



Military Despatches

Vol 81 March 2024

Special Forces raid goes wrong

The Dubrovka Theatre raid

Tank killers (Part II)

Tank destroyers of World War II



Desmond Doss

The conscientious objector who won a Medal of Honour

Army Speak 101

Military slang from around the world

For the military enthusiast



Military Despatches YouTube Channel



Click on any video below to view



Paratrooper Wings Quiz

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

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

Army Speak 101

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

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



New videos each week

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

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



Military Firearms Quiz

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



Elite Military Units Quiz

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

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



Who said that?

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

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Please remember to subscribe to our channel.

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



Editor's Sitrep

Thank my lucky stars that it's a leap year. It's the 29th February and I'm only just finishing off the March edition of the magazine.

Not only did I have to finish Military Despatches, I also had to do the layout and design of 'Jimmy's Own' - the magazine of the SA Signals Association. To add to this I had filming deadlines as well as having to edit video. So I've been a busy boy.

Having spent nearly four decades as a journalist, I was lucky enough to travel to most places on the globe. I've been to some countries that were - how should I put this diplomatically - a little bit backward.

If a super power were to tell these countries that they were going to bomb them back into the Stone Age, they would have been delighted and exclaimed "An upgrade."

Yet I must confess that the country that has the worst standard of service is nowhere else than right here in good old South Africa. Even the most poor and backward countries that I have visited offer better service than here.

In any retail business the ad-

age is "the customer is king." In South Africa the adage seems to be "the customer is an inconvenience."

Staff will ignore customers, argue with them, berate them, and even at times threaten them. And don't think that taking the matter to management is going to help. More often than not they are even more incompetent than their staff.

The good news is that in South Africa everything can be sorted out with a single word - "Sorry."

Your bank accidentally cleaned out your bank account - "Sorry." The airline has lost your luggage - "Sorry." The doctor removed your kidney instead of your tonsils - "Sorry."

Best of all you know that no-one is in the least bit sorry. Just be thankful that someone even bothered to say sorry in the first place.

Oh well, what can you do. I doubt whether it's going to change any time soon.

Until next time, stay safe and stay healthy.

Matt

Hipe!

media

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Front Cover

The military is making more and more use of drones. Even small commercial drones can be turned into deadly weapons that are both difficult to detect and to defend against.



Ten best attack helicopters

The ten best military attack helicopters in 2024.

An attack helicopter is an armed helicopter with the primary role of an attack aircraft, with the offensive capability of engaging ground targets such as enemy infantry, military vehicles and fortifications.

Due to their heavy armament they are sometimes called helicopter gunships.

Attack helicopters can use weapons including autocan-

10. Denel Rooivalk

The Denel Rooivalk (previously designated AH-2 and CSH-2) is an attack helicopter manufactured by Denel Aviation of South Africa. Rooivalk is Afrikaans for “Red Falcon”, which refers to the lesser kestrel.

Development of the type began in 1984 by the Atlas Aircraft Corporation, its development is closely connected to the Atlas Oryx transport helicopter, both aircraft being based on the Aérospatiale SA 330 Puma and having started development at the same time.

Development of the Rooivalk was protracted due to the impact of limited budgets during the 1990s, and a desire to produce a highly advanced attack helicopter. The South African Air Force (SAAF) ordered 12 Rooivalk, designated the Rooivalk Mk 1 in SAAF service, the first of which were official-

nons, machine guns, rockets, and anti-tank missiles such as the AGM-114 Hellfire.

Some attack helicopters are also capable of carrying air-to-air missiles, though mostly for purposes of self-defence against other helicopters and low-flying light combat aircraft.

A modern attack helicopter has two primary roles: first, to provide direct and accurate close air support for ground



ly handed over in April 2011.

The helicopters are flown by 16 Squadron, based at AFB Bloemspruit near Bloemfontein.

General characteristics

- Crew: 2 (pilot & weapon systems officer)
- Length: 18.73 metres
- Height: 5.19 metres
- Empty weight: 5,730 kg
- Fuel capacity: 1,854 litres
- Powerplant: 2 × Turbomeca Makila 1K2 turboshaft engines, 1,420 kW (1,900 hp) each

Performance

- Cruise speed: 278 km/h

troops; and second, the anti-tank role to destroy grouped enemy armour.

Attack helicopters are also used as protective escort for transport helicopters, or to supplement lighter helicopters in the armed reconnaissance roles.

In combat, an attack helicopter is projected to destroy targets worth around 17 times its own production cost before being destroyed.

- Range: 740 km
- Service ceiling: 6,100 metres
- Rate of climb: 13.3 m/s

Armament

- 1 × F2 20 mm cannon, 700 rounds
- 8 or 16 × Mokopa ZT-6 long-range anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM)
- 4 × MBDA Mistral air-to-air missiles
- 38 or 76 × 70 mm rockets folding fin aerial rockets (FFAR) or Wrap-Around (WA) (FZ90 70mm WA)
- FZ275 LGR Laser Guided Rocket

9. Changhe Z-10

The Changhe Z-10 is a Chinese medium attack helicopter developed for the People’s Liberation Army Ground Force. It is designed primarily for anti-tank warfare missions but has secondary air-to-air combat capability as well.

Initiated by chief designer Wu Ximing, the project had early Russian involvement with Kamov Design Bureau of Russia under a contract with the Chinese government, but the collaboration was abruptly stopped due to fundamental design philosophy disagreements.

In September 2016, the PLA announced that all of its army aviation units had been equipped with the Z-10.



General characteristics

- Crew: 2
- Length: 14.15 metres
- Height: 5.19 metres
- Empty weight: 5,100 kg
- Fuel capacity: Not known
- Powerplant: 2 × WZ-9 turboshaft engines, 930–957 kW (1,247–1,283 hp)

Performance

- Cruise speed: 230 km/h
- Range: 800 km
- Service ceiling: 6,400 metres

- Rate of climb: 10 m/s

Armament

- Guns: 1x 23 mm PX-10A revolver cannon or 1x 25 mm M242 Bushmaster chain gun copy
- Hardpoints: 4 with a capacity of 1,500 kg useful load
- Rockets: 57 mm or 90 mm unguided rocket pods
- Missiles: various air-to-air and air-to-surface missiles

8. Mil Mi-24

The Mil Mi-24 (Hind) is a large helicopter gunship, attack helicopter and low-capacity troop transport with room for eight passengers.

It is produced by Mil Moscow Helicopter Plant and was introduced by the Soviet Air Force in 1972. The helicopter is currently in use by 58 countries.

General characteristics

- Crew: 2-3 (pilot, weapons system officer and technician)
- Capacity: 8 troops / 4 stretchers / 2,400 kg cargo on an external sling
- Length: 17.5 metres
- Height: 19.79 metres
- Empty weight: 8,500 kg
- Powerplant: 2 × Isotov TV3-



117 turboshaft engines, 1,600 kW

Performance

- Max speed: 335 km/h
- Range: 450 km
- Service ceiling: 4,900 metresmk

Armament

- Flexible 12.7 mm Yakushev-Borzov Yak-B Gatling gun
- fixed twin-barrel GSh-30K autocannon on the Mi-24P.
- flexible twin-barrel GSh-

23L autocannon on the Mi-24VP and Mi-24VM.

- flexible GIAT dual feed 20mm (M693) autocannon on Mi-24 SuperHind Mk.II/III/IV/V
- PKB passenger compartment window mounted machine guns
- Various rocket launchers, bombs and anti-air missiles

7. Agusta A129 Mangusta

The Agusta A129 Mangusta (Mongoose) is an attack helicopter originally designed and produced by Italian company Agusta.

It is the first attack helicopter to be designed and produced wholly in Europe.

It has continued to be developed by AgustaWestland, the successor company to Agusta. It has been exclusively operated by the Italian Army, which introduced the type to service during 1990.

The A129 has undergone several combat deployments, seeing use in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. It has proven well suited to operating in hot climates, as well as quite flexible in the field.

General characteristics

- Crew: 2



- Length: 12.28 metres
- Height: 3.35 metres
- Empty weight: 2,530 kg
- Powerplant: 2 × Rolls-Royce Gem 2-1004D (license built by Piaggio) turboshaft engines, 664 kW (890 hp) each
- Performance
- Cruise speed: 229 km/h
- Range: 510 km
- Service ceiling: 4,725 metres
- Rate of climb: 10.2 m/s
- Armament
- 1 × 20 mm M197 three-barrel Gatling-type cannon
- 12.7 mm machine gun pod
- Rockets: 4 pods with 38 × 81 mm unguided rockets or 76 × 70 mm unguided rockets or
- 8 × AGM-114 Hellfire or BGM-71 TOW or Spike-ER anti-tank missiles
- 4-8 × AIM-92 Stinger or Mistral anti-aircraft missiles
- 8 (2 × 4) Air-to-Air Stinger (ATAS): short range air-to-air missile

6. Kamov Ka-50

The Kamov Ka-50 “Black Shark” (Hokum A), is a Soviet/Russian single-seat attack helicopter with the distinctive coaxial rotor system of the Kamov design bureau.

It was designed in the 1980s and adopted for service in the Russian army in 1995. The Ka-50 is manufactured by the Progress company in Arsenyev.

It is used as a heavily armed scout helicopter, and is notable for having a rescue ejection system, rare for helicopters.

