24 German U-boats during its two years of active service.

Captain Walker had an uncanny instinct for locating submarines and anticipating their moves. Some of the tactics he conceived to hunt for U-boats were subsequently used in naval warfare for many years.



HELLO: Some of the commemorative medals from the Russian Federation received by Arctic convoy veteran Mr Joseph Wilkinson.

One of them was the 'creeping attack', which involved two ships working together closely. If the ASDIC sonar indicated that there was a U-boat nearby, one of the ships would maintain ASDIC contact and slowly guide the second ship into position above the U-boat, while trying not to alert the target that it had been spotted.

Once in position, the second

ship would release their depth charges. The 'barrage attack' involved three ships moving in a line abreast over the target area; each of them would, at the same time, release a series of depth charges, set to explode at different depths.

The resulting barrage of explosions right after each other usually destroyed the submarine. One particularly memo-

orable patrol for the 2 EG happened over a three-week period from 31 January to 19 February 1944, when they successfully sunk six German U-boats in the Atlantic, southwest of Ireland. Shortly after this, in March 1944, the 2 EG was assigned to Arctic convoy JW 58 and return convoy RA 58.

Several German U-boats along the route were despatched to the depths of the icy seas before they could do any damage.

This particular convoy (JW 58) included the USS Milwaukee, a four-funnelled American cruiser, which was a gift from President Theodore Roosevelt to Joseph Stalin as Leader of the Soviet Union. On receipt by the Soviets, she was commissioned as the Murmansk and performed convoy and patrol duty in the Arctic Ocean until the end of World War II; thereafter, she became a training ship. A few years later, in March 1949, she was returned to the United States, and scrapped.

To be concluded in the January 2021 issue of Military Despatches.

Feared and respected

In the second of five articles we look at members of the American military that were both feared and respected by their enemies during World War II.

Both World War I and World War II began in Europe. Situated nearly 8,000 kilometres away, the United States of America was not that keen on getting involved in either conflict.

Although World War I began on 28 June 1914, America only decided to throw their hat in the ring nearly three years later.

On 2 April 1917 US President Woodrow Wilson went before a joint session of Congress to request a declaration of war against Germany. On 4 April 1917 the U.S. Senate voted in support of the measure to declare war on Germany. Two days later, on 6 April 1917, the USA declared war on Germany.

World War II officially started on 1 September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. On 3 September 1939 both Britain and France declared war on Germany.

Russia became involved when the Germans launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Russia, on 22 June 1941.

At this stage the United States had remained neutral. This changed on 7 December 1941 when Japan launched an attack against the US Navy's Pacific Fleet based at Pearl Harbour, Honolulu, Hawaii.

On 8 December 1941 US President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed 7 December 1941 as "a date which will live in infamy". The United States

then declared war on Japan.

On 11 December 1941, four days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and the United States declaration of war against the Japanese Empire, Adolf Hitler declared war against the United States.

Yet to be fair, when one takes a closer look at history it is clear that the United States was involved against the three Axis powers - Germany, Italy and Japan - before Germany even invaded Poland in September 1939.

On 12 December 1937 Japanese aircraft attacked the US Navy gunboat USS Panay while it was anchored in the Yangtze River outside Nanking.

The Japanese claimed that they did not see the US flags painted on the deck of the gunboat, apologized, and paid an indemnity.

Sales of American military equipment and strategic materials to Germany and Japan were severely restricted.

When World War II began, many Americans offered their services as medical personnel, such as the American Ambulance, an organisation which transported British civilians wounded in the blitz to hospital.

Some took a far more direct approach to matters. American pilots fought for the Royal Air Force (RAF) during the Battle of Britain. They were not part of the US Army Air Force, but Americans that joined the RAF

to form the Eagle Squadrons.

In China American pilots flew against the Japanese as part of the now legendary Flying Tigers.

At sea the US Navy fought an undeclared war against German U-boats in the North Atlantic.

After the attack on Pearl Harbour the Americans through their might into World War II.

Although American had entered the war late, they would go on to fight on every front and would go on to produce soldiers that were both feared and respected.



Lafayette G. Pool

Lafayette G. Pool

Lafayette Green Pool was an American tank-crew and tank-platoon commander in World War II and is widely recognized as the US tank ace of aces, credited with 12 confirmed tank kills and 258 total armoured vehicle and self-pro-

pelled gun kills, over 1,000 German soldiers killed and 250 more taken as prisoners of war.

All accomplished in only 81 days of action from June 27 to September 15, 1944, using three different Sherman tanks. He received many medals, including the Distinguished Service Cross, the Legion of Merit, the Silver Star, the Purple Heart, the Belgian *Fourragère*, and the French *Légion d'honneur*.

He was born in Odem, Texas, on 23 July 1919. After spending a year in college he was inducted into military service in the summer of 1941.

Pool was drafted into the United States Army on 14 June 1941, from Fort Sam Houston in his native Texas and assigned to the new 3rd Armoured Division.

While undergoing training at the Desert Training Center and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, Pool was noted as a very aggressive sergeant, always wanting the best from his men; he even refused a commission as an officer so he could remain close to the front.

Pool was promoted to staff sergeant and deployed overseas with the 3rd Armoured Division in September 1943.

Pool served with the 3rd Platoon of Company I, 32nd Armoured Regiment, 3rd Armoured Division, in France between June and September 1944.

He successively commanded three Sherman tanks; an M4A1, and two M4A1(76)Ws, all of which bore the nickname "IN THE MOOD".

He kept the same crew

throughout the majority of the war. Corporal Wilbert "Red" Richards was the driver, Private First Class Bertrand "School Boy" Close the assistant driver and bow gunner, Corporal Willis "Ground Hog" Oller the gunner, and Technician Fifth Grade Delbert "Jailbird" Boggs the loader.

Pool's first tank, an M4A1, lasted from 23 June until 29 June, when Combat Command A (CCA) attacked for the first time at Villiers-Fossard. It was hit by a *Panzerfaust*, forcing Pool and his crew to bail out of the stricken tank.

His second tank, his first M4A1 (76)W, lasted from around 1 July to 17 August, when he was leading CCA in clearing remaining German forces from the village of Fromental.

This tank was knocked out by friendly fire from a P-38. His third and last tank, another M4A1(76)W, was destroyed on the night of 15 September 1944, while CCA was attempting to penetrate the Siegfried Line at Munsterbusch, Germany, southwest of Aachen.

The tank was hit by an ambushing Panther, and while Pool's driver was trying to back his damaged Sherman up, the Panther hit it a second time. Positioned precariously on the edge of a ditch, the tank was tipped over by the second round.

The round killed Pool's replacement gunner, Private First Class Paul King, (Corporal Oller had been temporarily transferred back to the United States) and threw Pool out of the commander's hatch, severe-

ly injuring him in the leg with shrapnel.

The leg was so badly mangled that it later had to be amputated eight inches above the knee.

After 22 months of rehabilitation and being fitted with a prosthesis, Pool opened a filling station and garage at his home in Sinton, Texas, followed by several other businesses, before he re-enlisted in the Army and went into the Transportation Corps.

With the intervention of General Roderick R. Allen, he finally managed to "come home" to the 3rd Armoured Division in 1948, where he became an instructor in automotive mechanics.

He retired from the U.S. Army on September 19, 1960, with the rank of Chief Warrant Officer Two at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. Pool died in his sleep on May 30, 1991, in Killeen, Texas, at the age of 71.



Richard Bong

Richard Bong

Richard Ira Bong was a United States Army Air Forces major and Medal of Honour recipient in World War II. He was one

of the most decorated American fighter pilots and the country's top flying ace in the war, credited with shooting down 40 Japanese aircraft, all with the Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter.

Bong was born September 24, 1920, in Superior, Wisconsin, the first of nine children. He became interested in aircraft at an early age while watching planes fly over the farm carrying mail for President Calvin Coolidge's summer White House in Superior, and was an avid model builder.

He began studying at Superior State Teachers College in 1938. While there, Bong enrolled in the Civilian Pilot Training Program and also took private flying lessons. On 29 May 1941, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet Program.

Bong's ability as a fighter pilot was recognized while he was training in northern California. He was commissioned a second lieutenant and awarded his pilot wings on 19 January 1942.

His first assignment was as an instructor (gunnery) pilot at Luke Field, Arizona, from January to May 1942. His first operational assignment was on 6 May to the 49th Fighter Squadron (FS), 14th Fighter Group at Hamilton Field, California, where he learned to fly the twin-engine Lockheed P-38 Lightning.

In June 1942 Bong was cited and temporarily grounded for breaking flying rules, including looping around the Golden Gate Bridge, flying at a low level down Market Street in San Francisco, and blowing the clothes off of an Oakland woman's clothesline.

Bong was still grounded when the rest of his group was sent without him to England in July 1942. Bong then transferred to another Hamilton Field unit, 84th Fighter Squadron of the 78th Fighter Group. From there, Bong was sent to the Southwest Pacific Area.

On 10 September 1942, Lt. Bong was assigned to the 9th Fighter Squadron, which was flying P-40 Warhawks, based at Darwin, Australia.

In November, while the squadron waited for delivery of the scarce P-38s, Bong and other 9th FS pilots were reassigned temporarily to fly missions and gain combat experience with the 39th Fighter Squadron, 35th Fighter Group, based in Port Moresby, New Guinea.

On 27 December Bong claimed his initial aerial victory, shooting down a Mitsubishi A6M "Zero", and a Nakajima Ki-43 "Oscar" over Buna (during the Battle of Buna-Gona). For this action, Bong was awarded the Silver Star.

Bong rejoined the 9th FS, by then equipped with P-38s, in January 1943; the 49th FG was based at Schwimmer Field near Port Moresby. In April, he was promoted to first lieutenant.

On 26 July Bong claimed four Japanese fighters over Lae, in an action that earned him the Distinguished Service Cross. In August, he was promoted to captain.

On 12 April Captain Bong shot down his 26th and 27th Japanese aircraft, surpassing Eddie Rickenbacker's American record of 26 credited victories in World War I. Soon afterwards, he was promoted to

major by General Kenney.

Bong considered his gunnery accuracy to be poor, so he compensated by getting as close to his targets as possible to make sure he hit them. In some cases he flew through the debris of exploding enemy aircraft, and on one occasion collided with his target, which he claimed as a "probable" victory.

On the recommendation of General Kenney, the Far East Air Force commander, Bong received the Medal of Honour from General Douglas MacArthur in a special ceremony in December 1944.

Bong's Medal of Honour citation says that he flew combat missions despite his status as an instructor, which was one of his duties as standardization officer for V Fighter Command. His rank of major would have qualified him for a squadron command, but he always flew as a flight (four-plane) or element (two-plane) leader.

In January 1945, Kenney sent America's ace of aces home for good.

Bong then became a test pilot assigned to Lockheed's plant in Burbank, California, where he flew P-80 Shooting Star jet fighters at the Lockheed Air Terminal.

On 6 August 1945, he took off to perform the acceptance flight of P-80A 44-85048. It was his 12th flight in the P-80; he had a total of four hours and fifteen minutes of flight time in the jet.

The plane's primary fuel pump malfunctioned during take off. Bong either forgot to switch to the auxiliary fuel pump, or for some reason was unable to do so.

Bong cleared away from the aircraft, but was too low for his parachute to deploy. The plane crashed into a narrow field. His death was front-page news across the country, sharing space with the first news of the bombing of Hiroshima. He was just 24 years old.



Richard O'Kane

Richard O'Kane

Richard Hetherington "Dick" O'Kane was a United States Navy submarine commander in World War II, who was awarded the Medal of Honour for commanding USS Tang in the Pacific War against Japan to the most successful record of any United States submarine ever.

He also received three Navy Crosses and three Silver Stars, for a total of seven awards of the United States military's three highest decorations for valour in combat.

Before commanding Tang, O'Kane served in the highly successful USS Wahoo as executive officer and approach officer under noted Commander Dudley "Mush" Morton. In his ten combat patrols, five in Wahoo and five commanding Tang,

O'Kane participated in more successful attacks on Japanese shipping than any other submarine officer during the war.

O'Kane was born in Dover, New Hampshire, on 2 February 1911. He graduated from Phillips Academy, Andover in 1930 and the United States Naval Academy in May 1934, upon which he was commissioned an officer in the United States Navy.

O'Kane spent his first years of active duty on the heavy cruiser USS Chester and destroyer USS Pruitt. He received submarine instruction in 1938 and was then assigned to the USS Argonaut. O'Kane qualified for submarines aboard Argonaut in 1938 and remained aboard until her overhaul at Mare Island in 1942.

In early 1942, Lieutenant O'Kane joined the pre-commissioning crew of the new submarine USS Wahoo and served as its executive officer on five war patrols during World War II.

In July 1943, following his fifth patrol in Wahoo, O'Kane was detached, promoted to lieutenant commander, and shortly made prospective commanding officer of USS Tang, which was then under construction. He placed her in commission in October 1943 and commanded her for her entire career.

He was an innovator, and developed several operational tactics that markedly increased his ship's effectiveness. Among these were daylight surface cruising with extra lookouts, periscope recognition and range drills (enabling clear tactical sureness when seconds counted), drifting when not bound

somewhere, and methods of night surface attacks, one of his favourite techniques to obtain and maintain the initiative in battle.

In five war patrols on the Tang, O'Kane was originally recognized with sinking a total of 24 Japanese ships – the second highest total for a single American submarine and the highest for a single commanding officer.

Postwar reviews of Japanese war records, corroborated by Tang's surviving logs and crewmen, revised the totals to 33 ships totalling over 116,454 long tons (118,323 t) sunk.

This placed Tang first for both number of ships and tonnage (ahead of USS Tautog's 26 ships and USS Flasher's 100,231 long tons).

Several times during the war, he took Tang into the middle of a convoy and attacked ships ahead and behind – counting on Tang's relative position, speed, and low profile to keep clear of enemy escorts.

O'Kane was captured by the Japanese when Tang was sunk in the Formosa Strait by her own flawed torpedo (a circular run of a Mark 18) during a surface night attack on 24–25 October 1944.

O'Kane lost all but eight members of his crew, and was at first secretly held captive at the Ōfuna navy detention centre, then later moved to the regular army Omori POW camp.

Following his release, O'Kane received the Medal of Honour for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity" during his submarine's final operations against Japanese shipping.



Special Forces

This month we're looking at Special Forces. We show you a badge or patch, you tell us the name of the unit and the country they are from. Note, we've removed wording from certain badges or patches.
Answers on page 94.

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

In the years following World War II, O'Kane served with the Pacific Reserve Fleet as commanding officer of the submarine tender USS Pelias, testified at Japanese war crimes trials, was executive officer of the submarine tender USS Nereus and was Commander, Submarine Division 32 (ComSubDiv 32).

He was a student at the Armed Forces Staff College in 1950–51 and was subsequently assigned to the Submarine School at New London, Connecticut, initially as an instructor and, in 1952–53, as the commanding officer.

O'Kane died of pneumonia in Petaluma, California, at 83. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

In 1998, the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS O'Kane (DDG-77) was named in his honour.



Audie Murphy

Audie Murphy

Audie Leon Murphy was an American soldier, actor, songwriter, and rancher. He was one of the most decorated American

combat soldiers of World War II.

He received every military combat award for valour available from the U.S. Army, as well as French and Belgian awards for heroism. Murphy received the Medal of Honour for valour that he demonstrated at the age of 19 for single-handedly holding off a company of German soldiers for an hour at the Colmar Pocket in France in January 1945, then leading a successful counter-attack while wounded and out of ammunition.

Murphy was born into a large family of sharecroppers in Hunt County, Texas. His father abandoned them, and his mother died when he was a teenager. Murphy left school in fifth grade to pick cotton and find other work to help support his family; his skill with a hunting rifle helped feed his family.

After the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941, Murphy's older sister helped him to falsify documentation about his birth date in order to meet the minimum-age requirement for enlisting in the military.

Turned down initially for being underweight by the Army, Navy and the Marine Corps, he eventually was able to enlist in the Army.

He first saw action in the 1943 Allied invasion of Sicily; then in 1944 he participated in the Battle of Anzio, the liberation of Rome, and the invasion of southern France. Murphy fought at Montélimar and led his men on a successful assault at the L'Omet quarry near Cleurie in northeastern France in October.

After the war, Murphy em-

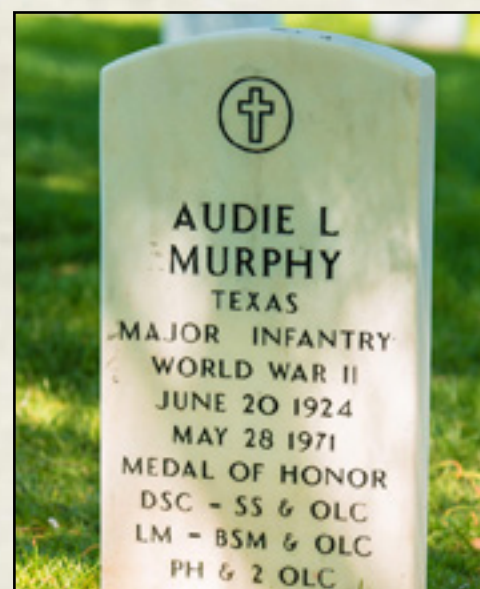
barked on a 21-year acting career. He played himself in the 1955 autobiographical film To Hell and Back, based on his 1949 memoirs of the same name, but most of his roles were in westerns.

He made guest appearances on celebrity television shows and starred in the series Whispering Smith. Murphy was a fairly accomplished songwriter. He bred quarter horses in California and Arizona, and became a regular participant in horse racing.

Suffering from what would today be described as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Murphy slept with a loaded handgun under his pillow. He looked for solace in addictive sleeping pills.

In his last few years, he was plagued by money problems but refused offers to appear in alcohol and cigarette commercials because he did not want to set a bad example.

Murphy died in a plane crash in Virginia in 1971, which was shortly before his 46th birthday. He was interred with military honours at Arlington National Cemetery, where his grave is one of the most visited.



My life as a Sea Cadet

By PO Albert Gouws

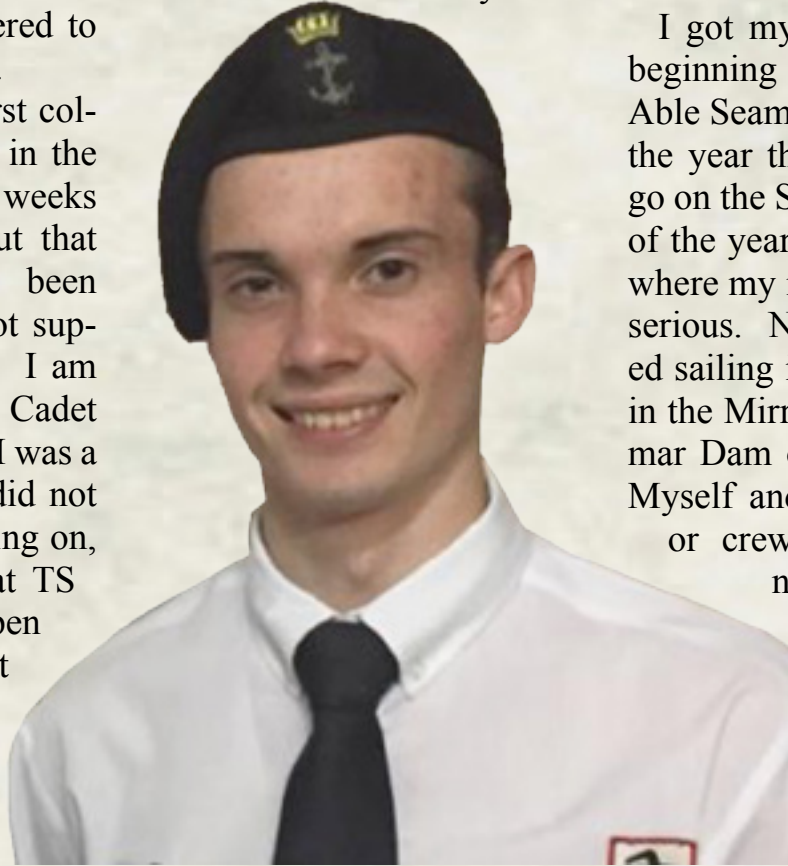
I started cadets in 2016, after one of my friends saw the cadets in Cape Town and thought that it would be something I would like to do. At first, I really didn't think that Cadets would matter to me this much. Boy, was I wrong!