General characteristics

- Crew: 1
- Length: 16 metres
- Height: 4.93 metres
- Empty weight: 7,700 kg
- Powerplant: 2 × Klimov



- VK-2500 turboshaft engines, 1,800 kW (2,400 shp) each
- Performance
- Cruise speed: 270 km/h
- Range: 545 km
- Service ceiling: 5,500 metres
- Rate of climb: 12 m/s
- Armament
- 1 × mobile semi-rigid 30 mm Shipunov 2A42 cannon
- Hardpoints: 4 (6 on Ka-52) under-wing hardpoints, plus
- 2 on wingtips for countermeasures or air-to-air missiles
- 80 × 80 mm S-8 rockets and 20 × 122 mm S-13 rocket
- 2 × APU-6 Missile racks, able to accommodate a total of 12 × 9K121 Vikhr anti-tank missiles
- 4 × 250 kg bombs or 2 × 500 kg bombs

5. T129 ATAK

The TAI/AgustaWestland T129 ATAK is a twin-engine, tandem seat, multi-role, all-weather attack helicopter based on the Agusta A129 Mangusta platform.

It was developed by Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) in partnership with Leonardo S.p.A.

The helicopter is designed for armed reconnaissance and attack missions in hot and high environments and rough geography in both day and night conditions.

General characteristics

- Crew: 2
- Length: 14.54 metres
- Height: 3.4 metres
- Weight: 5,056 kg



- Powerplant: 2 × LHTEC CTS800-4A turboshaft, 1,024 kW (1,373 hp) each
- Performance
- Max speed: 281 km/h
- Range: 537 km
- Service ceiling: 4,572 metres
- Rate of climb: 13.26 m/s
- Armament
- 1 × M197 20x102 mm three-barrel rotary cannon
- Hardpoints: 4, with provisions to carry combinations
- of:
- Rockets: maximum 4 pods with 76 70 mm unguided rockets
- 8 (4 × 2) UMTAS: 160 mm UMTAS and L-UMTAS anti-tank guided missiles.
- 16 (4 × 4) Cirit: 70 mm guided missiles
- 8 (2 × 4) Air-to-Air Stinger (ATAS): short range air-to-air missile

4. Eurocopter Tiger

The Eurocopter Tiger is a four-blade, twin-engine attack helicopter which first entered service in 2003.

It is manufactured by Airbus Helicopters which arose from the merger of Aérospatiale's and DASA's respective helicopter divisions. Airbus Helicopters designates it as the EC665. In Germany it is referred to as the Tiger.

General characteristics

- Crew: 2 (pilot and weapon systems officer)
- Length: 14.08 metres
- Height: 3.83 metres
- Empty weight: 3,060 kg
- Powerplant: 2 × MTR MTR390 turboshaft engines, 972 kW (1,303 shp)



- each
- Performance
- Max speed: 290 km/h
- Range: 800 km
- Service ceiling: 4,000 metres
- Rate of climb: 10.7 m/s
- Armament
- 1 × 30 mm (1.18 in) GIAT 30 cannon in chin turret
- 1x 20 mm autocannon pods, or
- 22x 68 mm SNEB unguided rockets in a pod, or
- 19x 70 mm Hydra 70 unguided rockets in a pod or
- 4x PARS 3 LR missiles or
- 4x HOT-3 missiles
- 2x Mistral air-to-air missiles, or
- 2x Air-to-Air Stinger (ATAS) air-to-air missiles (Germany), or
- 12x 68 mm SNEB unguided rockets in a pod or
- 7x 70 mm Hydra 70 unguided rockets in a pod

3. Bell AH-1Z Viper

The Bell AH-1Z Viper is a twin-engine attack helicopter, based on the AH-1W SuperCobra, designed and produced by the American aerospace manufacturer Bell Helicopter.

It is one of the latest members of the prolific Bell Huey family. It is often called “Zulu Cobra”, based on the military phonetic alphabet pronunciation of its variant letter.

The AH-1Z was developed during the 1990s and 2000s as a part of the H-1 upgrade program on behalf of the United States Marine Corps (USMC).

General characteristics

- Crew: Two: pilot and co-pilot/gunner (CPG)
- Length: 17.75 metres
- Height: 4.37 metres



- Empty weight: 15,579 kg
- Powerplant: 2 × General Electric T700-GE-401C turboshaft, 1,800 shp (1,300 kW) each
- Performance
 - Cruise speed: 300 km/h
 - Range: 690 km
 - Service ceiling: 6,100 metres
 - Rate of climb: 14.2 m/s
- Armament
 - 1 × 20 mm M197 three-barreled rotary cannon in the A/A49E-7 turret
 - Hardpoints: 6 total pylon stations on stub wings with provisions to carry combinations of 70 mm) Hydra 70 (unguided) or APKWS II (guided) rockets
 - AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles – one mounted on each wing tip station (two total)
 - AGM-114 Hellfire air-to-surface missiles

2. Mil Mi-28NM Havoc

The Mil Mi-28 (Havoc) is a Soviet all-weather, day-night, military tandem, two-seat anti-armor attack helicopter.

It is an attack helicopter with no intended secondary transport capability, better optimized than the Mil Mi-24 gunship for the role.

It carries a single gun in an undernose barbette, plus external loads carried on pylons beneath stub wings.

It is equipped with two heavily armoured cockpits, a windshield able to withstand 12.7–14.5 mm calibre bullets, in-nose electronics, and a narrow-X tail rotor (55 deg), with reduced noise characteristics.

While the Mi-28 is not intended for use as a transport,



- it does have a small passenger compartment capable of carrying three people. The planned purpose of this is the rescue of downed helicopter crews.
- Performance
 - Cruise speed: 270 km/h
 - Range: 435 km
 - Service ceiling: 5,700 metres
 - Rate of climb: 13.6 m/s
 - Armament
 - 1× chin-mounted 30 mm Shipunov 2A42 cannon
 - Hardpoints: Two pylons under each stub wing to mount bombs, rockets, missiles, and gun pods.

General characteristics

- Crew: 2 (1 pilot, 1 WSO)
- Length: 17.01 metres
- Height: 3.82 metres
- Empty weight: 8,590 kg
- Powerplant: 2 × Klimov TV3-117 turboshaft engines, 1,636 kW (2,194 hp) each

1. AH-64E Apache Guardian

The Boeing AH-64 Apache is an American twin-turboshaft attack helicopter with a tail-wheel-type landing gear and a tandem cockpit for a crew of two.

Nose-mounted sensors help acquire targets and provide night vision. It carries a 30 mm M230 chain gun under its forward fuselage and four hardpoints on stub-wing pylons for armament and stores, typically AGM-114 Hellfire missiles and Hydra 70 rocket pods. Redundant systems help it survive combat damage.

General characteristics

- Crew: 2 (pilot, and co-pilot/gunner)
- Length: 17.73 metres



- Height: 3.87 metres
- Empty weight: 5,165 kg
- Powerplant: 2 × General Electric T700-GE-701 turboshaft engines, 1,690 shp (1,260 kW) each
- Performance
 - Cruise speed: 265 km/h
 - Range: 476 km
 - Service ceiling: 6,100 metres
- Armament
 - 1× 30 mm M230 Chain Gun
 - Hardpoints: Four pylon stations on the stub wings. Longbows also have a station on each wingtip for an AIM-92 Stinger twin missile pack.
 - Hydra 70 70 mm, CRV7 70 mm, and APKWS 70 mm air-to-ground rockets
 - AGM-114 Hellfire variants;
 - Air-to-Air Stinger (ATAS)
 - AGM-65 Maverick and Spike missiles may also be carried.

Springbok



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

Click on the logo to the left to visit the SA Legion website.

Moscow Theatre Hostage Crisis

When Chechen terrorists seized the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow and took 850 people hostage, the Russian Special Forces launched a raid to neutralise the terrorists and rescue the hostages. It resulted in the death of 172 people.

- **Date:** 23–26 October 2002
- **Location:** Moscow, Russia
- **Units involved:** Spetsnaz GRU, SOBR, FSB

Shortly after 21.00 on 23 October 2002, 40–50 heavily armed masked men and women drove in a bus to the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow. The theatre was situated about four kilometres south-east of the Kremlin.

The black-and-camouflage-clad attackers entered the main hall of the theatre, firing assault rifles into the air. They took approximately 850–900 people hostage, including members of the audience and performers, among them an MVD general.

The reaction of spectators inside the theatre to the news that the theatre was under terrorist attack was not uniform: some people remained calm, some reacted hysterically, and others fainted.

Some performers who had been resting backstage escaped through an open window and called the police; in all, some 90 people managed to flee the building or hide.

The terrorist leader told the hostages that the attackers (who identified themselves as a suicide squad from “the 29th Division”) had no grudge against

foreign nationals (about 75 in number from 14 countries, including Australia, Georgia, Germany, the Netherlands, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States) and promised to release anyone who showed a foreign passport.

Demands

The gunmen were led by Movsar Barayev, nephew of slain Chechen rebel militia commander Arbi Barayev, and threatened to kill the hostages unless Russian forces were immediately and unconditionally withdrawn from Chechnya.