In the beginning of my career at the Cadets, it was mainly something for me to do on the weekend to keep me out of busy. As the time I spent at the Cadet unit increased, my parents (more specifically my mom) realised that there was no real structure in their teachings, and acted like any parent would have done, by asking the adults there too many questions on paperwork and safety. Soon enough she discovered that there were no proper documents to sign to ensure the safety of the Cadets at the unit. When this got questioned by all the other parents who enrolled their kids, my mom offered to sort out their paper work.

This turned into the first collaboration of my family in the Sea Cadets. A couple weeks later my mom found out that the unit has actually been closed down and was not supposed to be operational. I am not too sure how the Sea Cadet base was saved, because I was a small kid and honestly did not even know what was going on, but my mom ensure that TS Tiburon would stay open for more children to get some training and maritime exposure. The

only part I was focused on was getting my first rank so that I can wear uniform – I wanted to look as smart as the Cadets of Cape Town did. As the Cadets got more popular and word of the re-opening of the Sea Cadet unit spread, more and more kids joined and the unit went from 5 kids that show up to Cadets to 50 cadets really quickly.

This made Cadets really interesting for me because I am a competitive person and enjoy friendly competition and being pushed to better myself. I gained my first rank within being at cadets for 1 year. I was also the first Cadet to achieve the rank of Basic Seaman that year. This created the competition for the other Cadets to “catch up” to my rank and me to go even further. I could suddenly see that the maritime industry and specifically the Navy is a career I would really like.



In 2017 it was time for the current Commanding Officer to step down after 15 years. My mom took over as the new Commanding Officer of the Durban Sea Cadet base, TS Tiburon. This was very good for the unite, because it will be under good management and would quickly go very far, but bad for me because the chance of someone pointing fingers and saying got ‘given’ my rank instead of working for it was so much greater. Luckily, this did not phase me for long, as I learned that if I work hard and prove that I can do the work, then no one can point any fingers at anyone. This is truly where my Cadet life actually started. The competition increased as there were greater opportunities for advancements in ranks and suddenly the competition was not only in our unit but outside as well.

I got my second rank at the beginning of 2018 which is the Able Seamen rank. This is also the year that I was allowed to go on the SAN Camp at the end of the year, and it was the year where my interest in sailing got serious. Not long after I started sailing in 2017, I took place in the Mirror Nationals at Midmar Dam on a Mirror Dinghy. Myself and my team member,

or crew, only placed 15th nationally, but I still enjoyed it to the fullest since I only competed to gain experience from

it. This had me competing in every dinghy competition and regatta there was. In December of 2018, I attended the SAN camp at SAS Saldanha. The camp was 10 days long and was designed to give Cadets a taste how it is to be part of the South African Navy. This camp was definitely an eye opener to me because I had no idea that there were so many other Cadet units around South Africa. On this camp I met Petty Officer (PO) Davids. He was a PO at TS Woltemade. He saw that I was battling to find my feet on the camp, because it was a completely new thing for me to do. As TS Tiburon did not have military people assisting with training, we lacked the practical knowledge of what to do and how to complete certain tasks. PO Davids took me under his wing and made me his runner. By doing this, he taught me everything I needed to know about my current rank and how to use the ranking system to get duties done. During this camp, I won the RA Edwards Boatswain Pipe trophy. I still remember on my way back from the camp I kept on thinking “when I become a Petty Officer, I want to be a PO like him” and now I am a PO and have been doing everything as a Cadet to ensure that it will be at the standard that he would have done it.

During 2018-2019 I have attended 2 other camps away from my unit. One was a leadership camp at SAS Simonsberg and the other camp was another SAN camp, also at SAS Simonsberg. It has been pointed out to me on the leadership

camp that I have good leadership instinct and am not afraid to make decisions. I put that to good use at the last SAN camp when the wheels came off during a camp that felt chaotic and without good structure. I saw how my mom was standing in for other officers who were not doing what they were supposed to do as the camp was really tuff, and it made me do the same with the Cadets. As I was only a Leading Seaman on the camp with 5 Petty Officers, it was clear some of them could not handle the stress of the camp, and I stepped in and did what they were supposed to. I know this is what PO Davids would have done as well.

I have been in cadets for more or less 4 years now and I have never regretted the decision and there has never been a day that I have not enjoyed Cadets. There are one of or 2 times that I have not agreed with what we were doing and have voiced and suggested a bunch of changes to what we do at Cadets, but if I could have my way, I would be at Cadets every day. My dad and my smaller brothers joined Cadets in 2019, so Cadets is a family thing for us. My mom has won various trophies, which made everyone see TS Tiburon in a very different light. This makes all the Cadets at our unit want to work hard and achieve things. This made me want to take part in the Nasional Cadet of the Year competition. I won this competition and share first place with LS Sheik from TS Springs. This is the first time in over 10 years that our unit won this competition and this was the best way to end my Cadet

career. I won an amazing Fossil watch, and every time I look at it, it reminds me of where I started, what I learned, the friends that I have made, and how it has shaped my future.

Due to Covid-19, Cadets were un-able to operate this year and it had a very bad impact in the Cadets, as most of the Cadets use the Cadet training to better their future and as an escape from gangs and home violence. I achieved my PO rank this year, but due to the pandemic, I have not been able to put my rank to good use, and probably won't get a chance to do so. This is also my last my last year as a Sea Cadet, because I am finishing school and will be too old to be a Cadet. One thing is for sure, I will definitely join up with Cadet units wherever I am, to help with training there, just as I was help during my time as a Cadet.

In the short 4 years of being a Cadet, I gained so much experience and made some really great friends, but in my personal opinion the best thing I gained from being in the Cadets was all of the sports and hidden talents I would have not known of if it was not for Cadets. One great example of this is my sailing skills. I have gone from not even knowing where port or starboard is to gaining athlete status this year. And I can now sail anything from small dinghies to big L26's! I have also obtained my Day Skipper's Licence and have completed some great courses through Grindrod Training Academy.

Being a Cadet has also opened up so many doors for me that I can't wait to finish school and

A young man in a white polo shirt and dark cap stands on a sandy beach, holding a trophy. The background shows a body of water and a distant bridge.

parents, SAS Saldanha, SAS Simonsberg, Sail Africa, Grindrod Shipping, Offshore Shipping, PO Davids, Lt Cdr Wayne Partridge, Lt Denise Gouws, PO Easton Terblanche (SAN) and all my fellow Cadets for making me the person I am today and giving me the opportunities that I have been given.

Should you be interested in knowing more about the Sea Cadets please see www.seacadets.za.org – the local unit contact details are provided.



Warrior's Gate Virtual Tour

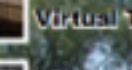
Take a virtual tour of Warrior's Gate, or find out more about the MOTH Order. Click on a thumbnail to view the video.



Virtual Tour



Photo gallery



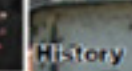
History



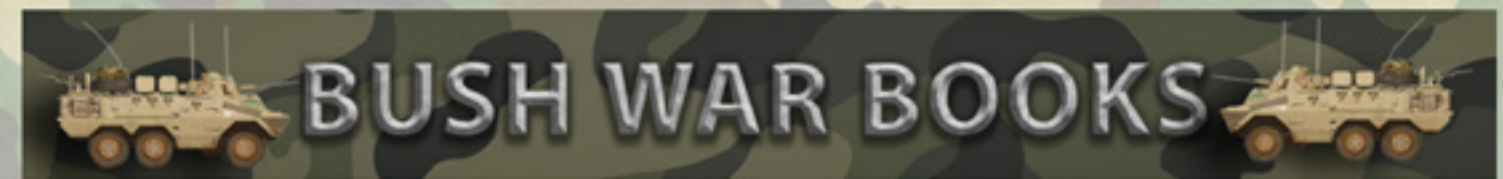
Message from the Vice-Chairman



Ceremonial



Message from the custodian



Click [here](#) to visit their website.

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

A matter of survival - Christmas gifts

Instead of our normal article on survival tips, we're looking at a few gift ideas that are idea for those spending time in the great outdoors. Next month it will be back to normal.

Tactical - All in One Survival Kit

What's in the box

- 1 x Tactical torch Flashlight
- 1 x Survival Paracord Bracelet
- 1 x Foldable Tactics Military Knife
- 1 x Compass
- 1 x Emergency thermal blanket
- 1 x Flintstone, Whistle
- 1 x Water Bottle Clip
- 1 x Tactical Camo Pouch
- 1 x roll Plaster
- 1 x roll bandage



BioLite Wood Burning Camp Stove

You're out in the bush and your cellphone or tablet dies. What if the heat from your campfire could be used to generate electricity to give you unlimited access to power?

The BioLite CampStove 2 uses a thermoelectric generator to convert the heat from your fire back into reusable electricity so that you can charge out to your handheld devices. Access that power right away or store it for later with its integrated battery. Using only twigs, pine combs or brush as fuel, this portable smokeless camping stove can boil a litre of water in under five minutes. The LED dashboard gives real-time feedback on fire strength, fan speed, and power output, making it super easy and convenient to use.



TACT Bivvy Survival Sleeping Bag

The TACT Bivvy is an ingenious light-weight emergency sleeping bag that fits in size of your hand.

The TACT Bivvy is made from heat-reflecting Mylar and coated with a unique material called Heatsheets. This material is highly durable, resistant to tearing, and stretches so it can be used over and over again.

It will keep both rain and wind off of you, while keeping you warm in temperatures below zero.



11-in-1 Survival Gear Kit

What's in the box

- 1 X Professional Flashlight (Battery not included)
- 1 X Heavy-Duty Tungsten-Pen with Carbide Tip
- 1 X Compact Wood Cutter
- 1 X Emergency Blanket
- 1 X 11-IN-1 Multi-Function Pocket Card
- 1 X Large Ferrocerium rod flint
- 1 X Paracord Bracelet
- 1 X Compact Water Proof Durable Carrying Case
- 1 X Water Bottle Clip
- 1 X Carabiner
- 1 X Military Knife



Gerber Dime Multi-Tool

If you're going to use a multi-tool then you can't go wrong with Gerber.

This model includes 10 tools: Needle nose spring-loaded pliers, Wire cutter, Fine edge blade, Retail package opener, Scissors, Medium flat screwdriver, Crosshead screwdriver, Bottle opener, Tweezers, File.



LifeStraw Steel Personal Water Filter

This is something that can save your life in a survival situation. Put the straw into almost any water, no matter how polluted, and drink.

Stainless steel LifeStraw water filter features 2-stage filtration system that eliminates contaminants as well as odours and tastes

Durable and compact food-grade stainless steel straw meets FDA standards and is ideal for hiking, camping, backpacking, travel, and outdoor survival

Removes minimum 99.9999% of water-borne bacteria and 99.9% of water-borne protozoan parasites, and filters to 0.2 microns; surpasses EPA filter standard

Replaceable carbon capsule provides 2-stage filtration that reduces chlorine, organic chemicals, odours and bad tastes

Filters up to 1,000 litres and does not require batteries, pumping, or chemicals



Rank Structure - Italian Army

Over the next few months we will be running a series of articles looking at the rank structure of various armed forces. This month we look at the Italian Army.

The Italian Army (Italian: Esercito Italiano) is the land-based component of the Italian Armed Forces of the Italian Republic.

The army's history dates back to the Italian unification in the 1850s and 1860s. The army fought in colonial engagements in China, Libya, Northern Italy against the Austro-Hungarian Empire during World War I, Abyssinia before World War II and in World War II in Albania, Balkans, North Africa, the Soviet Union, and Italy itself.

During the Cold War, the army prepared itself to defend against a Warsaw Pact invasion from the east. Since the end of

the Cold War, the army has seen extensive peacekeeping service and combat in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Its best-known combat vehicles are the Dardo infantry fighting vehicle, the Centauro tank destroyer and the Ariete tank and among its aircraft the Mangusta attack helicopter, recently deployed in UN missions.

The headquarters of the Army General Staff are located in Rome opposite the Quirinal Palace, where the president of Italy resides. The army is an all-volunteer force of active-duty personnel.

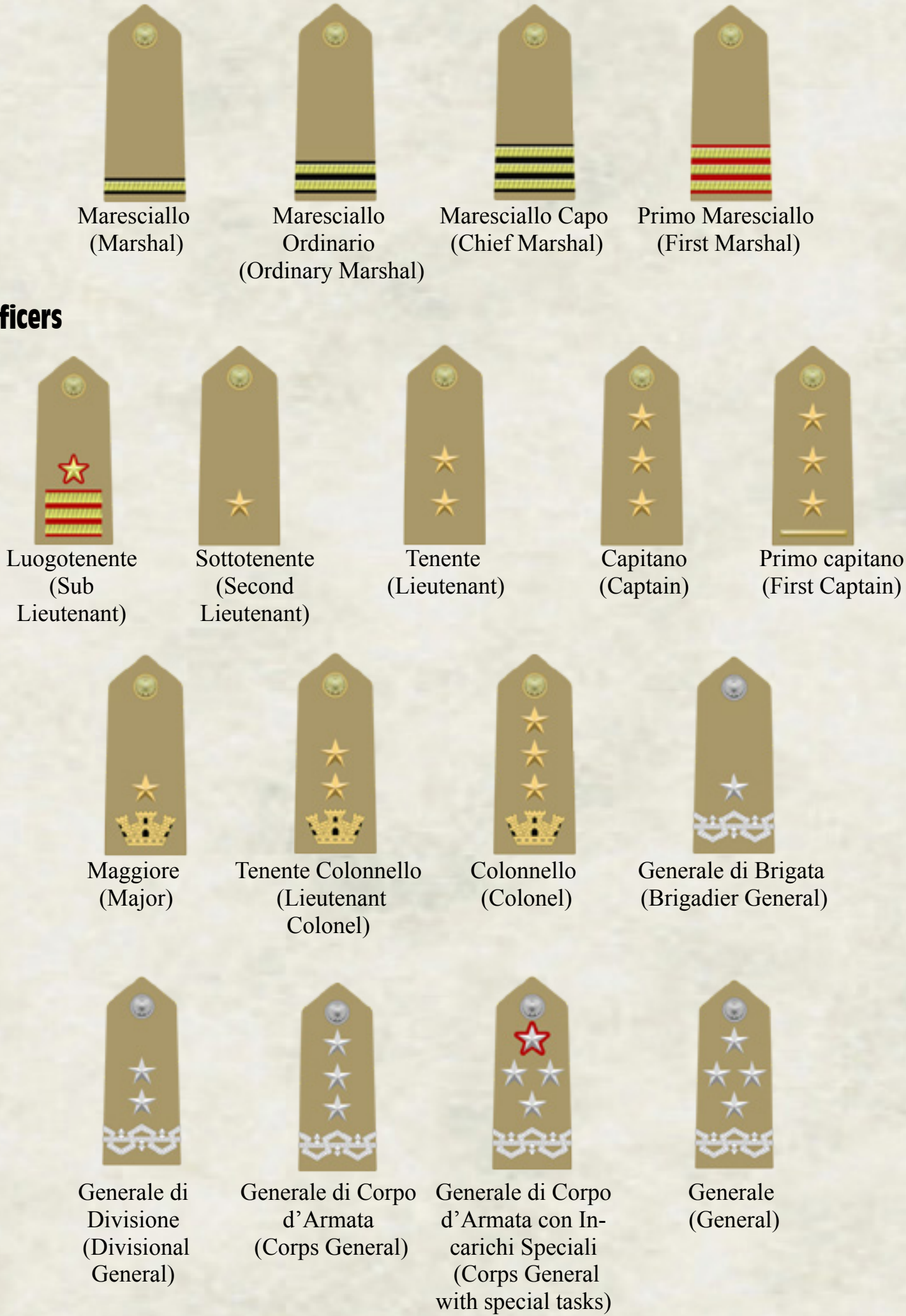


Italian Army

Non-commissioned Officers (NCO) and Warrant Officers (WO)



Officers



Weapons & Equipment: Paras

This month we compare the weapons and equipment of the World War II paratroopers.

Germany

The German *Fallschirmjäger* can trace their history back to April 1935.

They were part of the *Luftwaffe* (Air Force) and not the army.

While they were successful at the start of the war, they took heavy casualties during the invasion of Crete.

The worst parachutes used by a major power were those of the Germans which were based on the Italian *Salvatore* design.

Because of the rather athletic forward landing roll necessitated by their parachute harness, the German paratrooper could carry little more than a pistol

and some grenades on his person. Therefore, many weapons containers, called *Waffenhalter*, had to be carried and dropped.

The *Fallschirmjäger* had a wide variety of special clothing. As they were Luftwaffe personnel, the basic uniform was that of the flying units and in blue rather than the field grey of the Army.

While most were armed with either the standard K98 bolt-action rifle or the MP-40 submachine gun, some of them were armed with the FG-42.

The FG-42 was a gas operated semi-automatic rifle made only for the Airborne. Only about 10,000 were made. It had a 20

round magazine and a small bipod.

Paratrooper Equipment

- A - Jump boots.
- B - M38 Helmet.
- C - K98 Mauser.
- D - MP-40.
- E - Walther P-38.
- F - FG-42.
- G - Gravity knife.
- H - M24 *Stielhandgranate*.
- I - Canteen.
- J - *Göffel* (Fork and spoon).
- K - Trenching tool.
- L - Mess kit.
- M - MP-40 ammo pouches.
- N - Parachute badge.
- O - Jump gloves.
- P - Knee pads.

Britain

The Parachute Regiment was formed on 22 June 1940 when No. 2 Commando was turned over to parachute duties

During World War II they won no fewer than 23 battle honours, including Pegasus Bridge and Arnhem.

They wore the distinctive maroon beret and the Denison smock was the first camouflaged uniform issued to the British Army.

On landing from a parachute jump, many paras would remove their steel helmet and replace it with their maroon beret. This led to the Germans giving them the nickname *Die Roten*

Teufel (the Red Devils).

The Paras were not issued with any special weapons and their small arms were the same as the rest of the army.

They used the standard bolt action Lee-Enfield rifle and the Enfield or Webley revolver or the M1911 pistol.

For a submachine gun, they used the British Sten in North-west Europe, which was issued in higher numbers than to a normal infantry battalion.

Each section had a Bren light machine gun and the platoon had a 2-inch mortar. The only battalion heavy weapons were eight 3-inch mortars, four Vickers machine guns and after 1943,

ten PIAT anti tank weapons.

Paratrooper Equipment

- A - Combat boots.
- B - Mk II helmet.
- C - Lee Enfield No.4 Mk.I.
- D - Sten gun.
- E - Bren gun.
- F - Webley revolver.
- G - Fairbairn-Sykes knife.
- H - Trenching tool.
- I - Mess kit.
- J - Canteen.
- K - Mills bomb.
- L - Back pack.
- M - Sten ammo pouch.
- N - Parachute Regiment beret.
- O - Parachute wings.
- P - Toggle rope.
- Q - Scarf.

United States

The first U.S. airborne unit began as a test platoon formed from part of the 29th Infantry Regiment, in July 1940. The platoon leader was 1st Lieutenant William T. Ryder, who made the first jump on August 16, 1940 at Lawson Field, Fort Benning, Georgia from a B-18 Bomber.

Although airborne units were not popular with the top U.S. Armed Forces commanders, President Franklin D. Roosevelt sponsored the concept, and Major General William C. Lee organized the first paratroop platoon. This led to the Provisional Parachute Group, and then the United States Army Airborne Command. General Lee was the first commander at the new par-

achute school at Fort Benning, in west-central Georgia.