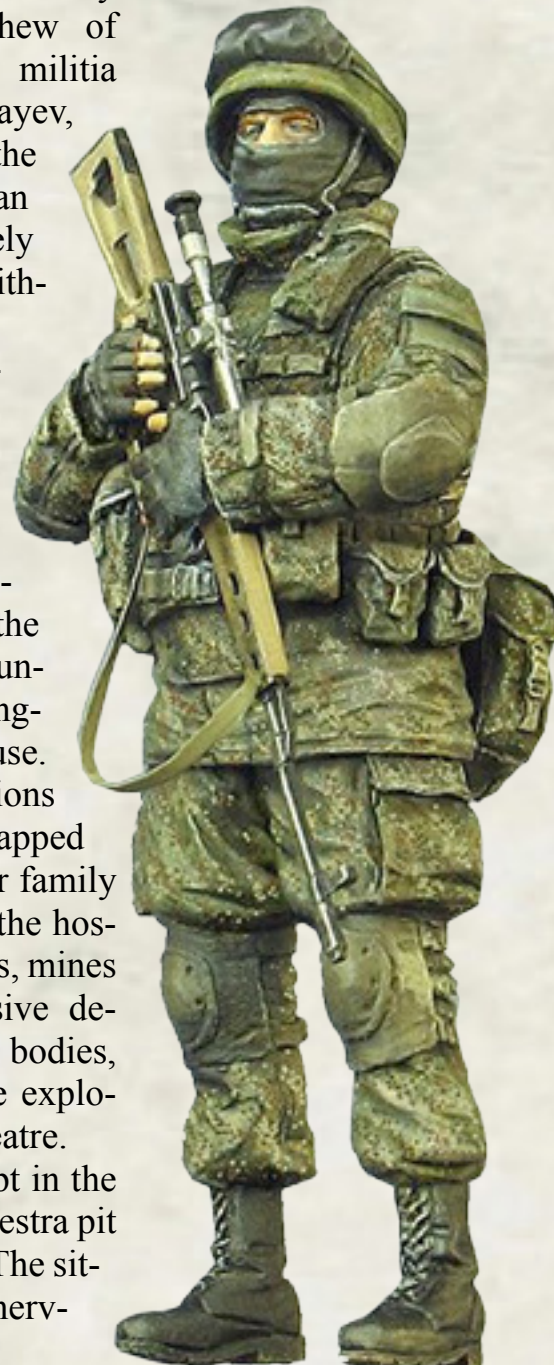
They said the deadline was one week, after which they would start killing the hostages.

A videotaped statement was acquired by the media in which the gunmen declared their willingness to die for their cause. Cell phone conversations between the hostages trapped in the building and their family members revealed that the hostage-takers had grenades, mines and improvised explosive devices strapped to their bodies, and had deployed more explosives throughout the theatre.

All hostages were kept in the auditorium and the orchestra pit was used as a lavatory. The situation in the hall was nerv-

ous and it frequently changed depending on the mood of the hostage-takers, who were following reports in the mass media.

Any kind of misinformation caused hopelessness among the hostages and new aggression among their captors, who would threaten to shoot hostages



es and blow up the building, but no major incidents took place during the siege.

The gunmen let members of the audience make phone calls. One hostage used her mobile phone to plead with authorities not to storm the auditorium, as truckloads of police and soldiers with armoured vehicles surrounded the building.

Day One - 23 October

The attackers released 150 to 200 people, including children, pregnant women, Muslims, some foreign-born theatre-goers and people requiring medical treatment in the early hours after they invaded. Two women managed to escape (one of them was injured while escaping).

The terrorists said they were ready to kill ten hostages for any of their number killed if the security forces intervened.

At 01:30 Olga Romanova, a 26-year-old civilian acting on her own, entered the theatre, crossing the police cordon by herself.

She entered the theatre and began urging the hostages to stand up to their captors. There was considerable confusion in the auditorium.

The terrorists believed she was a Federal Security Service (FSB) agent and she was shot and killed seconds later.

Romanova's body was later removed from the building by a Russian medical team, incorrectly reported by the Moscow police as the body of the first hostage who was killed while trying to escape.

Romanova was described as “strong-willed”, and lived near the theatre. It is unknown how

she crossed the police lines undetected.

Day Two - 24 October

The Russian government offered the hostage-takers the opportunity to leave for any country other than Russia or Chechnya if they released all hostages unharmed.

The hostages made an appeal, possibly under orders or duress, for Putin to cease hostilities in Chechnya and asked him to refrain from assaulting the building.

According to the FSB, thirty-nine hostages were set free by the terrorists on 24 October 2002, but they repeated via one of the hostages an earlier threat to start shooting their captives if Russia failed to take their demands seriously.

Negotiations on the release of non-Russian nationals were conducted by various embassies and the Chechens promised to release all foreign hostages. The kidnappers claimed they were ready to release 50 Russian hostages if Akhmad Kadyrov, head of Chechnya's pro-Moscow administration, would come to the theatre, but Kadyrov did not respond, and the release did not take place.

A hot water pipe burst overnight and was flooding the ground floor. The hostage-takers called the flooding a “provocation” and an FSB spokesman said no agreement had been reached on having the pipe repaired. It later turned out that the sewer system was used by the Russian special forces for listening purposes.

Day Three - 25 October

The terrorists demanded negotiations with an official representative of Vladimir Putin. Relatives of the hostages staged anti-war demonstrations outside the theatre and in central Moscow.

The hostage-takers agreed to release seventy-five foreign citizens in the presence of diplomatic representatives of their states. 15 Russian citizens were released, including eight children (aged 7 to 13). After a meeting with Putin, the FSB head Nikolai Patrushev offered to spare the lives of the Chechens if they released the remaining hostages unharmed.

A group of Russian doctors including Dr. Leonid Roshal, head of the Medical Centre for Catastrophes, entered the theatre to bring medicine for the hostages and said the terrorists were not beating or threatening their captives. He said most of the hostages were calm and that only “two or three” of the hostages were hysterical. Some hot food, warm clothes, and medicine had also been taken in by the Red Cross.

NTV channel journalists recorded an interview with Movsar Barayev, in which he sent a message to the Russian government:

“We have nothing to lose. We have already covered 2,000 kilometres by coming here. There is no way back... We have come to die. Our motto is freedom and paradise. We already have freedom as we've come to Moscow. Now we want to be in paradise.”

He also said the group had come to Moscow not to kill the

hostages or to fight with Russia's elite troops, as they had had enough fighting in Chechnya over the years: *"We came here with a specific aim – to put an end to the war and that is it."*

At 21:55, four hostages (citizens of Azerbaijan) were released, bringing the total number of hostages that were set free on that day to 19.

Day Four - 26 October

During the night, Akhmed Zakayev, a Chechen envoy and associate of the separatist President Aslan Maskhadov, appealed to the extremists and asked them to "refrain from rash steps".

The Chechens told the BBC that a special representative of President Putin planned to come to the theatre for talks the next day.

Two members of the Spetsnaz Alpha Group moving around in the no-man's land were seriously wounded by a grenade fired from the building by the terrorists, which was blamed by the Moscow police chief Vladimir Pronin on the media news leak.

According to an officer in the Russian special forces cited by The Guardian, the leak was controlled: *"We leaked the information that the storming would take place at three in the morning. The Chechen fighters were on their guard. They began shooting, but there was no raid. Then there was the natural reaction – a relaxation. And at 05.00 we stormed the place."*

Special Forces Raid

Early Saturday morning, 26 October, forces from Russia's Spetsnaz (Special Forces, lit-

erally "special purpose") from the FSB (Alpha Group and Vympel), with the assistance of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) SOBR unit, surrounded and stormed the theatre; all were heavily armed and masked.

Deputy Interior Minister Vladimir Vasilyev stated that the raid was prompted by a panic among the captives due to the execution of two female hostages.

The raid was planned shortly after the hostages were initially seized and the shooting cited as a proximate cause had occurred about three hours before the operation began.

Chemical Attack

Early in the morning before dawn, at around 05:00 Moscow time, the searchlights that had been illuminating the main entrance to the theatre went out.

Inside, although many hostages at first took the gas (aerosol) to be smoke from a fire, it soon became apparent to gunmen and hostages alike that a mysterious gas had been pumped into the building.

Different reports said it came either through the specially created hole in the wall, that it was pumped through the theatre's ventilation system, or that it emerged from beneath the stage.

The security services pumped an aerosol anaesthetic, later stated by Russian Health Minister Yuri Shevchenko to be based on fentanyl, into the theatre through the air conditioning system.

The discovery caused panic in the auditorium. Hostage Anna

Andrianova, a correspondent for *Moskovskaya Pravda*, called Echo of Moscow radio studio and told on-air in a live broadcast interview that the government forces had begun an operation by pumping gas into the hall:

"It seems to us that the Russians have started something. Please, give us a chance. If you can do anything, please do! ... I don't know which gas it is. But I see [the Chechens'] reactions. They don't want our deaths, and our officials want none of us to leave alive! I don't know. We see it, we feel it, we are breathing through our clothes. ... It began from outside. That's what our government has decided – that no one should leave from here alive."

Assault

The Chechens, some of whom were equipped with gas masks, responded by firing blindly at the Russian positions outside.

After thirty minutes, when the gas had taken effect, a physical assault on the building commenced. The combined forces entered through numerous building openings, including the roof, the basement, and finally the front door.

When the shooting began, the terrorists told their hostages to lean forward in the theatre seats and cover their heads behind the seats. Hostages reported that some people in the audience fell asleep, and some of the gunmen put on respirators.

As the terrorists and hostages alike began to fall unconscious, several of the female terrorists made a dash for the balcony but passed out before they reached



AFTERMATH: Members of the Spetsnaz assault team carry hostages from the theatre after an assault was carried out. Many of the hostages are unconscious as a result of the gas.

the stairs. They were later found shot dead. Two of the Spetsnaz Alpha Group were also overcome by the gas.

After nearly one and a half hours of sporadic gun battles, the Russian special forces blew open the doors to the main hall and poured into the auditorium.

In a fierce firefight, the federals killed most of the hostage-takers, both those still awake and those who had succumbed to the gas.

According to the Russian government, fighting between the troops and the still-conscious Chechen fighters continued in other parts of the building for another 30 minutes to one hour.

Initial reports stated that three terrorists were captured alive (the BBC reported that a "handful of surviving fighters were led away in handcuffs") and two of them managed to escape. Later, the government claimed that all hostage-takers had been killed in the storming.

Alpha team troops said that *"this is our first successful operation [in] years"*. Moskovskij

Komsomolets cited a Russian special forces operative saying that *"if it were a usual storming, we'd have had 150 casualties among our men, added to the hostages."*

Evacuation

At 7:00 a.m., rescuers began carrying the bodies of hostages out of the building. Bodies were laid in rows in the foyer and on the pavement at the main entrance to the TC, unprotected from falling rain and snow.

None of the bodies witnessed by The Guardian correspondent Nick Paton Walsh had bullet wounds or showed signs of bleeding, but *"their faces were waxy, white and drawn, their eyes open and blank."*

Shortly, the entire space was filled with bodies of the dead and those unconscious from the gas but still alive.

Ambulances were standing by and ordinary city buses were brought in. Medical workers were expecting to treat victims of explosions and gunfire but not a secret chemical agent.

If the drug used was indeed a fentanyl derivative or other μ -opioid receptor agonist, an opioid receptor antagonist drug like naloxone would have counteracted the chemical agent's effects, but would have had to be administered by rescue workers immediately upon arriving. Some reports said the drug was used to save some hostages.

Seventy-three hostages (including six minors) were rendered no medical aid. There were several Chechens among the hostages and it may be that some of them were not treated because of their Chechen names.

Money and other valuables belonging to the victims vanished; official reports stated that the valuables were stolen by an FSB officer who was later killed in a car crash.

The Russian authorities initially maintained that none of the deaths among the hostages occurred through poisoning.

They spoke of health problems that were exacerbated by the three-day ordeal with very little food or water, or indeed, medical attention.

Casualties

The number of estimated casualties varies widely because many hostages remained unaccounted for and were not included in the official list.

Some estimates have put the civilian death toll at more than 200 with 204 names on one list, or even 300, including people who died during the year after the siege from complications from the poison gas.

Some former hostages and relatives of the victims claim

that the death toll from the chemical agent is being kept secret. According to official numbers, 40 terrorists and about 130 hostages died during the raid or in the following days.

Aftermath

After the raid, Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov said that “the operation was carried out brilliantly by special forces;” he claimed he had wanted a negotiated end to the crisis, but the final attack was made necessary by the reported killing of hostages.

The Russian presidential special envoy for human rights in Chechnya, Abdul-Khakim Sultygov, said the bloody outcome was “a good lesson to the terrorists and their accomplices.”

Russian President Vladimir Putin defended the scale and violence of the assault in a tele-

vised address later on the morning of 26 October, stating that the government had “achieved the near impossible, saving hundreds... of people” and that the rescue “proved it is impossible to bring Russia to its knees.”

Investigation

The official investigation that the Moscow City Prosecutor’s Office had been carrying out for three and a half years failed to provide positive information on the gas agent that killed hostages, possible antidote to that agent, the number of hostages released by the operation, the number of militants who had seized the theatre (hostages claimed that they saw more than 50 militants, whereas only 40 hostage takers were in the building according to the official version), and the names of

officials who had made the decision about the assault.

On 1 June 2007, news came that the official investigation had been suspended. The reason provided was that the “culprit had not been located”.

The same month, Tatiana Karpova, co-chair of the Nord-Ost Organization of former hostages and families of the dead, demanded a new criminal investigation.

She claimed the authorities failed to meet their obligations related to right to life. She stated her concern about the lack of medical care for the injured, and future medical problems for the survivors.

In July 2007, relatives of those who died in the hostage-taking urged the Office of the Prosecutor General of Russia to investigate whether senior officials were responsible for the deaths.

Spetsnaz weapons



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

A ticket to ride

They say that getting there is half the fun. This wasn't particularly true for those setting off on their initial journey to report for national service. Getting there was more often than not anything but fun.

Every January and July, thousands of young, white South African males would gather at various assembly points throughout the country. Approximately 40,000 were called up each year. They would come from all parts of the country, and from all social environments.

The SADF did not discriminate about things like education or social standing. If you were white and a male, they wanted you.

In 1977, David was 19 and busy with his national service. He was a corporal at 5 South African Infantry Battalion in Ladysmith, Natal, and took a group of recruits for basic training in 1977. David takes up the story.

I was one of those who had to go down to Durban to fetch the January 1977 intake for 5 SAI. The army used to hire a train from the railways for the occasion.

There were a few hundred of them and it was fascinating to watch some of their reactions. Some of them were trying to look tough or cool. Others had no pretences at all and looked

totally shattered.

For a large percentage of them it would be their first time away from home. Many of the mothers and girlfriends were bawling their eyes out.

I can remember this one mother who really made a scene. She wasn't just crying, she was wailing and screaming. 'You can't take my little boy,' she sobbed. 'He's much too sensitive.'

She was begging anyone and everyone who was wearing a uniform, telling them that her son just couldn't go. Of course we were not really interested in her crap.

When we arrived at Ladysmith the recruits from Durban and from the rest of the country were then divided into companies. They were then further broken down into platoons

and sections.

I had some really interesting characters in my section. One of my guys was slightly older than the rest. He had received a deferment from national service and had first gone to university to study for a Bachelor of Science degree.

Now compare him to one of the other guys in my section who was a farm boy with a standard one education. This guy could hardly read or write.

More often than not, recruits from the larger cities would be transported by train to the units where they would be doing their basic training. These trains would be provided by South African Railways, which was owned by the state.

Few people who experienced it will ever forget that initial train trip that took them to their unit to begin national service.

You didn't really know what to expect. Of course you had all heard stories from friends who were already doing their national service or who had just completed it. Yet these did nothing to quell the nerves. If anything, they just made you more apprehensive.

If you were lucky there would be someone on the train that had been to the same school as you. Even if it were someone you had never spoken to at school, you would still try and sit together. Misery loves company.

More often than not though, you would be stuck on the train with a bunch of total strangers.

Edward was 17 when he was called up to 5 SAI in Ladysmith in January 1980. This is what he

remembers about his train trip.

I guess that until I went into the army I had led a very sheltered life. I grew up in a good neighbourhood in Johannesburg and went to a private school. I was a prefect at school and was also a member of the chess club and the debating society.

I was also very involved in our church youth group and all of my friends were from the same background as I was.

When we boarded the train at Johannesburg station I was put in a compartment with five other guys. I remember that two of them were from the south of Johannesburg and another was a small Portuguese speaking guy from Bez Valley.

There was this one bloke in the compartment that I will never forget. He was from Hillbrow and was the vilest creature I had ever laid eyes on at the time.

He had long greasy black hair and his face had this permanent snarl on it. He was wearing really dirty jeans and a black tee shirt with no sleeves. His arms were covered in tattoos and even his fingernails were filthy.

Two of his habits were most charming. First of all he chain smoked, flicking his ash all over the floor of our compartment, and he also spat a great deal. He kept on spitting out of the window and even spat on the floor a few times. I was totally disgusted.

When he did speak, every second word out of his mouth was a swear word.

About half an hour after the train had left Johannesburg, he reached into his bag and took out a half bottle of cheap brandy. Then he drank it straight

from the bottle, within a few minutes. I couldn't believe my eyes.

Not long after he had finished his brandy he started getting very aggressive. He was cursing and swearing at the army and said that he didn't give a damn about them or about anyone. He tried to pick a fight with all of us in the compartment and really became loud.

Two of the army guys on the train came into the compartment and told him to shut up. Then he started abusing them and threatening them.

They left and returned shortly afterwards with a staff sergeant from the military police. This guy then started threatening this staff sergeant. That was a mistake.