The first U.S. combat jump was near Oran, Algeria, in North Africa on November 8, 1942, conducted by elements of the 2nd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

The 82nd Airborne Division, known as the All American, and the 101st Airborne Division (Screaming Eagles) made a total of 13 combat jumps during World War II, including during Operation Overlord as well as Operation Market Garden.

A folding butt version of the M1A1 carbine was produced especially for the paratroopers. It was stored in a special rifle bag while jumping.

Paratrooper Equipment

- A - Jump boots.
- B - M1C Helmet.
- C - M1A1 carbine.
- D - M1A1 Thompson.
- E - M1918A2 Browning Automatic Rifle.
- F - M1911A1 Colt pistol.
- G - M3 fighting knife.
- H - Trenching tool.
- I - Mess kit.
- J - M1 carbine ammo pouch.
- K - Mk II hand grenade.
- L - Canteen.
- M - Parachute wings.
- N - 82nd Airborne patch.
- O - 101st Airborne patch.
- P - M1936 Musette bag.

Other Airborne Forces

Other countries also had their own airborne forces.

France

Following the Battle of France, General Charles de Gaulle formed the *1ère Compagnie d'Infanterie de l'Air* in September 1940 from members of the Free French forces who had escaped to Britain. It was transformed into the *Compagnie de Chasseurs Parachutistes* in October 1941.

Italy

The *Paracadutisti* was a parachute division formed in 1941 and was designated the 185th Parachute Division *Folgore*.

Japan

The *Teishin Shudan* was a Japanese special forces/airborne unit during World War II.

Poland

The 1st (Polish) Independent Parachute Brigade was a parachute brigade under the command of Major General Stanisław Sosabowski, created in the Second World War Scotland in September 1941, with the exclusive mission to drop into occupied Poland in order to help liberate the country.

Russia

The Russian Airborne Troops or VDV (Vozdushno-desantnye voyska Rossii) were first formed in the Soviet Union during the mid-1930s and arguably were the

first regular paratrooper units in the world. During World War II, they formed ten Airborne Corps plus numerous Independent Airborne Brigades, with most or all achieving Guards status.

Index

- A - Russian paratrooper.
- B - Italian paratrooper.
- C - Japanese paratrooper.
- D - Russian para helmet.
- E - Japanese para helmet.
- F - French para helmet.
- G - Italian para helmet.
- H - Japanese Type 100 SMG.
- I - Japanese Type 2 rifle.
- J - Italian fighting knife.
- K - Italian Beretta M938A.
- L - Russian PPsH-41.
- M - Free French parachute wings.
- N - Italian parachute wings.
- O - Polish parachute wings.



Germany



A



B



C



D



E



F



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Britain



A



B



C



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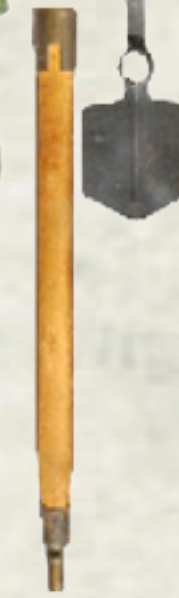


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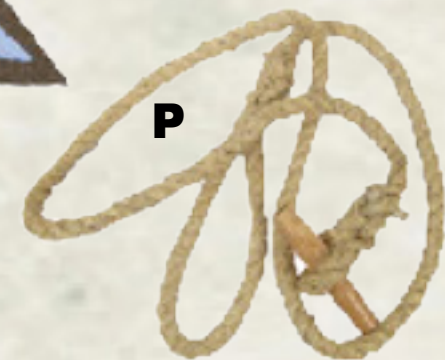
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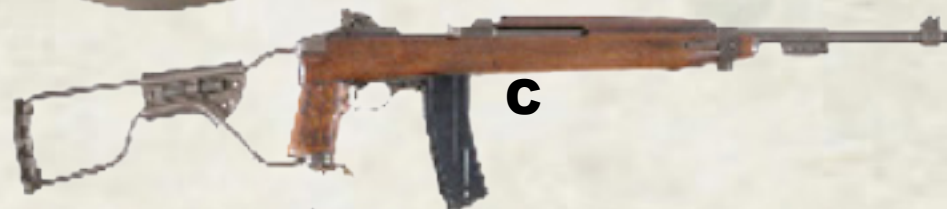
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Kurt Student

The highest ranking member of Germany's parachute infantry, Student commanded the Fallschirmjäger throughout World War II.

Kurt Student was born into an upper-middle class family in the city of Birkholz on 12 May 1890.

He wanted to become a doctor, but his family could not afford the cost of the education needed.

His mother died when he was 11 and his father sent him to the Royal Prussian Cadet School in Potsdam in 1901. Here he could train for a career in the military.

Discipline at the school was strict. Much emphasise was placing on sport and loyalty to the emperor and nation. Student did well at school, except in mathematics.

On graduating he became a *Fähnrich* (Officer Candidate) in the Imperial German Army in 1910 and was commissioned a lieutenant in March 1911, initially serving with a light infantry battalion.

In 1913 Student transferred to the German Army Air Service and underwent training as a pilot.

During World War I he served as a pilot and in July 1916 he became a charter member of the *Fokker Scourge*, when he scored his first confirmed victory, forcing Nieuport 11 no. 1324 to land behind German lines.

He then served in aerial units of the Third Army on the Western Front, including Jagdstaffel 9 (Jasta 9), which he command-

ed from 5 October 1916 – 2 May 1917, when he was wounded.

He scored six air-to-air victories over French aircraft between 1916 – 1917, with two coming after his wound. He left Jasta 9 on 14 March 1918.

After the war Student was assigned to military research and development. Due to the strict terms of the Treaty of Versailles, German was not allowed to develop an air force.

Gliding, however, was not forbidden by the treaty and Student became involved in researching the use of military gliders.

He also attended the Red Army Air Forces manoeuvres, where he first came into contact with the idea of airborne operations. This would play a big part in future thinking.

After Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, the *Luftwaffe* was secretly re-established. Student

transferred from the Army to the air force and was appointed by Hermann Göring to be the head of its training schools. In July 1938, he was named commander of airborne and air-landing troops, and in September commanding general of the 7th Air Division, Germany's first paratroop division.

A parachute training school was established at Stendal, 150 km from Berlin. All paratroopers were volunteers.

The division played no part in the invasion of Poland. In one sense, the overwhelming power of the German military meant that it was not really needed. The main reason, however, was Hitler's



OF COURSE IT HURT: A German paratrooper shows General Student where he was wounded. The troops gave Student the nickname "Papa".

desire to keep such a new unit secret until the *Blitzkrieg* was unleashed against Western Europe.

In their first action, Student's troops failed to achieve even the least of their objectives in the Battle for the Hague on 10 May 1940, taking and losing three airfields on the first day of the battle. The *Luftwaffe* also incurred huge losses.

German paratroopers were used with success in the campaigns in Norway, Belgium and Holland.

In Belgium, Student's paratroopers, under the command of *Oberleutnant der Luftwaffe* Walter Koch, captured the famous fortress of Eben-Emael. They landed gilders on the unprotected top of the fortress.

Student was decorated with the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for his leadership and bravery in the operation.

Following the Battle of Rot-

terdam in Holland, Student was almost taken prisoner.

It was in Rotterdam that Student was shot in the head. The round that almost ended his life was fired by a sniper of the *SS Leibstandarte*.

Still conscious but partly paralysed, Student was taken to the bomb-damaged hospital in Rotterdam where he was operated on by 36 year old Dutch brain specialist, Doctor Cornelis van Staveren.

Student would later thank van Staveren with the words, "*Sie haben mir das Leben gerettet*" (You saved my life).

Further operations were carried out in Berlin by Professor Wilhelm Tönnis, but it was only eight months later, in January 1941, that Student resumed active duty.

The input of Student's paratroopers in Western Europe had done a lot to convince Hitler that they were an important aspect of

his military.

In January 1941, Student was promoted to *Generaloberst* (Colonel General) and named commanding general of the *XI Fliegerkorps* (Air Corps), the newly formed command for the expanding German airborne forces.

In this capacity Student directed *Unternehmen Merkur* (Operation Mercury), the airborne invasion of Crete in May 1941.

Crete was taken, but with high losses to both sides. The Allies suffered 4,123 dead an unknown number wounded, and 17,479 captured. A number of ships were also sunk or damaged, including an aircraft carrier.

The German losses included 1,195 dead, 2,000 wounded, and 1,759 missing. A total of 284 *Luftwaffe* aircraft were destroyed or written off and several hundred were damaged.

One major disadvantage for the *Fallschirmjäger* was that individual weapons were dropped in canisters, due to their practice of exiting the aircraft at low altitude.

The Germans used colour-coded parachutes to distinguish the canisters carrying rifles, ammunition, crew-served weapons and other supplies.

This was a flaw that left the paratroopers armed only with knives, pistols and grenades in the first few minutes after landing. Poor design of German parachutes compounded the problem; the standard German harness had only one riser to the canopy and could not be steered. Even the 25 percent of

paratroops armed with sub-machine guns were at a disadvantage, given the weapon's limited range. Many *Fallschirmjäger* were shot before they reached weapons canisters.

The high casualties caused Hitler to forbid future airborne operations.

Acting as the temporary commander of the island, immediately after the surrender of Crete on 31 May 1941, on Göring's order Student issued an order for a launching of a wave of brutal reprisals against the local population with the Massacre of Kondomari and the Razing of Kandanos being typical examples.

His actual order read:

"It is certain that the civilian population including women and boys have taken part in the fighting, committed sabotage, mutilated and killed wounded soldiers. It is therefore high time to combat all cases of this kind, to undertake reprisals and punitive expeditions which must be carried through with exemplary terror. The harshest measures must indeed be taken and I order the following: shooting for all cases of proven cruelty, and I wish this to be done by the same units who have suffered such atrocities. The following reprisals will be taken:

1. Shooting
2. Fines
3. Total destruction of villages by burning
4. Extermination of the male population of the territory in question

My authority will be necessary for measures under 3 and 4. All these measures must, however, be taken rapidly and omitting



SMILE FOR THE CAMERA: Gen. Kurt Student at Gran Sasso, some days after Mussolini's rescue, poses for a propaganda photo.

all formalities. In view of the circumstances the troops have a right to this and there is no need for military tribunals to judge beasts and assassins."

In 1943, Student ordered Major Harald Mors to plan *Unternehmen Eiche* (Operation Oak), the successful raid conducted by a special *Fallschirmjäger* unit and a small team of Waffen-SS Commandos led by *Hauptsturmführer* (SS captain) Otto Skorzeny to free Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. They landed with gliders and STOL (Short Take Off and Landing) aircraft on a hilltop. Student received the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for his role in the operation.

Student was transferred to Italy and later to France, where he was involved in the battles of Normandy in 1944. He was put in charge of the First Paratroop Army and took part in counter-ing the Allied Operation Market Garden, near Arnhem.

After a brief time at the Eastern Front in Mecklenburg in 1945, he was captured by British forces in Schleswig-Holstein in April of that same year, before he could take command of Army Group Vistula.

In May 1947, Student was put on trial on eight charges of mistreatment and murder of prisoners of war by his men in Crete (but not his crimes against the civilian population of Crete, like those at Kondomari, Alikianos and Kandanos).

He was found guilty of three charges, but avoided a stern punishment owing to the testimony of Brig. Inglis, commander of the 4th NZ Brigade. Student was sentenced to five years of imprisonment but was given an early discharge in 1948 for medical reasons.

Kurt Student died on 25 July, 1978, at the age of 88.



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9. Photo gallery
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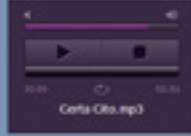




Certa Cito

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

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



Listen to Certa Cito by clicking play above.

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

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Official Newsletter of the Signals Association
Issue 16 - December 2020

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The Green Devils

WWII German Fallschirmjäger

Each month "Forged in Battle" looks at weapons, equipment or units that have been tried and tested on the battlefield. This month we look at the Fallschirmjäger, the WWII German paratroopers.

Nicknamed "Green Devils" by the Allies, the Fallschirmjäger were the paratrooper branch of the German Luftwaffe (Air Force).

The name Fallschirmjäger is made up from the German word for parachute, *Fallschirm*, and from the name for the elite light infantry of the Prussian Army, *Jäger* or hunter.

It was the Americans that first explored the concept of inserting a large body of troops inside enemy territory by means of parachute. Actually it was the commander of the US Air Corps in France during World War I, General Billy Mitchell, that first proposed the idea.

During the period after World War I there had been rapid developments in aircraft and aviation technology.

The Allied command, however, were forced to abandon

Mitchell's idea as they were wholly unprepared for such an undertaking, both logistically and in materiel.

It was the Soviet Union and Italy that were among the first to recognise the potential of airborne forces.

One of the problems with deploying a sizeable force by parachute was they would have to be dropped from a sufficient height to give them enough time to

open their parachutes.

The parachutes used at that stage were rip-cord types and had to be opened manually by each individual parachutist.

The height they would have to jump at meant that they were vulnerable to ground fire.

They would also be spread

out over a distance when they landed.

These problems were solved when the Italians developed the static-line parachute in the 1920s.

Static-line parachutes are attached to the inside of the aircraft and deploy automatically once the parachutist jumps from

the aircraft.

This technique allowed the jumps to take place at a much lower altitude, limiting exposure to ground fire, and providing tighter drop zone groupings.

Early Developments

It was the Soviets that first demonstrated the military pos-





a detachment of 14 officers and 400 men in just two days.

On 22 December 1933 the unit was renamed *Landespolizeigruppe General Göring*.

Although they carried out conventional police duties, it was always Göring's intention to produce a unit that would match the *Reichswehr*, the regular German Army.

The Fallschirmjäger are born

After Adolf Hitler introduced conscription on 16 March 1935, *Landespolizei General Göring* was transformed into *Regiment General Göring (RGG)* on 1 April 1935.

On 1 October 1935 the unit was incorporated into the newly formed Luftwaffe and training commenced at Altengrabow.

Göring ordered that a group of volunteers be drawn for parachute training. These volunteers would form a core *Fallschirmschützen Bataillon* (parachute soldiers battalion), a cadre for future *Fallschirmtruppe* (parachute troops).

It is interesting to note that one of the early Fallschirmjäger volunteers was Max Schmeling, the German boxer who was heavyweight champion of the world between 1930 and 1932.

The 1st Jäger Battalion/RGG was formed in January 1936 under the command of Bruno Bräuer. The 15th Engineer Company/RGG was also formed and both units were transferred to training area Döberitz for jump training while the rest of the regiment was sent to Altengrabow.

The parachute arm was officially inaugurated on 29 Janu-

ary 1936 with an Order of the Day calling for recruits for parachute training at the Stendal Parachute Training School located 96 km west of Berlin.

The school was activated in January 1936 and was open to active and reserve Luftwaffe personnel. NCOs, officers and other ranks of the Luftwaffe were required to successfully complete six jumps in order to receive the Luftwaffe Parachutist's Badge, which was instituted on 5 November 1936.

Formation

Prior to and during World War II the Germans established a number of parachute and airborne formations.

These included the 1st Parachute Army, the 1st and 2nd Parachute Corps, and 13 Parachute Divisions. There were also three independent regiments and brigades - *Ramcke Parachute Brigade*, *Luftlande-Sturm-Regiment*, and *Fallschirmjäger-Regiment Hübner*.

The Germany Army also had three parachute formations - The *Brandenburger Regiment*, 22nd Air Landing Division, and 91st Air Landing Division. The Waffen-SS had two parachute formations - the 500th and 600th Parachute Battalions.

World War II

Although the Fallschirmjäger were not used in an airborne capacity during the Invasion of Poland in 1939, they were sent to occupy several airfields between the Vistula and Bug rivers.

The first opposed airborne attacks took place during the

Norwegian Campaign. During the initial invasion Fallschirmjäger captured the defended air base of Sola, near Stavanger. It was also during the Norwegian Campaign when they suffered their first defeat. A company was dropped on the village and railroad junction of Dombas on 14 April 1940 and was destroyed by the Norwegian Army in a five-day battle.

On 10 May 1940 the Fallschirmjäger proved their worth when they captured Eben Emael in Belgium. (*See this month's Battlefield*). Eben Emael was considered to be one of the most powerful fortification in the world.

The performance of the Fallschirmjäger in the Netherlands was mixed as far as efficiency was concerned.

They did cause considerable disruption behind the Dutch lines and they successfully captured bridges at Moerdijk and Dordrecht. Yet they suffered heavy casualties in taking Dordrecht. They also captured airfields at Valkenburg, Ockenburg, Waalhaven, and Yprenburg.

Yet they failed to capture Hague and force the Dutch to surrender. The 22nd Airlanding Division was forced to land many of its aircraft on exposed motorways because the 7th Air Division had failed to secure designated airfields. Most aircraft ended up being shot up by Dutch infantry and artillery fire.

During the invasion of the Netherlands over 2,000 troops of the 7th Air Division were deployed, while approximately 12,000 troops of the 22nd Airlanding Division also participated.

It was the next large-scale airborne operation that would become the defining moment for the Fallschirmjäger during World War II.

Invasion of Crete

During the invasion of Crete in May 1941, the German airborne forces would perform their last strategic parachute and glider operation of the war.

The Fallschirmjäger captured a critical bridge that crossed the canal in the Isthmus of Corinth so German forces could pursue Allied forces further in the Greek mainland.

Due to carelessness, demolition charges were accidentally detonated, causing heavy casualties and damage to the bridge. Heavy enemy ground fire also took a toll. One group of paratroopers were accidentally dropped into the sea where they all drowned.

They did manage to capture British anti aircraft positions which forced the surrender of the local town, resulting in the capture of 12,000 Commonwealth and Greek troops.

The Germans used 22,000 airborne troops but in only nine days suffered 3,250 killed or missing and another 3,400 wounded.

One of the reasons for the heavy casualties was because of the design of the parachute. The parachute harness attached with a single strap to the body and the paratrooper had to land on his hands and his knees in a forward roll.

This meant that they could not safely jump with rifles or submachine guns. These, along with crew-served weapons, were

dropped in a separate container.

Armed only with pistols and hand grenades, the Fallschirmjäger first had to find the container and retrieve their weapons. Many were killed before they could arm themselves.

After Crete Adolf Hitler would no longer sanction large scale airborne operations and the Fallschirmjäger were used as ground troops.

Action on all fronts

During the invasion of Russia in 1941 the Fallschirmjäger acquitted themselves well in operations in the Leningrad area.

They were specifically deployed to the east of Leningrad on the River Neva to confront a Red Army effort to relieve the city. In October 1941, the German paratroopers were involved in heavy fighting against the Soviets and were successful in holding off Soviet attacks.

In July 1942, the Ramcke Parachute Brigade was deployed to North Africa to assist the Axis war effort there. In late October the Brigade participated in the 2nd Battle of El Alamein.

On 12 September 1943, the Fallschirmjäger conducted a successful rescue mission of Italian Prime minister Benito Mussolini at the Gran Sasso.

From 17 January to 18 May 1944, the Fallschirmjäger participated in the Battle of Monte Cassino.

The World War II-era German Fallschirmjäger, Brandenburgers, and especially the 22nd Airlanding Division glider borne paras laid the foundation for modern day Air Assault operations.

sibilities of airborne infantry.

They held a series of manoeuvres in 1935 and 1936 when they dropped 1,000 troops and then delivered another 2,500 with heavy equipment via air landings. They assembled forces then proceeded to carry out conventional infantry attacks with the support of heavy machine guns and light artillery.

The actual jumps were far from perfect. The Soviet paratroopers had to exit their slow moving Tupolev TB-3 transport aircraft through a hatch in the roof and then position themselves along the wings and jump together.

One of those present at these exercises was a foreign observer by the name of Hermann Göring.