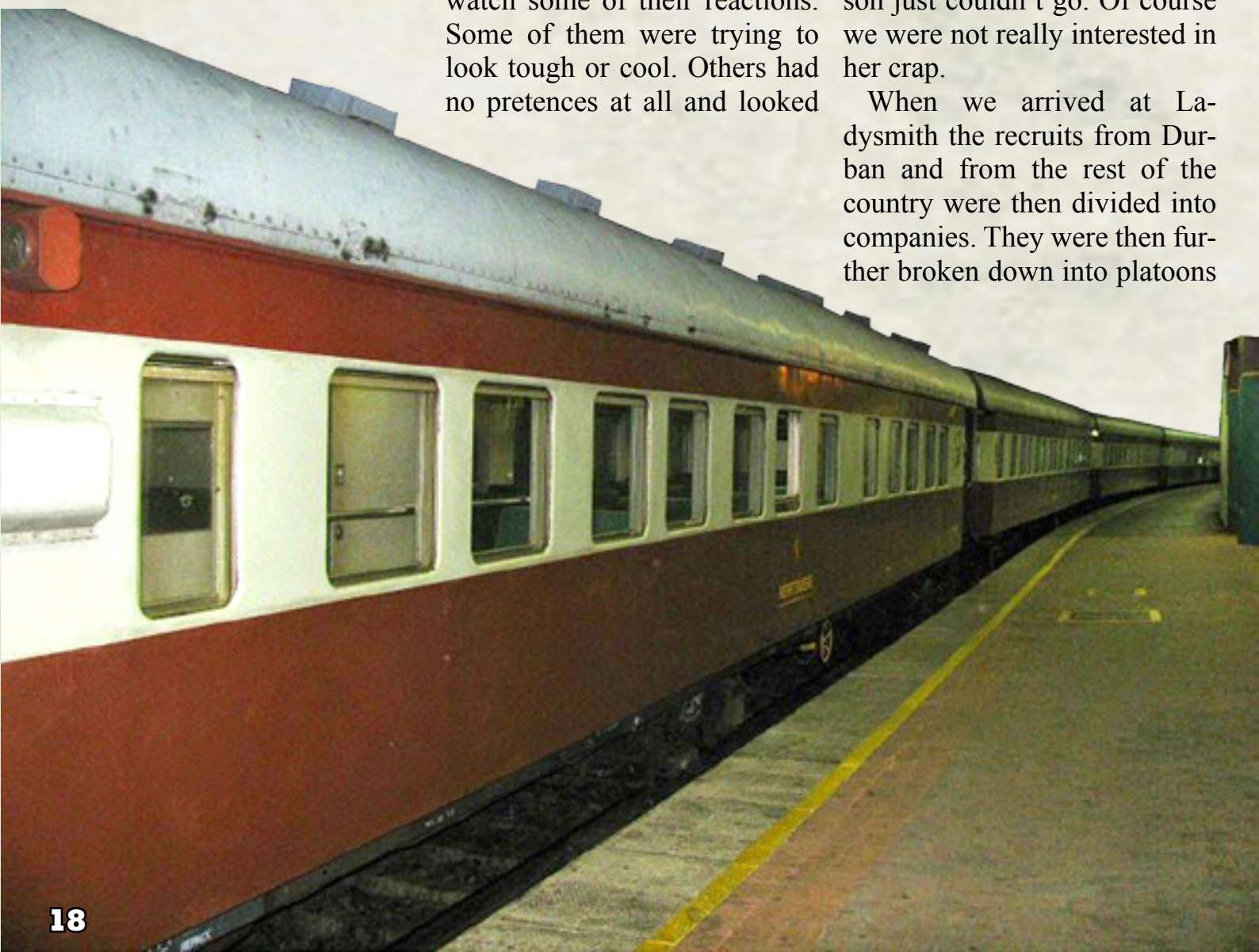
The staff sergeant was not the smallest person I had ever seen. He didn't say a word, just hit the guy with an open hand. The slap knocked this guy straight off his feet. The other two army guys picked him up and took him away.

I don't know where they took him, but I didn't see him for the rest of the trip. In fact I can't recall ever seeing him after that.

I didn't sleep at all and was still awake when we arrived in Ladysmith at about two the following morning. I was horrified, I really was.

Was this the type of person I would be spending the next two years of my life with? I really didn't know if I could handle it. All I wanted to do right then was get off the train and go home. I just wasn't ready for it.

When I look back at it now I still have mixed feeling about it. There were some incidents



that I would rather not remember. Yet I must admit that I grew up a lot in the army. I also made some good friends who I still keep in touch with.

Mark was 18 and had just completed his matric when was called up to Voortrekkerhoogte. He also remembers his train trip.

I was from Cape Town and had been called up to Technical Services in Pretoria.

Before we got on the train the army guys weren't too bad to us. Once we boarded the train it was a different story.

I was in a compartment with five other guys, none of whom I knew from a bar of soap. The train had these metal shutters on the windows and we had to keep them up for the entire trip. So you couldn't even look out the window at the scenery.

The reason for this, I later learnt, was so that the enemy could not look into the train and see how many troops were on board. How ridiculous was that?

We also had to keep the door to our compartment open the entire time. The only time you could leave your compartment was to go to the toilet.

The corridors were filled with corporals and military police. If one of them walked into your compartment, which for some reason they often did, you would have to jump to your feet.

The train left Cape Town at about midday and we must have stopped at every little station where more conscripts boarded the train.

At about 6.30 that evening

some guy came around and we were all given a styrofoam cup. Then about half an hour later they came around with supper. We were all given a cup of coffee and two sandwiches.

The coffee was really shit. It was really cheap instant coffee with milk powder and sugar already put into it. We each received one cheese sandwich and one polony sandwich. The cheese was rock hard and the bread was stale.

A corporal walked into our compartment and we all jumped up. He asked us how we were enjoying the supper. One of the guys in my compartment explained that he was a diabetic and he couldn't drink the coffee because it had too much sugar in it. The corporal just picked up the cup and poured the coffee over the guy's head.

"Well don't drink it then," the corporal smirked.

You may think I'm joking, but that is really what happened.

We were given no blankets or anything. You just slept on the bunk just like that. When we put the lights out I lay on the top bunk and began to cry. I must have been about ten-years-old the last time I cried. But at that moment I felt homesick, alone and more than a bit scared.

We didn't get much sleep that night. Every so often a corporal or MP would walk into the compartment and switch on the lights and we would all have to jump up again. This carried on almost the entire night.

For breakfast the next morning we were given coffee, a banana and a boiled egg. My banana was *vrot* (rotten) and the inside of my egg was blue.

I wasn't really hungry but I ate it anyway because I didn't want to get into trouble.

We arrived in Pretoria at about three that afternoon and then the fun really began.

Yet there were some people that actually enjoyed the trip. Corne was 17 and he was one of them.

I grew up in a small town in the middle of nowhere. I was the eldest of eight children. I had four brothers and three sisters.

I left school after finishing standard eight and was called up for national service at 1 SAI in Bloemfontein.

I had to catch the train from where I lived and it was a train that travelled between Windhoek and De Aar.

The train arrived just after lunch time. It was a normal passenger train but there were seven guys from Windhoek on the train who would also be going to Bloemfontein. There was also a corporal and I guess he was there to look after us and make sure we behaved.

We had two compartments to ourselves. There were four of us in one compartment and four in the other. Each compartment could sleep six people. There were two lower bunks, two middle bunks and two top bunks.

The corporal had his own room. It was called a *coupé* and was half the size of a compartment with only three bunks.

Now you must realise that this was the first time I was travelling on a train. My family had never been able to afford to go anywhere on holiday and



YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW: An intake reports for national service at the Castle in Cape Town. From here they would be sent to various units around the country. Photo from the mid-1970s.

this was the first time I had even been out of my town. This was a huge adventure and I was really excited.

The other guys were friendly and we all got along well. Even the corporal was cool. He was a permanent force guy, but he was friendly and relaxed.

That evening we all went through to the dining car for supper. We were served by guys in white jackets and it was a seven course meal. There was soup, fish, meat and even pudding afterwards. I had never eaten such a fancy meal, not even at Christmas time.

When we went back to our compartment the beds had been made up. I wanted a middle bunk. I turned the blankets and pillow around so that it was facing the window.

I spent a good portion of the night just lying and looking out of the window.

The next morning we went through to breakfast and again

it was excellent. There was orange juice, cereal, eggs, bacon, mushrooms, toast and coffee.

After breakfast we sat in our compartment and chatted. Some of the guys played cards. I was happy just to sit and look out of the window.

The lunch was really good, and so was the supper later that evening.

The next morning we had breakfast and the train arrived in De Aar just after 10.00.

We waited on the station for about two hours. We were joined on the platform by about a dozen other guys that were also going to Bloemfontein.

Most of them were also going to 1 SAI, but three of them were going to 1 SSB. It was an armoured car place and was also in Bloemfontein.

A train arrived and this was a special troop train that had come from Cape Town. There were quite a lot of guys on it. There wasn't a dining car on

this train and for lunch we were given two sandwiches.

We arrived in Bloemfontein later that evening and there were trucks waiting to take us through to our base.

I must say that I really enjoyed that initial train trip and it was something that stuck with me to this day.

In the more than forty years since I finished my national service I've been on many train trips. I later moved to Johannesburg and for about ten years I would take my wife and two children down to Cape Town on holiday. And we would always travel on the Trans Karoo train between Johannesburg and Cape Town.

I've also been fortunate enough to travel with my wife from Pretoria to Cape Town and back on the Blue Train. Two years ago we travelled from Cape Town, where I now live, to Pretoria on Rovos Rail.

When I retired my wife and I did a tour of Europe. While we were there we went from Venice to Paris on the Orient Express.

Now I know that many people that did national service do not have fond memories of their first train trip in the army. Yet I enjoyed that first trip of mine.

Next month we will take a look at some experiences of reader's first week in the military.



Tank Destroyers (Part Two)

Last month we looked at German tank destroyers of World War II. In this second part we will examine the tank destroyers of America.

As we saw in Part One of this article, the tank destroyer was very much a product of the military and economic developments peculiar to World War II. The Germans took the lead in the design and production of tank destroyers and by the end of the war has designed and

produced no fewer than nine tank destroyers. These included the iconic Nashorn, Elefant, Jagdpanther, and the 72-tonne Jagdtiger. This last vehicle was the heaviest armoured fighting vehicle (AFV) used operationally by any nation in WWII and the heaviest combat vehicle of any

type to be produced during the conflict. Yet other nations would go on to design and produce their own tanks destroyers. For example, the Americans had seven. The British had xxx, while the Italians produced xxx, and the Russians xxx.