Göring was obviously impressed by what he witnessed and he became personally committed to the creation of Germany's own airborne arm.

As Prussian Minister of the Interior, Göring had ordered the formation of a special police unit in 1933, with the objective being to protect Nazi party officials. They were officially named *Landespolizeigruppe Wecke*, after Polizeimajor Walther Wecke, who had assembled

Fort Eben Emael was considered to be one of the most powerful fortifications in the world. According to experts, it would be impossible to assault. The Germans, however, had other ideas.

On 10 May 1940 the Germans launched *Fall Gelb* (Case Yellow), an invasion of the Low Countries.

The ultimate goal was France. The German *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (High Command of the Armed Forces) believed that by attacking through the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium they could outflank the formidable French Maginot Line.

The Germans could then advance through southern Belgium and into northern France, cutting off the British Expeditionary Force and a large number of French forces and forcing the French government to surrender.

The Germans needed to capture several important bridges over the Albert Canal. The easterly roads led into the Belgian heartland and the rest of the Low Countries.

There was, however, a major obstacle that faced them. The Fort of Eben Emael, considered to be one of the most powerful fortification in the world.

Construction

Constructed between 1931 and 1935, it was reputed to be impregnable and, at the time, the largest fortress in the world.

It was designed to defend Belgium against a German attack across the narrow belt of Dutch territory in the region.

When designing the fort, the Belgians had taken the lessons learnt during World War I into account. The fort sat on high ground overlooking the Albert Canal. Reinforced concrete was used in place of plain mass concrete. The gun turrets were less closely grouped.

Ventilation was greatly improved, magazines were deeply buried and pro-

tected, and sanitary facilities and general living arrangements for the troops were given careful attention. The 120 mm and 75 mm guns gave the fort the ability to bombard targets across a wide area of the eastern Liège region.

In 1940, Fort Eben-Emael was commanded by Major Jottrand. There were around 1,200 Belgian troops stationed at the fort, divided into three groups. The first group was permanently stationed at the fort and consisted of 200 technical personnel (e.g. doctors, cooks, weapon maintenance technicians, administration staff).

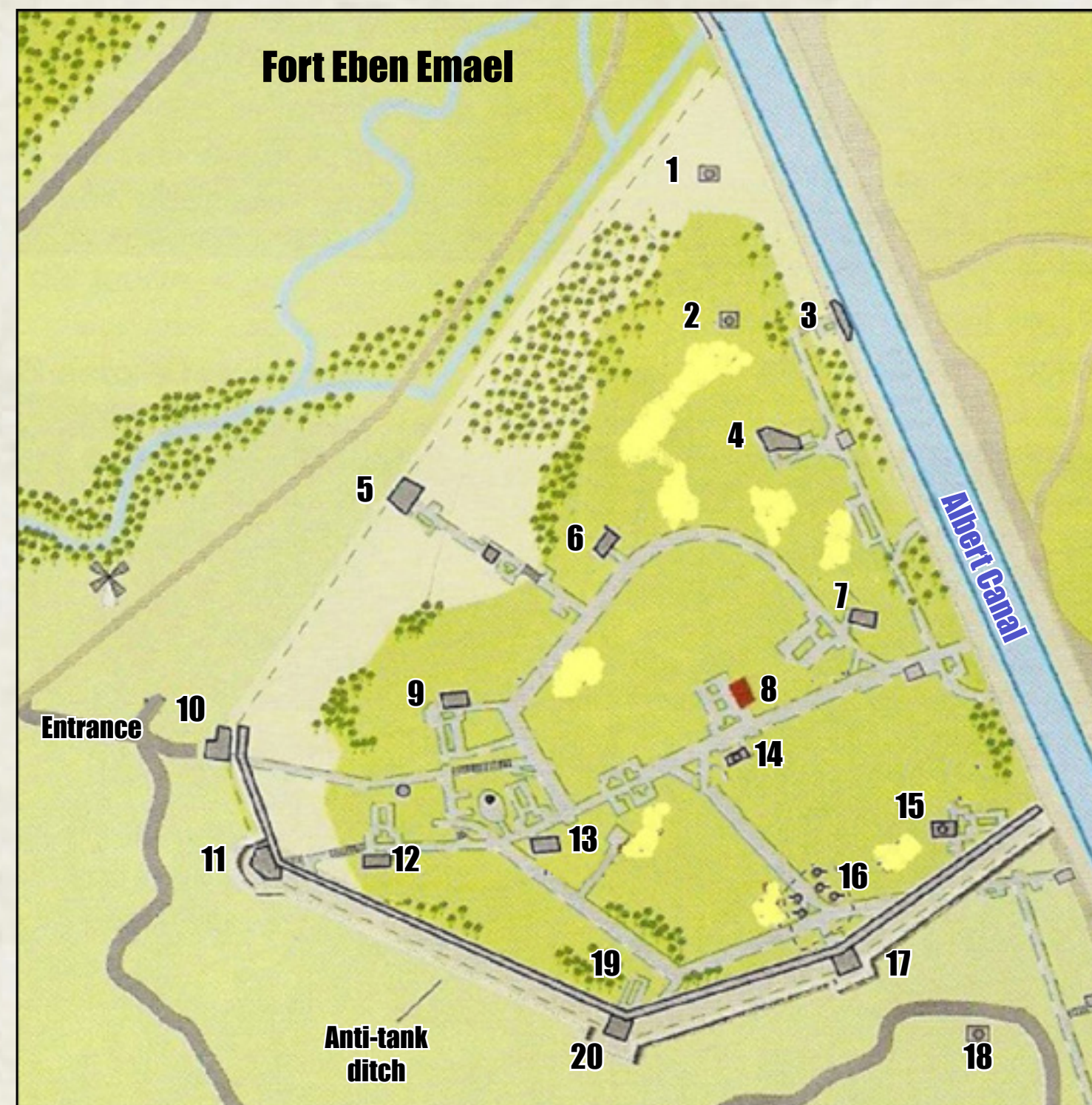
The two other groups consisted of 500 artillerists each. In peace time one group would be stationed at the fort for one week. The other group would be in reserve at the village of Wonck, about 5 km away. These two groups would change places every week.

Except for some of the officers and NCOs, most of the men were conscripts. The majority of these were reservists and were called up after the Invasion of Poland in 1939. Infantry training was poor, since the men were considered to be purely artillerists.

The Germans prepare

The airborne assault on Fort Eben-Emael, and the three bridges it helped protect, was part of a much larger German airborne operation that involved the 7th Air Division and the 22nd Airlanding Division.

The force tasked with assaulting the fort and capturing the three bridges was formed from elements of the 7th Air Division and the 22nd Airlanding Division, and was named *Sturmabteilung Koch* (Assault Detachment Koch) after the



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Decoy cupola | 11. Block VI- 2 x 60 mm guns & MGs |
| 2. Decoy cupola | 12. Visé II - 3 x 75 mm guns |
| 3. Canal Nord - 60 mm guns & machine guns | 13. Maastricht II - 3 x 75 mm guns |
| 4. Mi Nord - Machine gun block | 14. Cupola 120 - Twin 120 mm gun |
| 5. Block II - 2 x 60 mm guns & MGs | 15. Cupola Nord - 2 x 75 mm guns |
| 6. Mi Sud - Machine gun block | 16. Anti-aircraft position |
| 7. Visé I - 3 x 75 mm guns | 17. Block IV - 2 x 60 mm anti-tank guns |
| 8. Barracks | 18. Decoy cupola |
| 9. Maastricht I - 3 x 75 mm guns | 19. Cupola Sud - 2 x 75 mm guns |
| 10. Block I - 2 x 60 mm anti-tank guns | 20. Block V- 2 x 60 mm guns & MGs |

Fort Eben-Emael occupied a large hill just to the east of Eben-Emael village and overlooking the Albert Canal. Underground galleries extend over 4 kilometres beneath the hill, connecting the combat blocks and serving the underground barracks, power plant, ammunition magazines and other spaces. Fresh air was obtained from intake vents over the canal

leader of the force, Hauptmann Walter Koch.

Fifty DFS 230 transport gliders were supplied for use by the assault force. Then came the serious training for the mission.

Joint exercises between the parachutists and the glider pilots were carried out in the early spring of 1940, and a number of refinements made to the equipment and tactics to be used.

One of these refinements was the attachment of barbed wire to the nose-skids of the gliders. This meant that the skids would dig in, forcing the glider to a stop.

The airborne troops trained with special equipment such as flamethrowers and shaped charges.

A detailed study of the fort, the bridges and the local area was made, and a replica of the area was constructed for the airborne troops to train in.

The Plan

Hauptmann Koch divided his force into four assault groups. Group Granite, made up of eighty-five men in eleven gliders whose task would be to assault and capture Fort Eben Emael.

Group Steel, formed of ninety-two men and nine gliders, would capture the Veldwezelt bridge; Group Concrete, composed of ninety-six men in eleven gliders, would capture the Vroenhoven bridge; and Group Iron, composed of ninety men in ten gliders, who would capture the Kanne bridge.

Time was the vital component of the attack. The Germans were relying on two factors. First of all the believed that the use of gliders would not alert the Bel-



ATTACK: Fallschirmjäger exit a DFS 230 glider. This photo was posed after Fort Eben Emael had already been captured.

gians. Secondly, the lack of a declaration of war by the German government would give the attackers the element of surprise.

The Germans estimated that this element of surprise would last for sixty minutes before they reacted. It was therefore imperative that during those sixty minutes as many anti-aircraft positions, individual cupolas and casemates as possible had to be eliminated. The most important objective, however, was to put the long-range artillery covering the bridges out of action.

The destruction of these guns was expected to be completed within ten minutes; within this time the airborne troops would have to break out of their gliders, cover the distance to the guns, fix the explosive charges to the barrels of the guns and detonate them, all while under enemy fire.

The finalized plan for the assault called for between nine and eleven gliders to land on the western bank of the Albert Canal by each of the three bridges just prior to 05h30 on 10 May, the time scheduled for *Fall Gelb* to begin.

The groups assigned to as-

sault the three bridges would overwhelm the defending Belgian troops, remove any demolition charges and then prepare to defend the bridges against an expected counter-attack. Forty minutes later, three Ju-52 transport aircraft would fly over each position, dropping a further twenty-four airborne troops as reinforcements as well as machine-guns and significant amounts of ammunition.

Simultaneously, the force assigned to assault Fort Eben Emael was to land on top of the Fort in eleven gliders, eliminate any defenders attempting to repel them, cripple what artillery they could with explosive charges, and then prevent the Garrison from dislodging them.

Having achieved their initial objectives of seizing the bridges and eliminating the long-range artillery pieces possessed by the Fort, the airborne troops would then defend their positions until the arrival of German ground forces.

The Battle

The mission didn't get off to the best of starts. The tow-rope on one of the gliders snapped



JOB DONE: Fallschirmjäger share cigarettes and swap stories after the successful attack on Fort Eben Emael.

and it was forced to land inside Germany. The pilot of another glider released his tow-rope prematurely and the glider was unable to reach its target.

Because of strict radio silence the senior commanders of the assault force could not be informed. Both gliders were from Group Granite and, to make matters worse, one of the gliders was carrying Oberleutnant Witzig, the commander of the group.

The remaining gliders were released 32 km away from their objectives at an altitude of 2,100 m. After the Ju-52's released the gliders and began turning away, Belgian anti-aircraft artillery positions detected them and opened fire. This alerted the defences in the area to the presence of the gliders.

Group Steel

All of Group Steel's nine gliders landed next to the bridge at Veldwezelt at 05h20. They managed to take the bridge without it being destroyed.

Two field-guns, located five hundred metres from the bridge, pinned them down and the group commander, Leutnant Altmann, had to call in air support. Several Junkers Ju 87 Stukas responded and knocked out the guns.

Group Steel was supposed to be relieved by 14h30, but the relief force was held up by Belgian resistance and only arrived at 21h30.

Group Steel lost eight dead and 30 wounded.

Group Concrete

Ten of the eleven gliders transporting Group Concrete landed next to the Vroenhoven bridge at 05h15, the eleventh glider having been hit by anti-aircraft fire en route to the bridge and being forced to land prematurely inside Dutch territory.

One of the gliders was hit by anti-aircraft fire and three troops were seriously wounded.

One of the gliders landed near to the fortification housing the bridge detonators. This allowed the airborne troops to rapidly as-

sault the position. They killed the occupants and tore out the wires connecting the explosives to the detonator set, ensuring the bridge could not be destroyed.

The Belgians mounted several counter-attacks in an attempt to recapture the bridge. Group Concrete held out until they were relieved at 21h40. They lost seven dead and 24 wounded.

Group Iron

Things went awry for Group Iron from the start. Nine of the gliders were able to land next to their objective, while one was dropped in the wrong area due to a navigation error.

Yet while they were able to land next to their objective and eliminate the Belgian defenders, it was too late. The bridge at Kanne had already been destroyed.

Unlike the garrisons of the other two bridges, the Belgian defenders at Kanne had been forewarned. The German mechanized column heading to the bridge to reinforce Group Iron had arrived twenty minutes ahead of schedule.

With the element of surprise lost, the defenders had enough time to set off the demolition charges on the bridge.

Group Iron had secured the area by 05h50, but they came under strong counter-attack and had to call in air support.

They were only relieved on the morning of 11 May.

Group Iron suffered the heaviest casualties of all three assault groups assigned to capture the bridges with twenty-two dead and twenty-six wounded.

One of the airborne troops assigned to the Group was taken

prisoner by the Belgians. He was later freed by German forces at a British prisoner of war camp at Dunkirk.

Group Granite

Nine of Group Granite's gliders successfully landed on the roof of Fort Eben Emael. They gliders used arrester-parachutes to bring them to a quick halt.

The airborne troops quickly exited their gliders and headed for their individual objectives. The prime objectives were the artillery pieces that could target the bridges.

Objective No. 18, an artillery observation casemate housing three 75mm artillery pieces was damaged with a light demolition charge and then permanently destroyed with a heavier charge, which collapsed the casemate's observation dome and part of the roof of the Fort itself.

A traversing turret holding two artillery pieces, Objective 12, was destroyed by troops who then moved on to Objective No. 26, a turret holding another three 75 mm weapons. Another pair of 75 mm guns in a cupola was disabled, as was a barracks known to house Belgian troops.

Objective 24 proved to be a problem. The twin turrets with heavy-calibre guns mounted on a rotating cupola, was too large for airborne troops from a single glider to destroy on their own, forcing troops from two gliders to be used.

Shaped charges were fixed to the turrets and detonated. While they shook the turrets, they did not destroy them. Troops were forced to climb the turrets and smash the gun barrels.

In the northern section of the

fort, similar actions were taking place.

Objective No. 13 was a casemate housing multiple machine-guns whose arcs of fire covered the western side of the Fort; to destroy the casemate, the airborne troops used a flamethrower to force the Belgian soldiers manning the weapons to retreat, and then detonated shaped charges against the fortification to disable it.

Objective No. 23 was a retractable cupola housing two 75 mm guns. It had been thought that these would not be a threat to the airborne troops. They were proved wrong when the weapons opened fire, forcing the airborne troops in the area to go to cover.

They were pinned down and had to call for air support. A Stuka squadron bombed the cupola and although the bombs did not destroy the cupola, the explosions did force the Belgians to retract it throughout the rest of the fighting.

The airborne troops had achieved their initial objective of destroying or disabling the artillery pieces that the fort could have used to bombard the captured bridges, but they still faced a number of small cupolas and emplacements that had to be disabled. A number of these included anti-aircraft weapons and machine-guns.

As these secondary objectives were attacked, a single glider landed on top of the Fort. It carried Oberleutnant Rudolf Witzig.

After his glider had landed in German territory, he had radioed for another tug. The Ju-52 landed in the field with a replacement

glider.

Witzig's troops had quickly broken down fences and hedges obstructing the aircraft and the new glider was towed through anti-aircraft fire to the objective - Fort Eben Emael.

Having achieved their primary objectives of disabling the artillery pieces possessed by the fort, the airborne troops then held it against Belgian counter-attacks, which began almost immediately.

These counter-attacks were made by Belgian infantry formations without artillery support and were uncoordinated. This allowed the airborne troops to repel them with machine-gun fire.

Patrols were also used to ensure that the garrison stayed in the interior of the fort and did not attempt to emerge and mount an attempt to retake the fort.

Group Granite was not relieved until 07h00 on 11 May by the 51st Engineer Battalion. Once the airborne troops had been relieved, the battalion, in conjunction with an infantry regiment that arrived shortly after the engineers, mounted an attack on the main entrance to the fort.

Faced with this attack, the garrison surrendered at 12:30, suffering sixty men killed and forty wounded. The Germans captured more than a thousand Belgian soldiers. Group Granite suffered six killed and nineteen wounded.

The capture of the bridges, and the neutralization of the artillery pieces in the Fort allowed infantry and armour from the 18th Army to bypass other Belgian defences and enter the heart of Belgium.



Fort Eben Emael

Fort Eben-Emael is now open to the public. While still military property, it is administered by the Association Fort Eben-Emael, which provides tours and activities. If you're ever in Belgium, be sure to visit this amazing museum.



CUPOLA: One of the fort's cupolas.



MAZE: Part of the underground bunker system.



GLIDER: One of the models.

DAMAGED: The damage caused by a shaped-charge is still visible to this day.



OF DUTY: Part of the defenders sleeping quarters.

IMPRESSIVE: The exhibits at the Fort Eben Emael Museum are really top class.



All I want for Christmas

Here is a copy of the letter than Matt O'Brien sent to Santa this year.



Dear Fat Guy in the red suit,

Okay, I've been a good boy this year. You can ask anyone, even my parole officer. So how about this year you give me what I'm actually asking for.

Last year when I said I wanted Shakira for Christmas, I wasn't talking about her new CD.

This year I'm not asking for much. All I need are 10 games for my PC. Now you're probably going to say that I'm greedy. But you've got to make up for the past ten years where I got nothing from you.

And please don't get it wrong this year. I know where you live, if you get my meaning. And a word of advice - don't park your sleigh in my neighbourhood or you just might find it on bricks and your reindeer ending up on someone's braai.

Merry Christmas.

Matt O'Brien

So these then are the ten games that O'Brien wants in his Christmas stocking this year. And he says that if you're looking for a PC game to keep you occupied over the silly season, you won't go wrong with any of these titles. Click on the game cover to watch a review of the game.



Company of Heroes 2

This is a real time strategy game set during World War II. Built around the concepts of cover and directional fire, suppression and morale, you have to use actual battlefield strategies if you wanted to succeed.

In Company of Heroes 2 the action moves to the Eastern Front. In the single player campaign you control the Soviet Army from Operation Barbarossa to the Battle of Berlin.

Where the game really comes into its own is in skirmish mode. You can play multi-player, coop, or even go up against

the AI (Artificial Intelligence). What's also cool is that you can play as the Russians or the Germans.

The base game gives you both the Russian and German forces. It also includes DLC which gives you access to the Americans, British and the Oberkommando faction.

It's not that difficult to learn to play the game and with skirmish mode it will provide hours and hours of entertainment.

Price: R199 (on Steam)



ARMA 3

ARMA 3 is an open world, military tactical shooter video game. You can go anywhere you want and do anything you want.

ARMA 3 takes place on the Aegean islands of Altis and Stratis of Greece. The islands feature photo-realistic terrain and water environments. Altis features 270 square kilometres of terrain.

The game features a large assortment of weapons, equipment, vehicles, aircraft, and

helicopters.

Modding groups have created thousands of extra stuff for the game, including a group that specialises in South African and African content.

You can also use the Eden Editor that comes with the game to create your own content and scenarios.

This is an excellent military simulator and one I would recommend.

Price: R479 (on Steam)

SPMBT

Steel Panthers: Main Battle Tank was named the best war game of 1995 by Computer Gaming World, PC Gamer US and Computer Games Strategy Plus.

It's a turn-based strategy simulation that you can play in single player against the AI, or you can go up against a real opponent online.

Okay, the game is 24 years old, the graphics are nothing to write home about, but it's still an excellent simulator - and it's

absolutely free.

You can play real life battles that start off during the Korean War in the 1950s. There are scenarios that deal with Southern Africa, including scenarios set in Rhodesia, Angola and South West Africa. You can find scenarios for Ops Savannah, Smokeshell, Protea, Cassinga, Cuito Cuanavale and many more online.

Well worth playing.

Price: Free ([Click Here](#))



IL-2 Sturmovik: Cliffs of Dover - Blitz Edition

This is a flight simulation where you get to take part in the Battle of Britain, playing either as the RAF or the Luftwaffe.

There are three modes to the game - training, single player, and multi-player.

The game is very realistic and the planes are accurately modelled, meaning there is a steep learning curve.

It is suggested that you do quite a bit of training before you try going into combat. Es-

pecially if you're going to take on real opponents online.

There are no fewer than 23 aircraft that you can fly in the game, and these include both fighters and bombers.

The graphics are really well done and a lot of attention has been paid to detail.

It's a great simulation for those that are looking for realism and a challenge.

Price: R150 (on Steam)





Atlantic Fleet

This turn based tactical and strategic naval combat simulator puts you in command of the Allies or *Kriegsmarine* (German Navy) in the longest military campaign of WWII, The Battle of the Atlantic.

You take command of surface ships, submarines as well as carrier and land based aircraft in the deadly struggle for control of Atlantic shipping lanes.

Protect convoys as the Allies or go on the offensive with deadly submarine wolf packs

and surface raiders of the German Navy.

Atlantic Fleet is not a bad game at all, especially at the price. While the graphics are not bad, they are not high definition.

The good news is that the game will run on a fairly low-end computer.

Price: R109 (on Steam)

Jagged Alliance: Back in Action

The king of an island called Arulco needs to overthrow his wife, Queen Dedriana, and take back his kingdom. And he's hired you to do the job.

Armed with a laptop and a limited budget you have to search a website called AIM (Association of International Mercenaries) and hire the right people to do the job.

You can hire up to three teams of six mercenaries. Problem is you can't afford any good mercs to start off with. And the

good ones won't work for you until you've built up a bit of a reputation.

Each mercenary comes certain skills and characteristics. So you have to put together the right team.

As you take over sectors of the island you can gain more income and hire better people and equipment.

It's an addictive game to play and great fun.

Price: R219 (on Steam)

Ghost Recon: Wildlands

This game is what is known as a tactical shooter. It is set in 2019 in Bolivia. The country has become increasingly unstable as a Mexican drug cartel known as the Santa Blanca Cartel gains more power and influence within the country and turns Bolivia into the world's largest producer of cocaine.

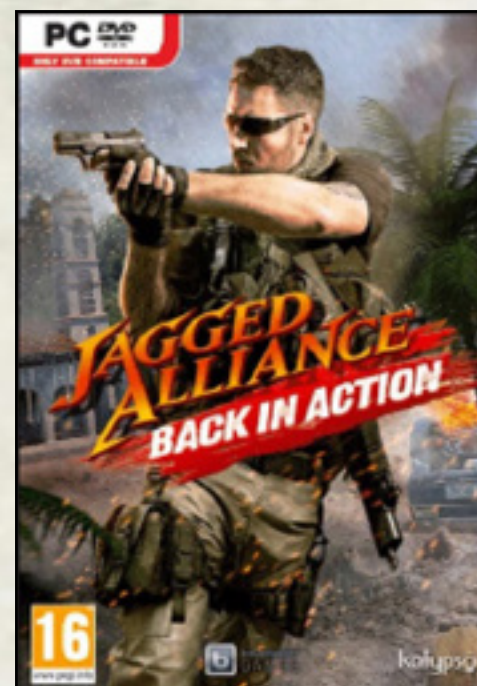
A task force, consisting of you and three others are sent in to take the cartel down. The map is 400 square kilometres

and you can get around the map using cars, trucks, dirt bikes, boats, light aircraft and helicopters.

You have to take down local *buchon* (local bosses) before you can take on the head honcho named El Sueño.

Some missions will require stealth, others brute force. It will keep you occupied for hours.

Price: R699 (on Steam)



U-Boat

U-Boat is exactly what it says it is, a submarine simulator. In a nutshell, you are given command of a Type VII submarine during World War II.

Unlike other submarine games you are not in charge of the submarine itself, but rather in charge of the men controlling the submarine. You act as the U-Boat captain.

Your job is to manage the morale, discipline and trauma of the crew and make sure all the crew come back alive at the

end of a mission.

Before you leave port you are given a mission briefing. You need to check that your boat is in good condition, and take on supplies include torpedoes, fuel, food, water and any other necessary rations and equipment.

You will be required to make all the decisions and handle any situations that may crop up. This is a challenging sim.

Price: R175 (on Steam)

Total War: Shogun 2

As daiymo (warlord) of a Samurai clan your objective is to take on the other clans and become the shogun - the supreme military leader of Japan.

You start with a single territory and the objective is to take over enough territories until you become the most powerful daiymo in Japan.

You will have to build up a strong enough army to invade other territories as well as defend your own. You will need to construct military buildings

to train your troops.

But you also need to look after the civilian population of your territories and provide them with food, education and spiritual guidance. All this costs money.

Collect taxes, loot other provinces or trade with them. Use diplomacy, make and break alliances. Do what needs to be done.

Price: R299 (on Steam)



Tank Mechanic Simulator

You start off with a workshop where you can repair and restore tanks. You also have a tank museum.

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

The tank is placed over an inspection pit and is ready for

you to start work. Also in your workshop you have an engine stand and a turret stand.

You need to strip the tank down and repair or replace all of the parts that are damaged.

As you progress you will gain access to better tools and workshop functions. Once you're done you get paid. You can also discover and repair old tanks to either sell or place in your museum.

Price: R130 (on steam)





Stocking fillers

Looking for a stocking filler for either yourself or a friend this Christmas? Then how about one of these movies. Five of them are based on true stories. We can strongly recommend 'My Father's War' to any South African military veteran. Click on the cover to watch a trailer of the movies.



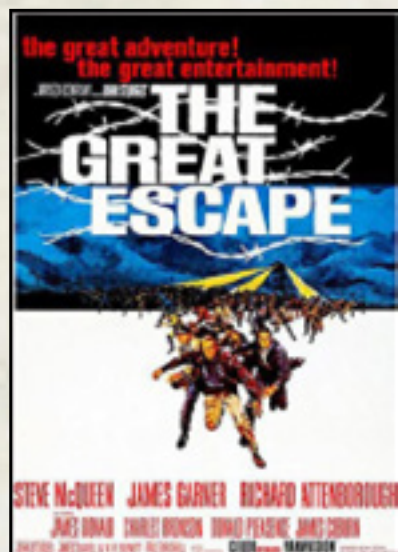
Enemy at the Gates



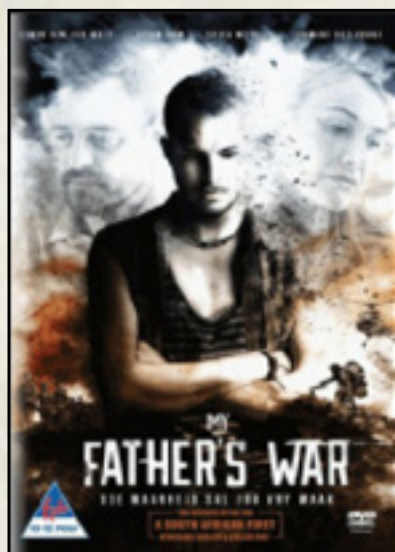
A Bridge too Far



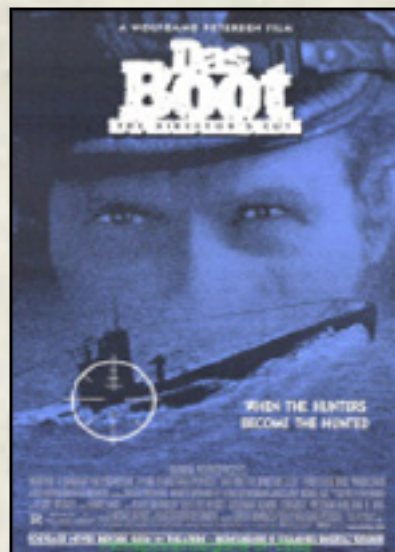
Siege at Jadotville



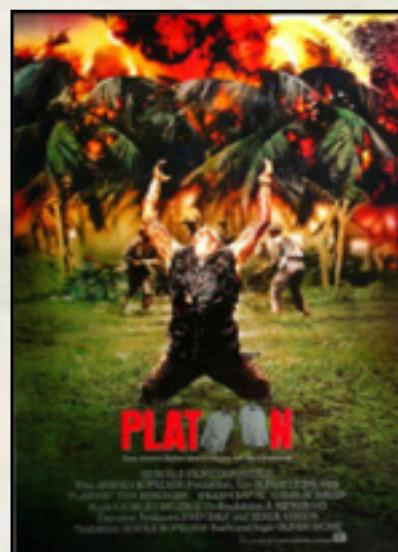
The Great Escape



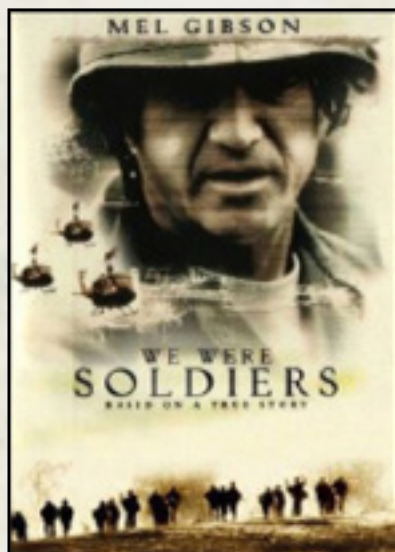
My Father's War



Das Boot



Platoon



We Were Soldiers



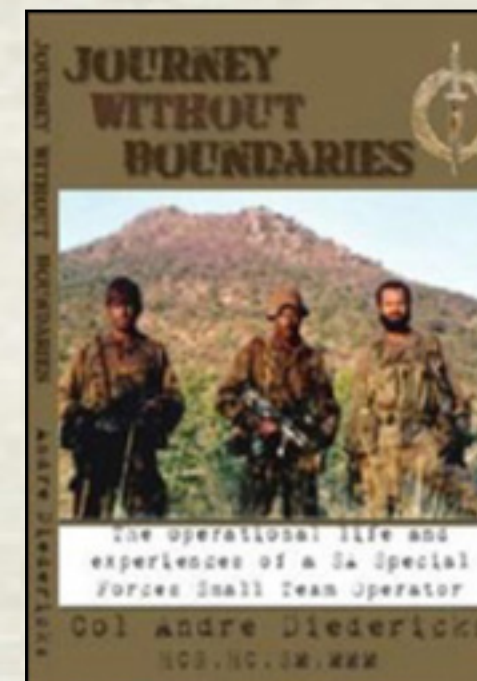
Full Metal Jacket

Good reads for the holidays

Many people will be on leave during December and it's the perfect time to catch up on a bit of reading. And many of us will be looking for the ideal gift to buy. You can't go wrong with a good book and we can recommend any of the books on this list. All of these books have been read and reviewed in Military Despatches at some stage.



Iron Fist from the Sea
Douw Steyn & Arne Söderlund
R300



Journey Without Boundaries
Col Andre Diedericks
R325



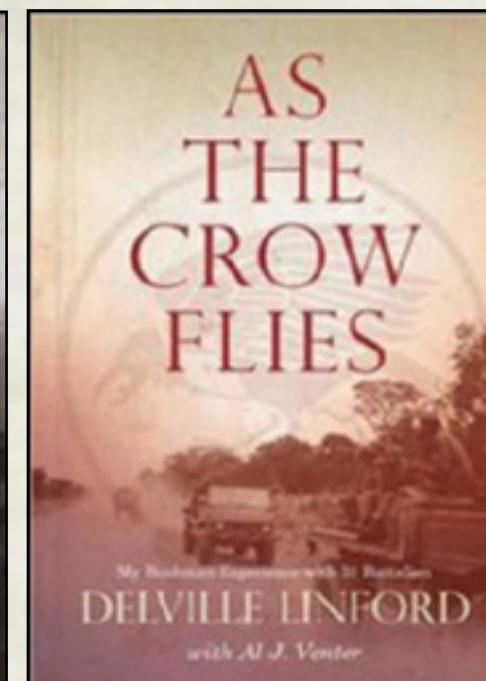
We Fear Naught But God
Paul Els
R395



Cuito Cuanavale
Gennady Shubin & Igor Zhdarkin
R255



Beyond No Mean Soldier
Peter McAleese
R525



As The Crow Flies
Delville Linford
R255

All books are available from [Bush War Books](http://bushwarbooks.co.za)

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

1 December

- **1914** - Col. J.F. Jordaan of the SA force captures Gen. Christiaan de Wet, on his way to German South West Africa at Waterbury, near Vryburg, Northern Cape (now North West Province).
- **1933** - Rudolf Hess & Ernst Rohm become ministers in Hitler's government.
- **1939** - SS-Fuhrer Himmler begins deportation of Polish Jews to concentration camps.
- **1978** - Lance Corporal Lionel Ashley Roe from Air Force Base Waterkloof was killed in a military vehicle accident at Waterkloof. He was 20.
- **1980** - Rifleman Johan Nothnagel from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident while on weekend pass. He was 19.
- **1992** - Cabinet decides to replace the SAAF trainer Harvards by the Swiss-made Pilatus PC-7 MK2. The joint venture will include twelve SA companies.
- **1995** - Prosecutors in South Africa formally charge former Defence Minister Gen. Magnus Malan and nineteen others with the murders of thirteen people in 1987. They were all later acquitted.
- **1998** - At least fourteen people are killed and twenty-four injured in a bomb explosion in a market in Algiers.

- **2012** - The world's first nuclear carrier, USS 'Enterprise' (CVN 65), is inactivated after 51 years of commissioned service.

2 December

- **1805** - Napoleon defeated Russia and Austria in the Battle of Austerlitz.
- **1836** - Commandant Andries Hendrik Potgieter is elected chief commandant of the Voortrekkers.
- **1856** - The Battle of Tugela (also Battle of Ndongakusuka) takes place in the war between Cetewayo, eldest son of the Zulu chief Mpande, and his father's younger brother, Umbolazi (also Mbulazi). In one of the bloodiest battles fought on the southern tip of Africa, more than 5,000 warriors are killed and thousands drown in the Tugela River.
- **1877** - The Battle of Umzimtsani takes place during the Ninth Border War. Seventy men of the Prince Alfred's Guard unit are attacked by the Galekas, but ward the attack off.
- **1900** - The Battle of Goede Hoop takes place during the Second Anglo-Boer War. Chief Commandant De Wet engages Col. Herbert at Goede Hoop, between

Smithfield and Bethulie in the OFS. De Wet takes off on the arrival of reinforcements sent by General Knox.

- **1914** - Adolf Hitler is awarded the Iron Cross, Second Class. "The happiest day of my life," he says.
- **1914** - Austrians capture Belgrade, Serbia, after several tries.
- **1935** - Abyssinian government orders troops out of Harar on humanitarian grounds.
- **1941** - HMS 'Prince of Wales' & 'Repulse' ("Force Z") arrive at Singapore.
- **1942** - The Allies repels a strong Axis attack in Tunisia, North Africa.
- **1965** - Rifleman Mark Andrew Brown from the Kaffrarian Rifles died as a result of heat exhaustion during a training session at the Infantry School in Oudtshoorn. The heat was reported at over 37 Degrees C during the training session. As a direct result of the findings of Board of Enquiry held into his death, training procedures were modified and amended. He was 21.
- **1978** - Corporal Johannes Havenga from 5 SAI was Killed in Action after being struck in the chest by a Soviet RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents at Eenhana. He was 20.

- **1979** - Lieutenant Johannes Jacobus Du Toit from 3 SAI Died of Wounds while serving in Rhodesia. He was 23.
- **1980** - Rifleman Nicolaas Christian Izaks from the South African Cape Corps was killed when he was struck by a bullet from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while stationed at M'pacha in the Caprivi Strip. He was 21.
- **1984** - Rifleman Wynand Eckard from 2 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in South West Africa while on leave pass. He was 21.
- **1988** - Rifleman Johannes Gerhardus Janse van Vuuren from the SADF Equestrian Centre was killed in a private motorcycle accident while on a weekend pass in Klerksdorp. He was 20.

3 December

- **1810** - Britain seizes the islands of Reunion and Mauritius from French control.
- **1902** - Mitsuo Fuchida, the Japanese pilot who would one day transmit the code "Tora, Tora, Tora" (indicating that the attack on Pearl Harbour had been successful) was born on this day.
- **1915** - British 6th Indian Division falls back on Kut-el-Amara, Iraq.
- **1942** - Guadalcanal: Japanese destroyers land reinforcements.
- **1963** - The Minister of De-

fence, P.W. Botha, announces a reshuffle of senior defence force posts to increase the efficiency of the country's Defence Department, the Defence Production Board and the Defence Organisation. Consequently Lieutenant-General C.A. Fraser, at present Chief of the Army, becomes Joint Commander, Combat Forces, in which capacity he will take command in times of war or emergency of the fighting formations of Army and Air Force elements.

- **1980** - Two members from 3 SAI were Killed in Action and one was critically wounded (he later Died of Wounds on 20 January 1981) while their Company was based at Ondangwa Town. The casualties were: Rifleman Johannes Erasmus van der Merwe (19). Rifleman Christo van Zyl (18).
- **1982** - SA Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha warns that SA will not tolerate the introduction of Cuban troops and will not hesitate to launch counter-measures against Mozambique, if it allows nationalist guerrillas to operate against SA from its territory.
- **1986** - Rifleman J.H. Nanyemba from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents

in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.

- **1987** - Angola claims South African troops and planes have launched attacks deep inside Angola.
- **1993** - Angola's government and its rebel foes agree to a cease-fire in their eighteen-year war. The final cease-fire agreement was only signed in April 2002.

4 December

- **1941** - US Navy Department orders Guam to destroy all codes and secret documents.
- **1943** - During World War II, the second Cairo Conference took place, attended by Prime Minister Churchill, President Roosevelt and President Inonu of Turkey.
- **1963** - The Security Council, in resolution 182 (1963), calls upon all States "to cease forthwith the sale and shipment of equipment and materials for the manufacture and maintenance



Pik Botha

of arms and ammunition in South Africa”.

- **1971** - The Defence Minister denies that South Africa has sent troops to Malawi to quell the security threat on Malawi's southern border, but admits that military equipment is being supplied.
- **1978** - Sapper Jacobus Cornelius Francois Cloete from the SWA Engineer Support Unit SWATF was accidentally killed during construction work at Grootfontein when a concrete block fell off a scaffolding and struck him on the head, killing him instantly. He was 19.
- **1983** - US airstrikes on Syrian anti-aircraft positions in Lebanon.
- **1986** - Defence Amendment Act, dealing mainly with various ways of combating terrorism, commences.
- **1987** - Rifleman A. Dala from 32 Battalion was found murdered by persons unknown. He was 31.
- **1987** - Private Abraham Samuel Jacobus Stander from 31 Field Workshop, Technical Service Corps was accidentally killed approximately 10km outside Grootfontein when he fell off the rear of a moving Samil 20 vehicle that was travelling on the road to Otavi. He was 21.
- **1992** - President George Bush orders about 28,000 US troops to Somalia to block warring Somali gangs from intercepting food shipments.