M18 Hellcat

The M18 Hellcat (officially designated the 76 mm Gun Motor Carriage M18 or M18 GMC) is a tank destroyer that was used by the United States Army in World War II and the Korean War.

Despite being equipped with the same main gun as some variants of the much larger Sherman tank, the M18 attained a much higher top speed of up to 89 km/h by keeping armour to a minimum, and using the innovative Torqmatic automatic transmission.

The M18 Hellcat was the culmination of the development of various prototypes of fast tank destroyers dating back to 1941. Entering production in summer 1943, the M18 first saw combat service in spring 1944.

The M18 served primarily in Western Europe, but was also present in smaller numbers in Italy and the Pacific. Production continued until October 1944, with 2,507 built.

The Hellcat was the most effective U.S. tank destroyer of

World War II. It had a higher kill-to-loss ratio than any other tank or tank destroyer fielded by U.S. forces in World War II. Kills claimed were 526 in total: 498 in Europe, 17 in Italy, and 11 in the Pacific. The kills-to-losses ratio for Europe was 2.3 to 1, and the overall kill to loss ratio was 2.4 to 1.

M18s were "...not primarily used for tank fighting, but were committed more often to improvised roles, usually direct fire support for infantry."

Although the M18 was re-

tired from U.S. service immediately after the end of World War II, a variant, the M39 Armoured Utility Vehicle, served in the Korean War, and M18s continued in service with some countries until 1995.

The M18 Hellcat was an example of the balancing act between firepower, armour, and mobility in armoured fighting vehicle design.

Despite its excellent mobility and reasonably powerful main gun, the M18 Hellcat also had drawbacks, including thin ar-

mour and a poor high explosive shell for its main gun.

Specifications

- Weight: 17.036 t
- Length: 5.28 metres
- Width: 2.87 metres
- Height: 2.57 metres

- Crew: 5 (Commander, gunner, loader, driver, assistant driver)
- Armour: 4.8–25.4 mm
- Main armament: 76 mm gun
- Secondary armament: 12.7 mm Browning M2HB machine gun

- Engine: Continental R975-C1 350 hp (260 kW)
- Operational range: 160 km on road
- Maximum speed: 89 km/h on road; 42 km/h off road

M3 Gun Motor Carriage

The M3 Gun Motor Carriage (GMC) was a United States Army tank destroyer equipped with a 75 mm M1897A4 gun, which was built by the Autocar Company during World War II.

After observing the new and often decisive, uses of armored vehicles on both sides during the French campaign of 1940, the US Army decided that it required a 75 mm self-propelled gun, based on the chassis of the M3 Half-track.

This was initially known as the T12. However, after the addition of features such as the gun shield from the M2A3 (a carriage for the M1897A4), the new vehicle entered production under the name M3 Gun Motor Carriage (or M3 GMC).

Because the number of M2A3 gun shields available was insufficient for the M3 GMC order, a new gun shield was designed. Variants featuring the new shield were designated M3A1 GMC.

The T12/M3 first served in the Philippines Campaign in 1942 with the Provisional Field Artillery Brigade in the anti-tank and the fire-support role. It then served in North Africa in tank destroyer battalions.

It was used ineffectively in the Battle of Kasserine Pass and several other engagements, but was used with success in the



Battle of El Guettar.

It also served in the Allied invasion of Sicily, but was eventually superseded by the M10 tank destroyer.

A total of 2,203 were produced, of which 1,361 were converted back into M3A1 half-tracks.

The M3 GMC also served in the Pacific theatre, starting with the Battle of Saipan. It proved effective against the Japanese Type 95 Ha-Go and Type 97 Chi-Ha tanks. It later served in the Battle of Okinawa, the Battle of Peleliu and many other island battles.

Specifications

- Weight: 9.1 t
- Length: 6.24 metres
- Width: 2.22 metres
- Height: 2.49 metres
- Crew: 5 (commander, gun-

ner, two loaders, and a driver)

- Armour: 6.4–15.9 mm
- Main armament: 75 mm M1897 gun
- Secondary armament: 12.7 mm Browning M2HB machine gun
- Engine: White 160AX, 386 in3 (6,330 cc), 6-cylinder, 147 hp (110 kW)
- Operational range: 240 km
- Maximum speed: 75 km/h

The M3 was often fitted with a 40 mm anti-aircraft gun. The M13 was a M3 armed with two 12,7 mm M2HB heavy-barrel Browning machine guns.

The M16 used the M3 chassis but was armed with four 12,7 mm M2 Browning machine guns in an M45 Quadmount.

M6 Gun Motor Carriage

The 37 mm Gun Motor Carriage M6, also known as M6 Fargo, and under the manufacturer (Dodge)'s designation WC55, was a modified Dodge WC52 light truck mounting a light anti-tank gun.

It was used by the United States Army for infantry support and as a mobile anti-tank gun.

It operated from late 1942 to January 1945 in the Mediterranean, European, and Pacific theatres of World War II.

The M6 saw limited use during the war, and was poorly suited to modern warfare as it was unarmoured and was armed with a too small calibre



gun. Being required to back into firing positions rather than forward firing proved to be a deficiency.

Specifications

- Weight: 3,330 kg
- Length: 4.52 metres
- Width: 2.24 metres
- Height: 2.11 metres

- Crew: 4 (Commander, gunner, loader, driver)
- Armour: 0.34 mm gun shield
- Main armament: 37 mm gun
- Engine: Dodge T-214 6 cylinder 4-cycle in-line gasoline engine 99 hp (74 kW)
- Operational range: 290 km
- Maximum speed: 89 km/h

M36 tank destroyer

The M36 tank destroyer, formally 90 mm Gun Motor Carriage, M36, was an American tank destroyer used during World War II.

The M36 combined the hull of the M10 tank destroyer, which used the M4 Sherman's reliable chassis and drive-train combined with sloped armour, and a new turret mounting the 90 mm gun M3.

Conceived in 1943, the M36 first served in combat in Europe in October 1944, where it partially replaced the M10 tank destroyer.

It also saw use in the Korean War, where it was able to defeat any of the Soviet tanks used in that conflict. Some were supplied to South Korea as part of the Military Assistance Program and served for years, as did re-engined examples found in Yugoslavia, which operated



into the 1990s.

Two remained in service with the Republic of China Army at least until 2001.

The M36 was well-liked by its crews, being one of the few armoured fighting vehicles available to US forces that could destroy heavy German tanks from a distance

The vehicle is also known under the unofficial nickname Jackson, but this designation

appears to be a postwar appellation that was never used by the US Army.

Specifications

- Weight: 29 t
- Length: 9.97 metres
- Width: 3.05 metres
- Height: 3.28 metres
- Crew: 5 (Commander, gunner, loader, driver, assistant driver)
- Armour: 9.5 to 127.0 mm

- Main armament: 90 mm gun
- Secondary armament: 12.7 mm Browning M2HB machine gun

- Engine: Ford GAA V8 gasoline engine 450 hp (340 kW)

- Operational range: 240 km
- Maximum speed: 42 km/h

T28 Super Heavy Tank

If you've never seen a photograph of a T28 in action, or you've never even heard of it - don't be alarmed. After all, they only ever produced two of them.

The T28 Super Heavy Tank was an American super-heavy tank/assault gun designed for the United States Army during World War II.

It was originally designed to break through German defences of the Siegfried Line and was later considered as a possible participant in the planned invasion of the Japanese mainland.

The near 100-ton vehicle was initially designated a heavy tank. It was re-designated as the 105 mm Gun Motor Carriage T95 in 1945, and then renamed



in 1946 as the Super Heavy Tank T28.

Only two prototypes were built before the project was terminated.

Specifications

- Weight: 86.2 metric tons
- Length: 11.1 metres
- Width: 4.39 metres
- Height: 2.84 metres
- Crew: 4

- Armour: 305 mm
- Main armament: 105 mm T5E1 gun
- Secondary armament: 12.7 mm Browning heavy machine gun
- Engine: Ford GAF V-8 gasoline 500 hp (372 kW)
- Operational range: 160 km
- Maximum speed: 13 km/h

T40/M9 Tank Destroyer

The 76 mm Gun Motor Carriage T40, later given the production model number M9 was a US tank destroyer (a self-propelled anti-tank gun), of the early part of World War II.

It mounted a 76 mm anti-aircraft gun on a M3 Medium Tank hull. A small production run of 50 tanks was planned in 1942.

This was cancelled due to the unavailability of suitable guns, and the entry into production of a similar vehicle, the far superior M10 tank destroyer.

Specifications

- Weight: 33 tons
- Length: 5.65 metres
- Width: 2.70 metres



- Height: 3.12 metres
- Crew: 5
- Main armament: 76 mm M1918
- Engine: Wright R975 EC2

- Maximum speed: 40 km/h

M10 tank destroyer

The M10 tank destroyer, formally 3-inch Gun Motor Carriage M10, or M10 GMC was an American tank destroyer of World War II.

After US entry into World War II and the formation of the Tank Destroyer Force, a suitable vehicle was needed to equip the new battalions.

By November 1941, the Army requested a vehicle with a gun in a fully rotating turret after other interim models were criticized for being too poorly designed. The prototype of the M10 was conceived in early 1942 and delivered in April that year.