5 December

- **1812** - Napoleon deserts his army during the retreat from Moscow.
- **1839** - George Armstrong Custer, who made his last stand at the Battle of Little Big Horn, was born on this day.
- **1861** - Richard Gatling applies for a patent on a clever device - the machine gun.
- **1911** - Italian forces at Tripoli defeat Turks.
- **1934** - Italian and Ethiopian troops clash at the Ualul (Welwel) on the disputed Somali-Ethiopian border.
- **1941** - Japanese First Air Fleet at 40 North 178 East, 2,655 kilometres from Pearl Harbour.
- **1941** - US military commanders in the Pacific are informed that Japanese embassies & consulates have been ordered to destroy their codes & code machines.
- **1941** - Moscow Counter-offensive: Under pressure from Zhukov's Soviet troops, the Germans call off their drive on Moscow.
- **1943** - Japanese air raid on port facilities at Calcutta.
- **1943** - USAAF introduces drop-tanks, allowing P-47s & P-51s to escort bombers from Britain into Germany
- **1950** - Korean War. UN forces abandon Pyongyang under heavy Chinese pressure.
- **1979** - The Prime Minister announces the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry

into the reporting of defence matters, to be headed by Justice M.T. Steyn. The Commission is to inquire into and make recommendations on the dividing line between the rights of the media to inform and the right of the public to be informed on the one hand, and the interests of the security of the state on the other.

- **1980** - Rifleman Frans Nyundu from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 32.
- **1981** - Rifleman Wayne Leon Jooste from 8 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1983** - Private Stefan Willem Welgemoed from the South African Medical College, attached to Naval Base Durban, was killed in a military vehicle accident at Richmond. He was 19.
- **1984** - Trooper Johannes Fred from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1992** - Aid agencies are stripped by gunmen in Somalia on the eve of US troop arrival.

6 December

- **1865** - The Battle of Platberg is fought during the Orange Free Sate-Basotho War.

- **1912** - First underwater submarine torpedo attack: Greek submarine 'Deflin' misses Turkish cruiser 'Medjidije' at 500m.
- **1914** - The Germans capture Lodz.
- **1917** - Two ships collided at Halifax, Nova Scotia, resulting in an explosion that killed more than 1,500 persons and injured 8,000. The Norwegian ship Imo collided with the French munitions ship Mont Blanc which was loaded with supplies for the war in Europe, including 5,000 tons of TNT. A tidal wave caused by the explosion destroyed much of the city.
- **1935** - Dessye palace, Ethiopia, is destroyed by an Italian air raid.
- **1941** - Admiral Husband Kimmel says, "No young man, I don't think they'd be such damned fools," when a journalist asks if the Japanese might initiate war.
- **1942** The Royal Air Force bombs Philips factory in the Netherlands, 150 die.
- **1943** - Burma: Allies cancel major amphibious operation.
- **1961** - Heavy fighting erupts in Congo's Katanga Province between United Nations and Katangan forces.
- **1968** - 2nd Lieutenant Ian Anthony Hefer from 5 Squadron was killed when his De Havilland Vampire FB9 crashed near Waterkloof during a routine training flight. He was 18.

- **1977** - Signaller Jan Johannes Bothma from 84 Signals Unit was killed in a head-on collision between a Military Bedford and a Military Landrover on the Grootfontein to Rundu road. He was 22.
- **1988** - Sergeant Petrus Alwyn Minnaar from 3 Electronic Workshops was killed in a military vehicle accident at Rundu. He was 29.
- **1988** - Corporal Derrick Gobey from 2 SAI was killed when his Samil 100 truck overturned at Bagani. He was 20.
- **1988** - Rifleman Deon Potgieter from 1 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 19.

7 December

- **1891** - In German South West Africa Captain Kurt von François moves his administrative headquarters to Windhoek, seven months after erecting a fort there.
- **1895** - At the Battle at Amba Alagi, Abissynia, the Ethiopians beat Italian armies.
- **1914** - Pope Benedict XIV calls on all powers to declare a Christmas truce.
- **1917** - US declares war on Austria-Hungary.
- **1940** - The British attack larger Italian forces in Libya by surprise, capturing 40,000 prisoners in three days.

- **1941** - The U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was attacked by nearly 200 Japanese aircraft in a raid that lasted just over one hour and left nearly 3,000 Americans dead.
- **1964** - Field Cornet (Lieutenant) Izak Cornelius Potgieter from 42 Army Air Reconnaissance Squadron (later 42 Squadron) was killed when his Cessna 185A crashed near Coligny during a routine low level cross-country reconnaissance flight. He was 23.
- **1975** - Sergeant Frederick Gerhardus Wannenbergh CS (P) from 1 Reconnaissance Commando Died of Wounds in the Battle for Bridge 14 in Central Angola during Operation Savannah. He was 24.
- **1976** - Sergeant Jan Gerrit Bantjies from 1 SAI organised himself a live Alouette Gunship 20 x 82mm High Explosive Incendiary (HEI) cannon cartridge to keep as a souvenir while he was serving in the Operational Area.

George H.W. Bush



While attempting to make the device safe, the High Explosive projectile exploded, killing him instantly. He was 28.

- **1979** - Rifleman Patrick Benjamin Bickers from 5 SAI died in 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria from injuries received in a hit and run accident on the Pietersburg Highway. He was 19.
- **1979** - Rifleman Johannes Gabriel Albertus Mostert from 11 Commando Regiment was Killed in Action while on patrol in the Etale area. He was 19.
- **1981** - Spain becomes a member of NATO.
- **1987** - The US state department says it hopes South Africa's withdrawal from Angola will be followed by the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the country.
- **1987** - Lieutenant (Mrs) Daphne Margaret Therissa Bacher from the South West Africa Medical Command SWATF died in the Windhoek State Hospital after contracting pneumonia. She was 43.
- **1988** - Lance Corporal Johannes Christiaan Du Plessis from 2 Special Service Battalion was killed at the Rooisloot Training Area when his armoured car overturned, crushing him underneath. He was 19.

8 December

- **1895** - Battle at Amba Alagi: Ethiopian emperor Mene-lik II drives Italian general

Baratieri's forces out.

- **1914** - General Christiaan Beyers, former Speaker of the Transvaal Parliament and Commandant-General of the Union Defence Force, drowns in the Vaal River.
- **1914** - Battle of the Falkland Islands: British battlecruisers annihilate von Spee's German cruiser squadron.
- **1940** - During the Blitz, the House of Commons and Tower of London were seriously damaged amid an overnight air raid by German bombers on London.
- **1941** - Japanese troops land in Malaya, attack Hong Kong, invade Siam and the Dutch East Indies, bomb the Philippines, and capture the USS Wake in Shanghai.
- **1941** - WWII: The Union of SA, Australia and the US declare war on Japan.
- **1943** - Japanese air raids on British airfields in Assam.
- **1944** - Iwo Jima: U.S. bombers and carrier aircraft begin a 72 day pre-invasion bombardment.
- **1952** - French troops fire on demonstrators at Casablanca, 50 die.
- **1977** - Three SADF members were Killed in Action during a contact SWAPO/PLAN with insurgents when their patrol walked into an ambush near Ruacana. The casualties were: Sergeant Johannes Cornelius Badenhorst from Regiment North Natal (28). Lance Corporal Christiaan Rudolf Kotze from West Coast Comman-

do (23). Rifleman Johannes Hendrik Petrus Kruger from Bloemfontein Commando (25).

- **1987** - Two members from the Gordonia Commando were killed when they were run over by a civilian vehicle that failed to stop at a military roadblock near Uptington. They were: Rifleman Willem Petrus Burger (23). Rifleman Desmond Reginald van der Merwe (38).

9 December

- **1838** - The Voortrekker commando under Andries Pretorius and Sarel Celliers make a solemn promise to God. Should they be victorious, they undertake that they and their descendants will annually dedicate the day of the conquest to the glory of God alone. This promise was repeated nightly until the Battle of Blood River on the 16th was fought.
- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War the Russian czar rejects President Paul Kruger's pleas for official aid in South Africa against the British. Many Russians fought as volunteers on the Boer side.
- **1917** - General Sir Edmund Allenby enters Jerusalem, on foot.
- **1931** - Japanese army attacks Chinese province of Jehol.
- **1939** - Russian air raid on Helsinki.
- **1940** - British 8th Army opens offensive in North

Africa by attacking Sidi Barrani in Egypt. They seize 1,000 Italians in a sudden thrust.

- **1940** - The Greeks begin a counter offensive against the Italians in Albania
- **1941** - South African armoured cars take part in the pursuit of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps as it retreats towards El Agheila in North Africa.
- **1941** - China declares war on Japan, Germany and Italy.
- **1946** - The Nuremberg "Doctors' trial" begins, against physicians and officers who conducted Nazi human experimentation, euthanasia, and mass murder.
- **1961** - SS Colonel Adolf Eichmann is convicted of war crimes in Israel.
- **1967** - The United States withdraws the last of three C-130 transport planes sent to Congo in July to help the Kinshasa government airlift troops to suppress a rebellion of White mercenaries and Katangese soldiers.
- **1974** - Portuguese and Rhodesian soldiers are accused in a UN report of torturing and killing over 1,000 Africans in Mozambique during the war of independence.
- **1977** - Two members from 1 SAI were Killed in Action when their patrol walked into a SWAPO/PLAN insurgent ambush near St. Mary's on the Yati Strip. They were: Corporal Abraham Izak Emmanuel Venter (20). Rifle-

man Edwin Chaplin Bishop (20).

- **1982** - Rifleman Simeon Shimbaranda from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 24.
- **1982** - South African Defence Force commandos crossed the border into Lesotho. Their target was a cluster of houses on the outskirts of Maseru where members of the African National Congress (ANC) were believed to be in hiding.
- **1983** - Rifleman Allen Derrick Wolton from 7 SAI was killed in an accidental mortar bomb explosion during operations in Southern Angola. He was 19.
- **1991** - Sergeant Laurens Kruger from Group 21 was killed when his Military vehicle overturned between Watersend and Bray. He was 26.
- **1992** - American forces land in Somalia to begin humanitarian operation in famine-stricken country.
- **1993** - 2nd Lieutenant Gideon van Zyl from 4 SAI was Killed in Action by automatic weapons fire in Katlehong Township on the East Rand during a military intervention in a fire-fight between Armed IFP and ANC Militia's. He was 19.

Adolf Eichmann



10 December

- **1665** - The Royal Netherlands Marine Corps, founded by Michiel de Ruyter, was founded on this day.
- **1898** - The Treaty of Paris was signed between American and Spanish representatives following Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War. Under the treaty, the U.S. gained the Philippine Islands, the islands of Guam and Puerto Rico, and an agreement by Spain to withdraw from Cuba.
- **1899** - British General Gatacre is defeated in the Battle at Stormberg Junction by the Republican forces under Chief Commandant J.H. Olivier. This is the first of three serious British setbacks known as Black Week.
- **1941** - During World War II, British Battleships Repulse and Prince of Wales were sunk by Japanese warplanes in the South China Sea, kill-

- ing nearly 800 crewmen.
- **1941** - Guam surrenders to a Japanese landing force after a two day battle.
- **1975** - Rifleman Thom Du Toit Lotze from 2 SAI was Killed in Action in a contact with Cuban Forces during Ops Savannah. He was 19.
- **1975** - Sapper Udo Kneed von Schmettau from 2 Field Engineer Regiment was Killed in Action during Ops Savannah. He was 19.
- **1976** - Lance Corporal Marthinus Petrus Pearson from 3 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1978** - Private Hendrik Stephanus Willem Engelbrecht from the South African Medical Corps Training Centre was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident in Northern Owamboland. He was 21.
- **1978** - Rifleman Mark Steven Taylor from Infantry School was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident near Calitzdorp. He was 19.
- **1983** - Rifleman Richard Barrington from 6 SAI was shot dead when a fellow soldier accidentally mistook him for an insurgent during an ambush. He was 19.
- **1983** - Lieutenant Robert Ernest Byron from Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Hartenbos. He was 23.
- **1988** - Sapper Christiaan Andre de Goede from 2

Field Engineer Regiment was killed when his military vehicle overturned near Nelspruit. He was 18.

- **1992** - Troops open fire on a truckload of Somalis who barrel through a French checkpoint, killing two and injuring seven in the first bloodshed of the U.S.-led military mission in Somalia.
- **2010** - For the first time since World War II, a German infantry battalion paraded in a French city, at Strasbourg, to mark the formation of a Franco-German combat brigade.
- **2011** - Henry Lafont, last French veteran pilot of the Battle of Britain, dies aged 91.

11 December

- **1845** - The first Anglo-Sikh War in India began as the Sikhs attacked British colonial forces. The Sikhs were defeated after four battles. Part of the Punjab region of northwestern India was then annexed by the British.
- **1878** - Sir Bartle Frere, new British High Commissioner, delivers an ultimatum to Cetewayo, Zulu chief, to disband his army, hand over certain offenders and receive a British resident. This led to the war between Britain and Zululand.
- **1899** - The British under Methuen attempt to advance and are defeated by the Boers under Cronje as the Battle of Magersfontein,

one of the most decisive battles of the war, starts. Apart from the dead and wounded, many hundreds, especially the killed Scots, are rendered medical casualties through exposure and serious sunburn.

- **1937** - Italy withdraws from League of Nations.
- **1940** - British capture Sidi Barrani, Egypt, from Italians.
- **1941** - US submarines commence war patrols against Japanese shipping
- **1941** - A major turning point in World War II occurred as Japan's Axis partners, Italy and Germany, both declared war on the United States. The U.S. Congress immediately declared war on them. President Roosevelt then made the defeat of Hitler the top priority, devoting nearly 90 percent of U.S. military resources to the war in Europe.
- **1960** - Black Sunday: Anti-French Riot in Algiers, 114 die.
- **1975** - Sapper Alfred Robert Willemse from 2 Field Engineer Regiment Died of Wounds in the Battle of Bridge 14 during Operation Savannah. He was 19.
- **1977** - Two members of 11 Commando Regiment Died of Wounds when their Buffel vehicle detonated a boosted Yugoslavian TMA-3 Cheese Mine. They were: Corporal Mark Anthony Wilcox (19). Rifleman Daniel Louis Buys (19).

- **1978** - Lance Corporal Vivian Charles Evert from 5 SAI was accidentally killed while doing a recovery of a broken down pantry Bedford near Glencoe. He was 19.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Johnny Alvern Booysen from the South African Cape Corps was accidentally drowned at Rundu during an off-duty excursion. He was 21.
- **1982** - Rifleman Paul Labuschagne from 8 SAI was killed at Eenhana when struck by a bullet from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 19.
- **1983** - Signaller Gary Bresler from 2 Signals Regiment was killed instantly after being struck by lightning during a training exercise at Sabie. He was 23.
- **1983** - Lieutenant Eugene Werner Nel from the Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Oudtshoorn. He was 24.
- **1984** - Captain Carel Petrus van der Merwe Brand from Sector 30 was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Kamanjab to Erwee Road in South West Africa. He was 34.
- **1984** - Sapper D.A. van Wyk from 1 SWA Engineer Regiment, attached to 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in the Koakoveld. He was 18.

- **1990** - Private Rudi van Rooyen from the Ordnance Service School was accidentally killed at Bloemhof while refueling a convoy en route to Cape Town when he was run over by a diesel bunker vehicle. He was 21
- **1994** - Russia sent tanks and troops into Chechnya to end the rebel territory's three-year drive for independence.

12 December

- **1899** - The Battle of Magersfontein continues. At about midday the British retire to their camp at Modder River.
- **1899** - Winston Churchill climbs over the yard wall of the State Model School in Pretoria where he has been imprisoned and walks to the Eastern railway line where he jumps a train to Lourenço Marques.
- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War Britain announces in London that more than 11,000 British soldiers have already been killed.
- **1917** - French troop train derails in the Alps, killing 543.
- **1940** - British troops capture Sidi el-Barrani.
- **1941** - British decide to abandon northern Malaya.
- **1941** - Germans begin house-by-house search for Jews in Paris.
- **1941** - Japanese invade Burma.

- **1975** - Rifleman David Hercules Dewald Marais from 2 SAI Died of Wounds received in action on 10 December 1975 in a contact with a Cuban Patrol during Ops Savannah. He was 18.
- **1979** - Rifleman Johannes Jacobus Fourie from 5 SAI was Killed in Action during a 20 minute contact with a numerically superior force of 181 heavily armed SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line. He was 20.
- **1980** - 2nd Lieutenant Arthur Eduard De Villiers from 3 SAI was killed instantly at Ondangwa during a thunderstorm when lightning struck a tent pole while he was holding onto the tent pole chain. He was 20.
- **1980** - Rifleman Gary Lang from 61 Mech Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident while on pass. He was 19.
- **1992** - Rifleman Sabelo Lukhozi from 21 Battalion was attacked and stabbed



Franklin D. Roosevelt

to death by persons unknown while on foot patrol in Soweto. He was 24.

13 December

- **1862** - During the American Civil War, the Battle of Fredericksburg occurred in Virginia as the Union Army of the Potomac under General Burnside suffered a costly defeat, losing 12,653 men after 14 frontal assaults on well entrenched Rebels on Marye's Heights. "We might as well have tried to take hell," a Union soldier remarked. Confederate losses were 5,309. "It is well that war is so terrible - we should grow too fond of it," stated Confederate General Robert E. Lee during the fighting.
- **1880** - The First Anglo-Boer War (Transvaal War of Independence) begins.
- **1899** - On this night a bedraggled Winston Churchill knocks on the door of the manager of Delagoa Bay Collier, pleading for something to eat after his escape from Pretoria the night before. The manager, John Howard, hides him in the underground stables of the mine, and slips him into a goods truck destined for Lorenzo Marques six days later, from where he sails to Durban to enjoy a rousing welcome as hero.
- **1916** - Avalanches kill 10,000 Austrian & Italian troops in 24 hrs in the Tyrol.
- **1916** - French chief of staff Josef Joffre replaced by Robert Nivelle.
- **1918** - The first US occupation troops cross the Rhine to enter Germany.
- **1937** - The beginning of one of the worst atrocities of World War II as the Chinese city of Nanking (Nanjing) was captured by the Japanese. Over the next six weeks, the Rape of Nanking occurred in which Japanese soldiers randomly attacked, raped and indiscriminately killed an estimated 200,000 Chinese persons.
- **1939** - Battle of the Rio de La Plata: three British cruisers defeat the German pocket battleship 'Graf Spee'.
- **1941** - British and Canadian troops abandon the mainland portions of Hong Kong.
- **1945** - The "Beast of Belsen" Josef Kramer (39), the "Bitch of Belsen" Irma Grese (22), and six other Belsen war criminals, hanged on this day.
- **1969** - Britain announces agreement to withdraw all its forces from Libya within next few months.
- **1976** - Lance Corporal William Hendrik Boucher from 95 Tactical Airfield Unit (Later Air Force Base Ondangwa) was part of the SAAF Guard detail on the Base when a fire broke out in one of the tents in the Air Force camp area. While assisting to put out the fire, the heat of the flames caused a fire extinguisher to explode, killing him instantly. He was 22.

- **1977** - Candidate Officer Gerard Genis from 4 Squadron was killed at Lanseria shortly after take-off in his Atlas MB326KM Impala Mk II when the radio compartment panel opened in flight causing the aircraft to roll inverted out of control. He was 19.
- **1985** - Rifleman J.N. Hamukwaya from 202 Battalion SWATF died in the Rundu State Hospital from injuries received when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Rundu. He was 23.
- **1987** - Rifleman John Marcus Bothma from the South African Cape Corps was killed in a private vehicle accident at Usakos. He was 20.
- **1988** - Rifleman Alfred Mahlakwane from 116 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Pietersburg. He was 22.
- **1988** - Private Jacob Janse from 6 Maintenance Unit was admitted to 3 Military Hospital in Bloemfontein suffering from liver cancer. He succumbed to the disease on 13 December 1988. He was 22.
- **1988** - Angola, Cuba, and South Africa end eight months of negotiations under US mediation for a settlement in South West Africa by signing a protocol in Brazzaville, the Congo, thereby ensuring independence for the territory. The final signing took place at UN

headquarters in New York on 22 December.

- **1991** - North and South Korea signed a treaty of reconciliation and non-aggression which also formally ended the Korean War, although actual fighting had ceased in 1953.
- **2003** - US troops find Iraqi Dictator Saddam Hussein in a hole in the ground.

14 December

- **1799** - George Washington died at Mount Vernon.
- **1896** - World War II General James Doolittle was born in Alameda, California. On April 18, 1942, he led a squadron of B-25 bombers launched from the aircraft carrier Hornet to conduct the first American air raid of the war against mainland Japan. He also headed the Eighth Air Force during the Normandy invasion and was awarded the Medal of Honour.
- **1901** - Reports reach London of the large number of deaths in South African concentration camps during the Second Anglo-Boer War.
- **1939** - The Soviet Union (Population 181 million) "defends" itself by attacking Finland (2 million).
- **1939** - The League of Nations expelled Soviet Russia for its aggression against Finland.
- **1939** - Norwegian politician Vidkun Quisling meets Hitler for the first time, in Berlin, and offers to betray his country to the Nazis.
- **1941** - Japanese forces in Malaya occupy Gurun & Kroh.
- **1970** - Field Marshal Viscount Slim, Defender of India, Liberator of Burma, dies at the age of 79.
- **1979** - Two members from 5 SAI were Killed in Action near Nkongo when their Platoon was ambushed by a numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near a village waterhole. The casualties were: Rifleman Willie Jacobus Applegryn (19). Rifleman Daniel Jacobus Victor (19).
- **1981** - Sapper Jan Adriaan Crous from 25 Field Engineer Squadron was Killed in Action while driving a Buffel Troop Carrier when the vehicle detonated a boosted Soviet TMA-3 Cheese mine on Oom Willie se Pad. He was 20.
- **1981** - Rifleman Fernando Chameia from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion on the road between Ongiva and Chiede during operations in Southern Angola. He was 27.
- **1981** - Signaller Abraham Johannes Nortje from SALNET accidentally drowned while crossing a river during a foot patrol near the Cutline. He was 29.
- **1984** - Rifleman Theodore Marais from North West

Saddam Hussein

Command was killed after being accidentally run over by a military vehicle while at Potchefstroom. He was 20.

- **1995** - A Bosnian peace treaty was signed in Paris by leaders from the former Yugoslavia. The treaty ended Europe's worst conflict since World War II.

15 December

- **1815** - The Slagtersnek rebels are tried in the Uithenhage landdrost court. One is reprieved by Lord Charles Somerset, the other, Cornelis Faber (43), Stefanus Cornelis Botma (43), his brother Abraham Carel Botma (29), Hendrik Frederik Prinsloo (32) and Theunis de Klerk, are sentenced to death.
- **1890** - Sioux leader Sitting Bull (native name Tatan-ka-yatanka) was killed in a skirmish with U.S. soldiers along the Grand River in South Dakota as his warriors tried to prevent his arrest.
- **1899** - The British under General Redvers Buller make a frontal attack in the



Battle of Colenso aimed at relieving the besieged town of Ladysmith. The action fails and the British lose over 1,100 men, including Lieutenant Freddy Roberts, only son of Field-Marshal Lord Frederick Roberts. Eight Boers die and thirty are wounded. This third straight defeat of British troops, which began at Stormberg on December 10, brings "Black Week" to an end.

- **1938** - General Jan Kemp, acting SA minister of defence, announces during the Voortrekkereuefees festivities that Robertshoogte in Pretoria will in future be known as Voortrekkerhoogte.
- **1941** - USS 'Swordfish' (SS-193) becomes 1st US sub to sink a Japanese ship.
- **1943** - The Battle of San Pietro took place during World War II as a German panzer battalion devastated American forces trying to take the 700-year-old Italian village.
- **1961** - Nazi SS-Colonel Adolf Eichmann was sentenced to death in Jerusalem for his role in the Holocaust. Eichmann had organized the deportation of Jews from all over occupied Europe to Nazi death camps.
- **1976** - Corporal Timothy Gilmore Conway from Regiment Algoa Bay was Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds when his Temporary Base near Oshikango came under heavy enemy mortar attack.

He was 23.

- **1978** - Corporal Thomas Davis from 2 Parachute Regiment was accidentally killed in the Operational Area when struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle. He was 24.
- **1980** - Rifleman Anthony Uytenbogaardt from 1 SAI was killed when his civilian motor vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with another vehicle. He was 19.
- **1981** - Lance Corporal Jeremiah Richards from 8 SAI was killed in Northern Kavangoland when the Buffel Troop Carrier in which he was traveling, overturned and he was crushed under the vehicle. He was 19.
- **1984** - Two members from 1 SWA Engineer Regiment SWATF were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. They were: Sapper G.J. Bock (18). Sapper J.P. Isaacs (18).
- **1989** - Mercenary coup in Comoros gives up power after twenty-one days. The mercenary leader and ex-presidential bodyguard, Bob Denard, attempted to create a 'pirate kingdom' after the assassination of president Ahmed Abderrahman Abdallah.
- **1989** - The dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet ended in Chile. Pinochet had come to power in 1973 after a military overthrow of the democratically elected gov-

ernment.

16 December

- **1653** - Following the defeat of King Charles I in the English Civil War, Oliver Cromwell, leader of the Parliamentary forces, was declared Lord Protector of England.
- **1773** - The Boston Tea Party occurred as colonial activists disguised as Mohawk Indians boarded British ships anchored in Boston Harbor and dumped 342 containers of expensive tea into the water.
- **1838** - In the Battle of Blood River, a Voortrekker commando of 470 men, under leadership of Andries Pretorius, is attacked at Ncome River (later called Blood River) by an army of Zulu King Dingane. About 3,000 Zulus are killed. This day was first commemorated by the Afrikaner community as Dingaan's Day and later as Day of the Covenant.
- **1880** - The first shots in the First Anglo-Boer War are fired in Potchefstroom. The war ended with the defeat of the British in the battle of Amajuba, on 27 February 1881.
- **1900** - The second Republican invasion of the Cape Colony starts under Commandant P.H. Kritzinger and General J.B.M. Hertzog.
- **1913** - The Women's Memorial is unveiled in Bloemfontein, to commemorate

26,251 women and children who died during the Second Anglo-Boer War, mainly in British concentration camps.

- **1914** - German battlecruisers shell the British resort towns of Scarborough and Hartlepool.
- **1941** - Dan Pienaar gains distinction in an attack on the Italian outpost of El Wak and is awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).
- **1944** - American big-band leader Glenn Miller disappeared in a small plane over the English Channel and was presumably killed. Best remembered for Moonlight Serenade and In the Mood.
- **1944** - During World War II in Europe, the Battle of the Bulge began as the Germans launched a big counter-offensive in the Ardennes Forest along a 75-mile front, taking American troops by surprise. Aided by foggy, snowy weather, the Germans penetrated 104 kilometres into Allied lines by the end of December. The German advance was eventually halted by Montgomery on the Meuse and Patton at Bastogne. As the weather cleared, Allied aircraft attacked German ground forces and supply lines and the counter-offensive failed. There were an estimated 77,000 Allied and 130,000 German casualties.
- **1944** - German V-2 rocket strikes Antwerp theatre. 638 are killed.

• **1956** - UN troops occupy Port Said, Suez Canal Zone, following the abortive Tripartite Invasion.

- **1961** - Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), formed since June 1961 under leadership of Nelson Mandela, performs its first acts of sabotage by attacking post offices and other buildings in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Durban.
- **1963** - Able Seaman Johannes Hendrik Jordaan from SAS President Steyn was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident between Colesberg and Phillipolis. He was admitted to the Bloemfontein Hospital where he later succumbed to his injuries. He was 23.
- **1971** - Pakistan accepts an armistice, ending the Bangladesh Liberation War and Indo-Pakistani War of 1971.
- **1979** - Rifleman Arrie Zagarias Greyling from 5 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1982** - Signaller Daniel Andries Barnard from 2 Signal Regiment was killed in a private motor vehicle accident, in Pretoria. He was 23.

17 December

- **1920** - South Africa receives the League of Nations man-

date over South West Africa.

- **1963** - President Christophe Soglo is overthrown in a military coup in Dahomey, now Benin.
- **1965** - Eight members of the South African Cape Corps drowned during a sea training exercise when their light surface craft was hit by a freak wave and capsized in Kalkbay. They were: Rifleman Piet Rittles (25). Rifleman Harden Classen Presence (36). Rifleman Jacobus Newing (22). Rifleman Mattheus Willem Joubert (24). Rifleman Harry Harris (33). Rifleman Jacobus Gideon Farmer (32). Rifleman Frikie Braaf (24). Rifleman Jacobus Abraham Arnolds (20).
- **1968** - The first rocket to be wholly developed and manufactured in South Africa is successfully launched from the new rocket launching range at St. Lucia Bay on the east coast. The Minister

Glenn Miller



of Defence asserts that the rockets are defensive not offensive weapons.

- **1975** - Gunner Barend Hermanus Neethling from 4 Field Regiment was accidentally killed in Central Angola during Ops Savannah. He was 18.
- **1975** - Trooper Danie Anderson from 1 Special Service Battalion was accidentally killed during Operation Savannah. He was 19.
- **1979** - Rifleman Leon Pereira from 32 Battalion was Reported Missing after being attacked by a crocodile while swimming in the Kavango River near Buffalo. He was 20.
- **1981** - Sergeant Ronald Potgieter from Regiment De la Rey Died of Wounds resulting from an accidental mortar bomb explosion during a weapons demonstration in Northern Owamboland. He was 21.
- **1983** - Rifleman Daniel Chindumba from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 22.
- **1984** - Rifleman Lenas July from 201 Battalion SWATF was killed at Omega after being struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 25.
- **1993** - American troops are pulled out of Somalia following a series of gun battles with Somali troops un-

der the command of General Mohammed Farah Aidid.

18 December

- **1899** - Field Marshal Lord Roberts is appointed British supreme commander in South Africa.
- **1916** - During World War I, the Battle of Verdun concluded after ten months of fighting in which 543,000 French and 434,000 German soldiers were killed.
- **1939** - Air Battle of Heligoland Bight: RAF bombers attempting to raid German naval bases suffer heavily at the hands of the Luftwaffe.
- **1940** - Adolf Hitler ordered the German General Staff to begin planning Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Soviet Russia.
- **1972** - Operation Linebacker: US begins "Christmas bombing" of North Vietnam.
- **1983** - During Ops Askari, ten members that were part of an Anti-Aircraft team deployed near Caiundu in Southern Angola were Killed in Action during a fierce fire-fight when their position was attacked by a numerically superior enemy force of more than 200 FAPLA troops. The casualties were: Lieutenant Keith Claassen (20). Sergeant Hendrik Albertus Oosthuysen (25). Rifleman Lourens Johannes Jansen van Rensburg (20). Rifleman Thomas Kakuru (20). Rifleman Ndara Diyerenge (20). Rifleman Alfred Ka-

munga (18). Rifleman Esau Mashika (20). Rifleman Hamat Hamutenya (22). Rifleman Aron Dikuwa (20). Rifleman Edward Moyo (20).

- **1985** - Rifleman Albert Hapera from 911 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 19.
- **1988** - Commandant Ernestes Johannes Jacobus Brummer from the Northern Cape Command Headquarters died in the Kimberley Hospital after being critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident in Kimberley. He was 31.

19 December

- **1941** - Italian divers sink British BBs 'Queen Elizabeth' & 'Valiant' at Alexandria.
- **1942** - General Dan Pienaar is killed as his aircraft crashes into Lake Victoria at Kisumu while returning to South Africa. The suburbs Danville (Pretoria) and Dan Pienaar (Bloemfontein) have been named after him.
- **1942** - Guadalcanal: Malaria rate reaches 972 cases per 1,000 US troops.
- **1943** - Military coup in Bolivia.
- **1946** - War broke out in French Indochina as Ho Chi Minh attacked the French seeking to oust them from Vietnam. This marked the beginning of a thirty-year conflict which eventually led to heavy U.S. involve-

ment and ended with a Communist victory in April 1975 after U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam.

- **1964** - Air Mechanic Henri Martin Strydom from Air Force Base Ysterplaat was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident on 17 Dec 1964. He was transferred to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he sadly succumbed to his injuries on 19 December 1964. He was 18.
- **1976** - Corporal Benjamin Johannes Schoeman of Regiment Noord Natal Died of Wounds while on patrol along the Cut-line North of Ombalantu. He was 28.
- **1982** - Rifleman Terence Norman Fitzpatrick from 5 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident at Ladysmith. He was 18.
- **1982** - Rifleman Shaline Lloyd Keen from Special Forces Headquarters was accidentally killed at the Headquarters while he was standing on the back of a Landrover and the vehicle overturned. He was thrown out of the vehicle and the vehicle rolled over him. He was 19.
- **1985** - Two members from 202 Battalion SWATF were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Omega. The casualties were: Rifleman Lenox Hipangua (20). Rifleman Benjamin Johannes Thomas (21).
- **1992** - President F. W. de

Klerk announces that he is either suspending or forcibly retiring 23 officers of the South African Defence Force, including two generals and four brigadiers for illegal or unauthorised activities and malpractice. He says further disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution will follow pending the completion of the probe.

20 December

- **1852** - Sir George Cathcart, governor and commander-in-chief at the Cape (31 March 1852-26 May 1854), is defeated when he attacks Moshesh at Berea Mountain, Basutoland, with his force of 2 500 regular troops. He concluded peace in accordance with instructions from the British Colonial Office and returned to the Cape Colony.
- **1860** - South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union in a prelude to the American Civil War. Within two months Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas seceded. In April 1861, Virginia seceded, followed within five weeks by Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina, thus forming an eleven state Confederacy with a population of nine million, including nearly four million slaves. The Un-

ion had 21 states and a population of over 20 million.

- **1880** - The Battle of Bronkhorstspuit takes place, four days after the Transvaal War of Independence started, in which a detachment under British officer Col. P.R. Anstruter is cut to pieces by a commando led by Comdt. Frans Joubert: half of the force is killed and wounded and the rest taken prisoner.
- **1900** - The Kitchener memorandum concerning the implementation of concentration camps for Boer women and children is issued. Between 1900-1902 27,827 people, mostly women and children, were to die in these camps.
- **1914** - Josef Johannes (Jopie) Fourie, rebel commando leader during the 1914 Rebellion, is executed by a firing squad after being found guilty of high treason. His death caused an outrage in Afrikaans-speaking circles, and was a potent factor in the rise of the National Party.



Ho Chi Minh

- **1924** - Adolf Hitler is freed from prison, having served only part of his sentence for the "Beer Hall Putsch".
- **1935** - Italians are driven back to the Dembeguina Pass when Abyssinian troops cross the River Takaze.
- **1939** - Captain Hans Wilhelm Langsdorff, commander of the 'Graf Spee,' commits suicide at the age of 45.
- **1942** - First Japanese bombing of Calcutta.
- **1944** - Battle of Bastogne: Germans surround the American defenders, initiating a siege.
- **1958** - First successful test of the US Titan ICBM.
- **1965** - A re-organisation of the South African Defence Force replaces the General Staff with a body to be known as the 'Supreme Command' with the Commandant-General as Chairman and the Executive Commanders as members.
- **1979** - Rifleman Antonio Cahasa from 32 Battalion was accidentally killed during a follow-up patrol in Southern Angola when his Buffel Troop Carrier was involved in a collision with a Hyena vehicle. He was 33.
- **1985** - Six South Africans and three Lesotho nationals are killed in an attack for which the renegade Lesotho Liberation Army claims responsibility, while the Lesotho government blames SA.
- **1989** - The U.S. invaded Panama attempting to capture Manuel Noriega on charges of narcotics trafficking. Operation Just Cause occurred seven months after Noriega had declared unfavorable election results in his country to be null and void. The invasion toppled the Noriega government and resulted in the installation of Guillermo Endara as president. Noriega temporarily eluded capture, but surrendered a few weeks later to U.S. troops. He was then tried, convicted, and imprisoned in the U.S.

21 December

- **1832** - Egyptian forces rout Turkish army at Battle of Konieh.
- **1879** - Soviet Russia leader Josef Stalin was born in the village of Gori in Georgia, Russia. His original name was Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili.
- **1900** - The inaugural meeting of the Burgher Peace Committee is held in Pretoria. Lord Kitchener discusses his concentration camp policies with this group, mentioning that stock and Blacks would also be brought in. An estimated 14,100 Blacks were to die in these camps.
- **1941** - Japanese renew their attempt to capture Wake Island.
- **1945** - World War II General George Patton died in Germany following a car accident. He had been injured on

9 December near Mannheim and was taken to a hospital in Heidelberg where he died. He was buried in Luxembourg.

- **1964** - SA signs treaty with Great Britain on the supply of military equipment to South Africa.
- **1977** - Rifleman Stephen Victor Paul Devereaux from SWA SPES, SWATF died from a gunshot wound accidentally self-inflicted while he was serving at Okankolo in Northern Owamboland. He was 18.
- **1979** - Rifleman C. Kavatjana from the Hereroland Area Force Unit SWATF was accidentally shot and killed by own forces after being caught in cross-fire during a heavy contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1979** - Peace agreement signed, ending seven-year Rhodesian guerrilla war and 15-year rebellion against the British crown.
- **1983** - Rifleman Gustav Carl Schönborn from the University of the Orange Free State Military Unit was killed when a military vehicle accidentally drove over him in very dusty conditions with poor visibility during anti-insurgent follow-up operations in Southern Angola. He was 21.
- **1988** - Pan American Flight 103 exploded in midair as the result of a terrorist bomb and crashed into Locker-

bie, Scotland. All 259 passengers and crew members along with 11 persons on the ground were killed.

- **2003** - The Sudanese government and rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Army reach a tentative deal to evenly divide the country's oil wealth as part of negotiations to end its 20-year-old civil war.

22 December

- **1880** - During the First Anglo-Boer War a three-month siege of Pretoria begins.
- **1894** - A French court martial convicts Alfred Dreyfus of treason on trumped up charges, triggering "The Dreyfus Affair".
- **1944** - Battle of the Bulge. General Anthony McAuliffe to a German ultimatum to surrender with the reply, "Nuts!". (See this month's Famous Figures in Military History).
- **1944** - Vietnamese Liberation Army is formed by Vo Nguyen Giap.
- **1956** - Last British and French troops leave Egypt.
- **1965** - Second military coup in Dahomey (now Benin) is led by Colonel Christophe Soglo.
- **1977** - Rifleman David Herculaas Wilters from 4 SAI Died of Wounds in Northern Owamboland. He was 18.
- **1977** - Lieutenant Kurt Gagliano from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents

near the Cut-Line. He was 21.

- **1982** - Private Pieter Johannes Jordaan from 92 Ammunition Depot was killed in a private motorcycle accident near Witbank while off duty. He was 30.
- **1988** - South Africa signs an accord granting independence to South-West Africa. Angola, Cuba, and South Africa end eight months of negotiations under US mediation for a settlement in South-Western Africa by signing a formal treaty at UN headquarters in New York, after signing a protocol earlier in December.
- **1989** - Private Johannes Bornman from the North West Command Workshops, Technical Service Corps, died in 1 Military Hospital after suffering a brain aneurysm. He was 20.
- **1990** - Rifleman Michael Charles Muller from the South African Cape Corps died at Umgababa from a gunshot wound, accidentally self-inflicted. He was 19.

23 December

- **1910** - German SS General Kurt "Panzer" Meyer was born on this day.
- **1941** - British troops capture Benghazi, Libya.
- **1943** - General Montgomery, commander of the Allied forces in North Africa, is advised that he will be

appointed commandant for D-day.