After appropriate changes to the hull and turret were made, the modified version was selected for production in June 1942 as the “3-inch Gun Motor Carriage M10”. It mounted the

76.2 mm gun M7 in a rotating turret on a modified M4 Sherman tank chassis.

It was built in two variants. The M10 GMC used the M4A2 Sherman chassis and the M10A1 used the M4A3 chassis. Production of the two models ran from September 1942 to December 1943 and October 1942 to November 1943, respectively.

The M10 was numerically the most important U.S. tank destroyer of World War II. It combined thin but sloped armour with the M4’s reliable drivetrain and a reasonably potent anti-tank gun mounted in an open-topped turret.

Despite its obsolescence in the face of newer German tanks like the Panther and the introduction of more powerful and better-designed types as replacements, the M10 remained

in service until the end of the war.

During World War II, the primary user of the M10 tank destroyer was the United States, but many were Lend-Leased to the United Kingdom, Canada and Free French forces.

Several dozen were also sent to the Soviet Union. Post-war, the M10 was given as military surplus to several countries, such as Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands, through the Mutual Defence Assistance Act or acquired through other means by countries like Israel and the Republic of China.

The M10 is often referred to by the nickname “Wolverine”, an unofficial name that sometimes appeared in wartime Chrysler advertising, but that was not used by U.S. troops; the M10 was never officially assigned a nickname or re-

ferred to with one when used by American soldiers, who simply called it a “TD” (a nickname for any tank destroyer in general) beyond its formal designation.

Despite not adhering strictly to the tank destroyer doctrine, the M10 still achieved impressive scores against enemy tanks. A US Army study of 39 tank destroyer battalions found that each destroyed, on average, 34 tanks, 17 towed guns, and 16 pillboxes.

The tank destroyer battalions in the Third Army claimed the destruction of 686 tanks and 238 self-propelled guns.

The highest-scoring tank destroyer battalion in the European Theatre, the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, claimed

to have destroyed 113 panzers, including 27 Panthers and 18 Tigers, using towed guns and M10s. The 773rd Tank Destroyer Battalion also claimed to have destroyed 113 panzers, with the 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion claiming 103. The 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, which fought in North Africa, Italy, and Europe, claimed to have knocked out 155 tanks and self-propelled guns.

Tank destroyers in the European Theatre fired approximately 11 high-explosive (HE) rounds for every round of armour-piercing (AP) ammunition, an indication of their use in general support duties in addition to the intended mission of anti-tank defence.

Specifications

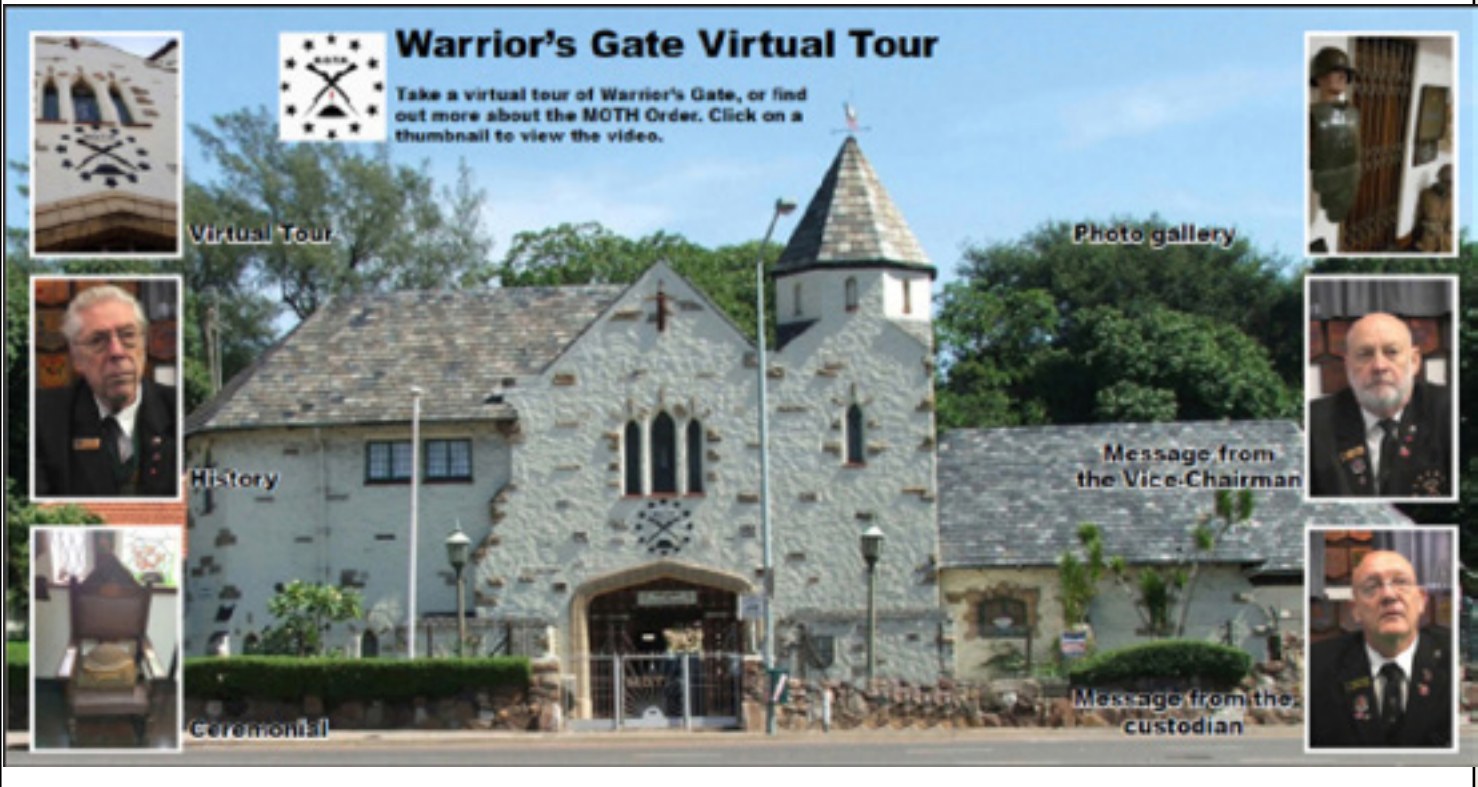
- Weight: 29 t
- Length: 5.97 metres
- Width: 3.05 metres
- Height: 2.90 metres
- Crew: 5 (Commander, gunner, loader, driver, assistant driver)
- Armour: 9.5 to 57.2 mm
- Main armament: 76.2 mm M7
- Secondary armament: 12.7 mm Browning M2HB machine gun
- Engine: General Motors 6046 twin diesel 375 hp (280 kW)
- Operational range: 320 km
- Maximum speed: 48 km/h on road





Memorable Order of Tin Hats

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



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

I could march to that

Every month we do a movie review in *Military Despatches*. This month we're taking a look at music from some classic war movies. Click on the underlined blue links below to listen to the actual songs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The [Guns of Navarone](#) was

another movie set in World War Two.

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

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

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

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

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

Apocalypse Now was a movie set during the Vietnam War.

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

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

On the subject of *Apocalypse*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One of the unique songs



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

involved in the real battle depicted in the movie.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They renamed it [Kaarina](#).

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

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

It was another song that cracked the charts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Führersonderzug

While air travel was the quickest method of travel during World War II, it was not the safest. Travelling by train was not only safer, it was far more comfortable. Naturally German leader Adolf Hitler had his own personal train.

Even during World War II the quickest method of travelling from Point A to Point B was via aircraft.

Yet while it may have been the fastest mode of transport, it was not the safest.

Any aircraft runs the risk of being attacked by an enemy aircraft. This is particularly true for slower flying transport aircraft such as the Junkers Ju 52 used by the German Luftwaffe throughout the war.

The Ju 52, nicknamed *Tante Ju* ("Aunt Ju"), had a service ceiling of 5,900 metres and a top speed of 276.8 km/h. Compare this to something like a

Royal Air Force Supermarine Spitfire.

The Spitfire has a service ceiling of 11,100 metres and a top speed of 600 km/h. It could fly circles against a Ju 52.

You also need to take into account that the Ju 52 was armed with only two machine guns - a 7.92 mm MG 15 machine gun in a dorsal position, and a 7.92 mm MG 131 machine gun in a semi-retractable dustbin turret.

The Spitfire carried either eight 7.7 mm Browning Mk II machine guns or two 20 mm Hispano Mk II and four Browning Mk II machine guns. In an

aerial battle it would be a 'no contest'.

Of course Hitler did travel by aircraft on numerous occasions. Yet it was in areas where the Luftwaffe held air supremacy and his aircraft was accompanied by a heavy fighter escort.

Yet there was always the chance that an enemy aircraft could attack.

Isoroku Yamamoto learned this lesson the hard way. Admiral Yamamoto was a Marshal Admiral of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) and the com-

mander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet during World War II.

On the morning of 18 April 1943, Yamamoto would be flying from Rabaul to Balalaie Airfield, on an island near Bougainville in the Solomon Islands.

The only problem was that United States naval intelligence had intercepted and decrypted a message containing specifics of Yamamoto's tour, including arrival and departure times and locations, as well as the number and types of aircraft that would transport and accompany him on the journey.

One does not have to be a genius to guess what happened next.