- **1948** - Hideki Tojo was hanged for war crimes. He had been Japanese prime minister from 1941-44. Following Japan's defeat in World War II, he was arrested as a war criminal, tried by a military tribunal and sentenced to death. He was hanged along with six other Japanese wartime military leaders at Sugamo Prison in Tokyo, with the sentence carried out by the U.S. 8th Army.
- **1968** - North Korea releases 82 crewmen of the USS 'Pueblo' (AGER-2), held since January.
- **1971** - Private Hendrik Roos from the Air Force Gymnasium was killed in a private motorcycle accident at Honeydew in Johannesburg. He was 17.
- **1975** - Two members from 14 Field Regiment attached to Battle Group Orange during Ops Savannah were Killed in Action when their



Hideki Tojo

artillery gun position received a direct hit from a salvo of 122mm Soviet BM-21 Katyusha rockets. The casualties were: Gunner Glen Martin Felix Muller (18). Gunner Matthys Jacobus Theunissen (18).

- **1975** - Sergeant (Flight Engineer) Pieter van Rensburg from 17 Squadron SAAF was killed while serving in Rhodesia when his Alouette III Helicopter crashed after flying into High Tension overhead Power Lines. He was 22.
- **1976** - Lieutenant Christiaan Johan Swart from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action after breaking his neck when his Unimog overturned after detonating a landmine just outside Elundu. He was 23.
- **1980** - Rifleman Ivan Shipago from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line. He was 25.
- **1983** - Rifleman Simon Petrus Jurgens Du Toit from the Kimberley Regiment was killed in a private motor vehicle Accident, at Warrenton. He was 21.
- **1985** - Five civilians were killed and forty injured in a bomb explosion in the Sanlam shopping centre in Amanzimtoti, Natal South Coast. Umkhonto we Siswe (MK) cadre Andrew Sibusiso Zondo, who detonated the explosive in a rubbish bin, was executed by hang-

ing in 1986.

- **1986** - Rifleman Peter James from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 19.
- **1989** - Lance Corporal Samuel Athol Ellis from Regiment Bloemspruit was accidentally killed after being struck by a bullet during a shooting incident at Nkongo Base. He was 20.
- **2013** - Mikhail Timofeyevich Kalashnikov, the man that designed the AK-47, dies at the age of 94.

24 December

- **1914** - The first-ever German air raid against Britain took place when a German monoplane dropped a single bomb on Dover, England, during World War I.
- **1914** - World War I. Along sections of the Western Front, British and German troops declare an unofficial Christmas truce.
- **1941** - Manila is heavily bombed by Japanese aircraft.
- **1942** - The first surface-to-surface guided missile, later known as the V-1 Flying Bomb, was launched by German rocket engineer Wernher von Braun. Called "Buzz Bombs" for the loud buzzing sound of their motor, they were used by Nazi Germany against Britain beginning in September 1944.
- **1943** - General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed

Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force preparing for D-Day.

- **1976** - Private Philip Lindsay Backhouse from 16 Maintenance Unit was killed when the civilian motorcycle he had borrowed, was involved in an accident. He was 19.
- **1976** - Private Hermanus Jakobus van der Westhuizen from 13 Maintenance was killed in a military vehicle accident at the Letaba Training Area. He was 18.
- **1976** - Sergeant Stephen Graham van Biljon from Central Flying School Dunottar died after suffering a fatal heart attack at the Base. He was 38.
- **1978** - Sergeant Abrie Pieter De Man from 2 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident in Kavangoland. He was 20.
- **1980** - Signaller Thomas Arnold Du Toit from the Orange Free State Command Died of Wounds after being accidentally shot in a friendly fire incident near Ruacana. He was 21.
- **1980** - German admiral & führer Karl Dönitz dies at the age of 89.
- **1981** - Rifleman Karel Theunissen from the South African Cape Corps was Killed in Action after his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a Landmine while on patrol in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1983** - Trooper Johan van Tonder from 10 Armoured Car Squadron SWATF was

killed when his Eland 90 Armoured Car was involved in a collision with another military vehicle at Grootfontein. He was 19.

- **1987** - Rifleman Pieter Breytenbach from 44 Parachute Regiment was Reported Missing during a parachuting exercise at Komatipoort after he was seen to land in the Crocodile River. Despite an intensive search, his body was never located and he has no known grave. He was 22.

25 December

- **1901** - During the Battle of Tweefontein, (also Groenkop or Krismiskop) General De Wet surprises British soldiers. At least fifty-seven of them are killed. De Wet takes the unwounded soldiers (about 120) with him to put them across the Basutoland border a few days later.
- **1941** - British-Canadian garrison of Hong Kong surrenders to the Japanese 38th Division.
- **1977** - Rifleman Michael Nicolaas Beukes from 4 SAI was critically wounded during a fierce contact that took place between Beacon 9 & 10. He was 18.
- **1979** - Private Ronald Atkins from 2 Military Base Management was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident, at Grootfontein. He was 20.
- **1981** - Rifleman Funa Dala from 32 Battalion Died of Wounds in Hospital on 25

December 1981 after being critically wounded in a landmine explosion on the road between Ongiva and Chiede in Southern Angola on 14 December 1981. He was 28.

- **1985** - The Six-day War between Mali and Algeria over the disputed Agacher strip starts.
- **2016** - Airplane crash in the Black Sea kills 92, including the Russian Army Chorus.

26 December

- **1862** - The first US navy hospital ship, 'Red Rover' commissioned, with four Catholic nuns serving as nurses.
- **1893** - Mao Tse-Tung was born in Hunan Province, China.
- **1900** - The Battle of Greylingstad takes place when Commandant Buys attacks the South Rand mine, near Greylingstad. Part of the guard is cut off and has to surrender, but the burghers are forced to retreat when the main column arrives.
- **1915** - The German gunboat, the Kingani, is captured by the British on Lake Tanganyika. It is removed by portage through the jungle of the Belgian Congo.
- **1916** - Joseph Joffre is made a Marshal of France.
- **1943** - Battle of North Cape: The Scharnhorst is sunk by the Royal Navy.
- **1944** - Battle of the Bulge:

US 4th Armored Div relieves Bastogne.

- **1944** - The Red Army surrounds Budapest.
- **1972** Former US President Harry S Truman dies at the age of 88.
- **1975** - Curiango, Angola is taken by Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, (MPLA, Popular Liberation Movement of Angola) guerrillas.
- **1987** - Private Andre Johan van Niekerk from 1 Maintenance Unit died of pneumonia at 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria. He was 18.
- **2006** - Former naval officer and US President Gerald R. Ford dies at the age of 93.

27 December

- **1838** - In the Battle of the White Umfolozi, the Voortrekker commando is ambushed and nearly overpowered by a Zulu impi. Alexander Harvey Biggar, among others, is killed in the running fight.
- **1922** - The Imperial Japanese Navy commissions



Mikhail Kalashnikov

the 'Hôshô', the first purpose-built carrier to enter service in any navy.

- **1941** - British Commandos raid Vaagso, Norway.
- **1944** - B-29s from Saipan make their fifth major raid on Tokyo.
- **1956** - 5,580 Egyptian prisoners of war are exchanged for four Israelis held by Egypt.
- **1960** - France detonates its third atomic device in the Sahara.
- **1977** - Two members from the 1st Battalion Regiment Bloemspruit and one member from the Bronkhorst-spruit Commando were killed when their Unimog vehicle skidded off the road and overturned in wet weather while traveling on the Rundu to Bagani Road. They were: Sergeant Andries (23). Lance Corporal Barend Frederick Wiese (26). Rifleman Leon Myburgh (27).
- **1979** - Soviets invade Afghanistan, initiating a disastrous nine-year war that opens the country to a Taliban takeover.
- **1980** - Two members from 101 Battalion SWATF were accidentally shot dead in Northern Owamboland by members of a 53 Battalion Patrol who mistook them for SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. They were: Rifleman Philipus Elifas (20). Rifleman Elias Philipus (21).
- **1983** - Rifleman Teixeira Manganhes from 32 Battal-

ion burnt to death when Aerospatiale SA330C/H Puma struck trees and crashed during a take-off near Cassinga while carrying out trooping during Ops Askari. He was 31.

- **1983** - Rifleman Shawn Pretorius from 4 SAI Died of multiple shrapnel wounds received in an accidental hand grenade explosion inside a Ratel while in Southern Angola during Ops Askari. He was 18.
- **1996** - A genocide trial began concerning the killing of an estimated 800,000 Tutsis in Rwanda. In 1994, a bloody civil war had broken out between the two main ethnic groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi. After the Hutu army seized power it had waged a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" against the Tutsi population.
- **2012** - General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander of the US Army during "Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm", dies at the age of 78.

28 December

- **1901** - Commandant Gideon Scheepers is found guilty on several charges by a British court martial and sentenced to death. He professes his innocence to the end.
- **1921** - The Rand Revolt begins with a strike by miners after announcements of wage reductions on the gold-mines necessitated by the depression following WWI.

- **1950** - Korea: Chinese troops cross 38th Parallel.
- **1962** - UN troops occupy Elizabethstad, Katanga.
- **1971** - Ordinary Seaman Johannes Petrus Gerhardus Botha from SAS Simonsberg was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 18.
- **1983** - Trooper Norman Walter Niemand from 1 Special Service Battalion attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group, was Killed in Action in Southern Angola. He was 19.

29 December

- **1895** - Leander Starr Jameson crosses the border into Transvaal, leading about five hundred hand-picked policemen of the Chartered Company on their way to Johannesburg.
- **1900** - The Battle of Helvetia near Machadodorp takes place, with the British under Major Cotton surrendering to General Ben Viljoen. Major Cotton is fatally wounded.
- **1940** - During the Blitz, German aircraft dropped thousands of incendiary bombs on the centre of London, causing the worst fire damage since the great fire of 1666. St. Paul's Cathedral survived but eight other Wren churches along with the Guildhall and Old Bailey were badly damaged.
- **1941** - First Japanese air raid on Corregidor.
- **1965** - During the Vietnam

War, North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh rejected unconditional peace talks offered by the U.S.

- **1981** - Rifleman James Clark Cromhout from 2 Parachute Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 23.
- **1983** - Rifleman Jacobus Johannes Adonis from the South African Cape Corps was Killed in Action in Northern Owamboland during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 20.
- **1983** - Corporal Sarel Johannes Reynders from 3 Squadron was killed in a private motorcycle accident, in Pretoria. He was 21.
- **1983** - Private Johan Coghill from the South African

Medical Corps was killed in a military vehicle accident at De Doorns. He was 20.

- **1983** - Commodore Dieter Gerhardt, former commanding officer of the Simons Town naval base, and his wife Ruth Gerhardt, are sentenced to life imprisonment and ten years' imprisonment respectively, being found guilty of high treason on charges of spying for the Soviet Union.
- **1992** - Rifleman Abraham Mohlolo Khoathela from 44 Parachute Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident at the Soweto off-ramp while traveling on the Potchefstroom Road. He was 24.

30 December

- **1900** - Battleships are sent to Tangiers by the Spanish

government as the first part of its intended invasion of Morocco.

- **1935** - Italian bombers destroy a Swedish Red Cross unit in Ethiopia.
- **1959** - USS 'George Washington' (SSBN-598) is commissioned, the first ballistic missile sub.
- **1972** - US President Richard Nixon halts bombing of North Vietnam & announces peace talks.
- **1975** - Major Hendrik Matthee from the School of Armour suffered a fatal heart attack while on duty at Grootfontein. He was 38.
- **1976** - Corporal Peter Vaughan Phipson from the Equestrian Regiment Died of Wounds in 1 Military Hospital after being critically wounded near Okatopi. He was 19.



- **1987** - The Transkei military, under General Bantu Holomisa, overthrows the administration of Stella Sigcau of the Transkei.
- **1988** - Airman Johan Nicolaas Nel from the 70 Mobile Radar Unit was accidentally electrocuted while serving at 140 Squadron, AFB Ondangwa. He was 19.
- **1989** - Private Douglas Emmaneuil De Freitas from 72 Motorised Brigade Headquarters was killed instantly while on guard duty at the Brigade Headquarters when he was struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge from a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 19.
- **2006** - Saddam Hussein is hanged at the age of 69.

31 December

- **1967** - Prime Minister B.J. Vorster warns that the government would re-assess the Simon's Town agreement during 1968. This reaction follows the British government's decision to maintain the South African arms embargo.
- **1971** - Sergeant Petrus Johannes Engelbrecht from 1 Special Service Battalion Died of Wounds received in an accidental hand grenade explosion while serving in the Caprivi Strip. Eleven others were also injured in the same incident. He was 21.
- **1975** - Rifleman Michael Lenin van der Schyff from the Equestrian Regiment

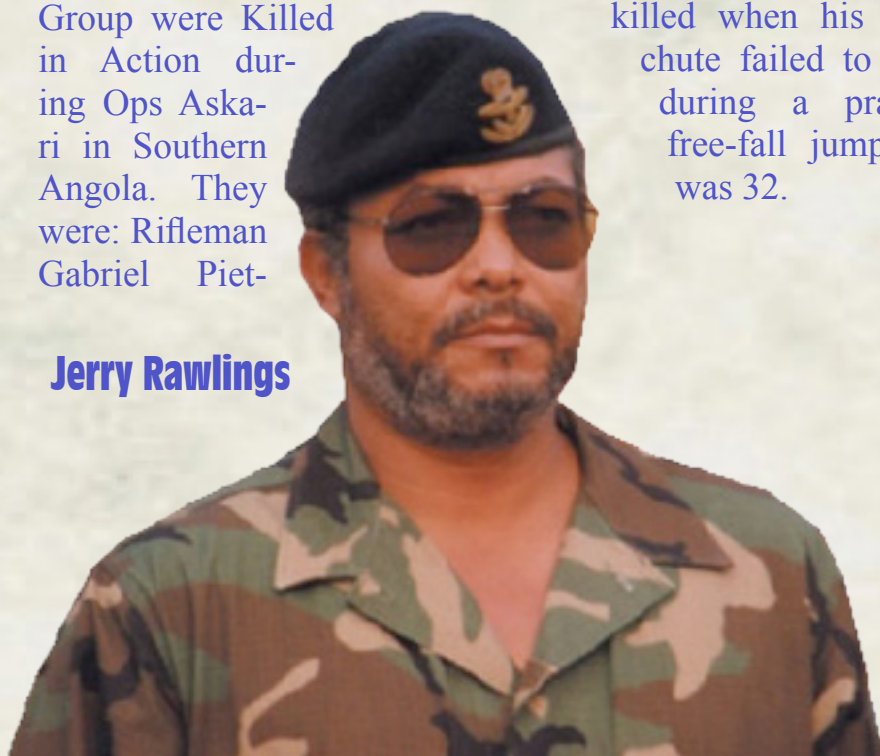
was accidentally killed when struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 19.

- **1976** - Rifleman Jacobus Abraham Visser from Infantry School was killed when he accidentally fell from a horse and broke his neck. He was 18.
- **1981** - In his second military coup, Jerry Rawlings overthrows the government of President Hilla Limann in Ghana.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal André Christiaan Weideman from 6 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned on the Oshakati to Ruacana road. He was 20.
- **1983** - 2nd Lieutenant Pieter Marcus Liebenberg from 4 SAI was Killed in Action near Cuvelai in Southern Angola during Ops Askari. He was 21.
- **1983** - Three Members from 4 SAI attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group were Killed in Action during Ops Askari in Southern Angola. They were: Rifleman Gabriel Piet-

er le Roux (18). Rifleman Derick John Schröner (18). Rifleman Mathys Cornelius Smit (18).

- **1983** - Rifleman Johan Carel Fourie from Regiment Groot Karoo, attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was Killed in Action during Ops Askari. He was 21.
- **1983** - The Nigerian civil government of President Shehu Shagari is overthrown in a fourth, bloodless, military coup led by Major-General Muhammadu Buhari. He was declared Head of State on 2 January 1984.
- **1986** - Trooper Peter Matthews from 1 Special Service Battalion, attached to 32 Battalion contracted cerebral malaria while deployed in Southern Angola. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he unfortunately succumbed to the illness. He was 20.
- **1993** - Staff Sergeant R. Nieuhaus from 44 Parachute Regiment was accidentally killed when his parachute failed to open during a practice free-fall jump. He was 32.

Jerry Rawlings



Military Despatches

**To all our readers from all of us
at Military Despatches.**

**Thanks for your support during the year.
Here's wishing you everything of the best for
Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New
Year.**





Special Forces

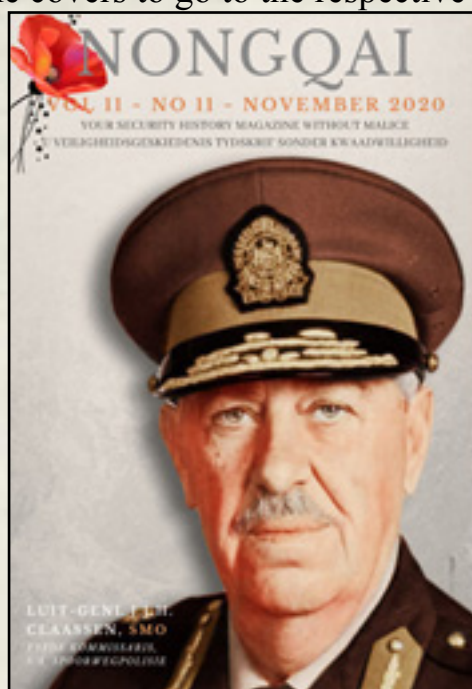
1. Spetsnaz (Russia)
2. "Black Berets: (South Korea)
3. Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (Canada)
4. Sayeret Matkal (Israel)
5. Special Operations Forces Grouping (Argentina)
6. Para (Special Forces) (India)
7. Navy Seals (United States of America)
8. Special Operations Command (Brazil)
9. Black Wasps (Cuba)
10. PLA Special Operations Forces (China)
11. Special Forces Group (Japan)
12. Unit 777 (Egypt)
13. Special Boat Service (Great Britain)
14. GSG-9 (Germany)
15. Underwater Demolition Command (Greece)



Useful links

Every month we will be featuring a few useful links to military websites, newsletters and on-line magazines. Stuff that we think our readers will appreciate.

Here are two of our favourites. The first one is Nongqai, the unofficial police newsletter for veterans of the former South African Police Force and for those interested in Police History. The second is Jimmy's Own, the official newsletter of the South African Signals Association. Click on the magazine covers to go to the respective websites.



Military Despatches Website



"Things don't have to change the world to be important."

Steve Jobs



Our aim is to make the Military Despatches website easy to use. Even more important to us, we want to make the website informative and interesting. The latest edition of the magazine will be available, as will all the previous editions. More over, there will be links to videos, websites, and articles that our readers may find interesting. So check out the website, bookmark it, and pass the URL on to everyone that you think may be interested.



Have you checked out the bookshelf on the website? Here you can open and read individual articles on screen with no need to download anything.

You will find articles on numerous different topics that have been published over the past two years as well as video clips and documentaries.

Hipe!

media

E-mail
editor@hipe.co.za



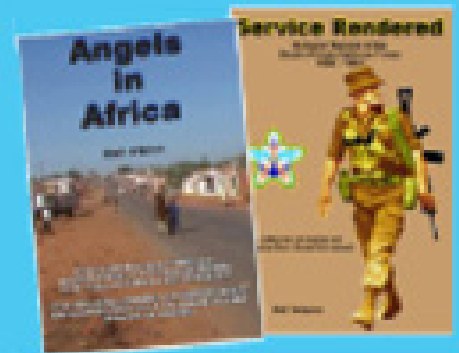
Online Magazines

Flip book magazines with pages that can be turned.



E-books

Produced in any electronic format required.



2D & 3D Animation

Produced in any video format.



Video Production

Scripting, storyboard, filming and editing done to any video format required. We also do aerial and underwater video and stills.



Still Photography

If you're thinking digital media then think Hipe Media.