Yamamoto's flight consisted of two Mitsubishi G4M bombers, used as fast transport aircraft without bombs, and six escorting Mitsubishi A6M Zeiros.

The flight was intercepted by 16 United States Army Air Forces Lockheed P-38

Lightning aircraft. In the ensuing dogfight the Mitsubishi G4M carrying Yamamoto was shot down. His death was a major blow to the Japanese.

So, as previously stated, air travel

was quicker, but by no means safe.

A far safer, and more comfortable method of travel was by rail. The *Führersonderzug* (Führer's special train) was Adolf Hitler's personal train.

In 1940 the train was named



Führersonderzug “Amerika”. In January 1943, when Hitler declared war on the United States of America, the name of the train was changed to *Führersonderzug* “Brandenburg”.

The train served as a headquarters until the Balkans Campaign. Afterwards, the train was not used as Führer Headquarters (*Führerhauptquartier*), however Hitler continued to travel on it throughout the war between Berlin, Berchtesgaden, the Wolfsschanze and his other military headquarters.

Before the first permanent Führer Headquarters Felsen-nest was used in May 1940, the *Führersonderzug* served as a mobile headquarters. Hitler and his entourage used this train to visit various fronts and theatres of war. For safety, a front train and rear train were used to prevent any possible attack.

The train was originally named *Führersonderzug* “Amerika”, purportedly because Hitler wanted to pay homage to the European conquest of the Americas. After Germany declared war on the United States, on 31 January 1943 the train was renamed to the *Führersonderzug* “Brandenburg”.

In late April 1945, Hitler ordered his aide and adjutant Julius Schaub to travel to Austria to destroy the *Führersonderzug*.

The exact elements of the train are not known; documentation for each journey was destroyed after the trip to prevent it being used to plan an attack. Some details were revealed by the departure information “Bln 2009”, when the train departed the Anhalter Bahnhof in Ber-

lin on 23 June 1941, arriving at Wolfsschanze on 24 June 1941.

The individual 10-16 components (locomotives and railway cars) in order were:

- Two locomotives (Deutsches Reichsbahn K5E Krieg-slokomotive
- a special *Flakwagen* armoured anti-aircraft train flatbed car with two anti-aircraft guns, most often a pair of quadruple 20mm *Flakvierling* batteries, one at each end of the car. It also had the quarters for the officers and men from the Luftwaffe 9 Regiment General Göring that manned the guns. Goering’s trainset flak cars used anti-aircraft cannons.

- a baggage car
- the *Führerwagen*, used by Hitler
- a *Befehlswagen* (command car), including a conference room and a communications centre
- a *Begleitkommandowagen*, for the accompanying twenty-two-man security force (SS-Begleit-Kommando and Reichssicherheitsdienst detachment)
- a dining car
- two cars for guests
- a *Badewagen* (bathing car)
- another dining car
- two sleeping cars for personnel
- a *Pressewagen* (press car) for press chief, Otto Dietrich, and staff
- another baggage car
- another *Flakwagen*

Otto Dietrich indicates that the *Flakwagen* never had to be used when Hitler was travel-ling. The “*Pressewagen*” was

Führersonderzug

- Manufacturer: Deutsche Reichsbahn
- Built at: Henschel
- Krauss-Maffei Credé
- Constructed: 1937–39
- Entered service: 1939
- Scrapped: 1945
- Capacity: 200+
- Operators: Deutsche Reichsbahn

Specifications

- Train length: 10–16 components - 300–430 metres
- Maximum speed: 80–120 km/h
- Weight: 1,200 tons
- Engine type: 2x BR 52 “Kriegslok” Class KDL1 locomotives

to receive and release press re-ports, not for journalists.

There were other special trains used by prominent Ger-man officials. These included:

- *Sonderzug* “Afrika”, used by the chief of the Armed Forces High Command
- *Sonderzug* “Asien”, used by Hermann Göring
- *Sonderzug* “Atlantik”, used by the supreme commander of the Navy (*Kriegsmarine*)
- *Sonderzug* “Ostprien”, used by the Army General Staff
- *Sonderzug* “Robinson 1”, used by the chief of the Command Staff of the Luft-waffe
- *Sonderzug* “Steiermark”, used by Heinrich Himmler
- *Sonderzug* “Westfalen”, used by Joachim von Rib-bentrop.



So who are we

This month you’re looking at 15 beret/cap badges of corps or units of the old South African Defence Force (SADF). You may even have served in one of these corps or units. All you have to do is tell us what they are. You’ll find the answers on page 84.



Army speak 101

The military has always had their own way of doing things. And this includes having a rich vocabulary of slang terms.

The military world-wide has always had their own way of doing things. And this includes having their very own language.

The South African Defence Force (SADF) used a strange mixture of Afrikaans, English, slang and techno-speak that few outside of the military could hope to understand.

Some of the terms were humorous, some were clever, while others were downright crude.

Other armed forces around the world also have their own slang terms.

This article looks at just a few of these slang names and terms. Obviously we had to leave out some of the more crude and offensive terms. But I'm sure most of our readers will remember them.

Here is but a small sample of military slang.

- **Admin vortex (British)** - A disorganised Soldier.
- **Admiral of the Swiss Navy (Allied Forces WWII)** - A self-important person.
- **Agitate the gravel (Rhodesian Army)** - Lets go. Leave the place.
- **Air-dale (UK and US)** - Derogatory term for a pilot or aircrew.
- **Amen wallah (British Army)** - Used during World War I to describe a Chaplain.
- **Archie (British)** - Expression used during World War

I to describe an anti-aircraft gun.

- **Armoured cow (Australia)** - Tinned milk.
- **Army Banjo (Allied Forces WWII)** - Shovel.
- **Army Strawberries (Allied Forces WWII)** - Prunes.
- **Army's Lawn Dart (US)** - UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter. Named for its inability to stay in the air. Also Known as a "Crash Hawk".
- **Asino morto (Italian)** - "Dead donkey", term for canned ham.
- **Axle Grease (Allied Forces WWII)** - Butter.
- **Bagger (Ireland)** - Derogatory term referring to an Irish reservist Soldier, comparing him/her to a sandbag, i.e.; useless.
- **Bait layer (Australian)** - An Army cook. Refers to a person who drops poison meat to kill dingos. The are also known as a Ration Assassin.
- **Battery Acid (SADF)** - Slang term given to concentrated cold drink that was mixed with water.
- **Bayonet Course (Allied Forces WWII)** - Hospital treatment for venereal diseases. "Bayonet" refers to the male member.
- **Beasting (British)** - Punishment drill or PT.
- **Become a Gold Star in Mom's Window (Allied Forces WWII)** - A gentle way of saying killed in ac-

tion.

- **Blister Mechanic (Allied Forces WWII)** - Medic.
- **Blou Gat (SADF)** - Expression used to describe a national serviceman who had reached the halfway point of his initial national service. It is an Afrikaans word literally meaning 'blue arse'.
- **Bokkop (SADF)** - Slang term for infantry soldier. It is derived from the Afrikaans word 'Buck Head'. The emblem of the infantry was a Springbok's head.
- **Bohica (US Navy)** - Bend over, here it comes again.
- **Blanket-stacker (British)** - Any storeman (even if he doesn't deal with blankets).
- **Bleu (France)** - A recruit. Derived from the French term for barely-cooked steak, symbolizing a "raw" recruit.
- **Blue on blue contact (UK and US)** - A friendly fire incident.
- **Body Snatcher (Allied Forces WWII)** - Stretcher bearer.
- **Boomer (US Navy)** - A nuclear ballistic missile submarine, or personnel serving aboard same.
- **Boozer (Australian)** - Pub or Bar on an Army Base.
- **Bottled Sunshine (Allied Forces WWII)** - Beer.
- **Bowl us the ages ek se (Rhodesian Army)** - What is the time?
- **Box 500 (British)** - The



Bokkop

nickname given by the SAS to MI5. Their official address is PO Box 500, London.

- **Brake Shoes (SADF)** - Slang term used to describe Provita Biscuits.
- **Brass (Worldwide)** - Top ranking officers.
- **Bravo Zulu (Worldwide navies)** - Well done.
- **Brown Navy (SADF)** - A term used to describe the South African Navy's Marines. They wore the normal brown uniform of the SADF, as opposed to the 'blue navy' who were the seafaring element of the navy.
- **Bundu (Rhodesian Army)** - The bush, the countryside.
- **Bungalow Bill (SADF)** - When troops lived in a bungalow or dormitory one of them would often be put in charge. Although this troop usually had no rank he was known as the Bungalow Bill.
- **Canned Morale (Allied Forces WWII)** - A movie.
- **Canteen medals (Australian)** - Beer or food stains on the breast of a shirt or jacket.
- **Charles (US)** - Nickname for the Viet Cong during

the Vietnam War. Shortened from the phonetic alphabet Victor Charles for VC.

- **Cherry (US)** - New recruit still in basic training.
- **Chibuli (Rhodesian Army)** - Beer.
- **Chicken Parade (SADF)** - Basically a clean up of an area, picking up papers, cigarette butts, and general refuse. In the navy this was known as 'skirmishing'.
- **Civvie sitrep (Rhodesian Army)** - News on the commercial radio.
- **Clutch Plate (SADF)** - Slang term given to hamburger patties.
- **Craphat (British)** - Used by members of the parachute regiment to denote what they class as lesser regiments. Taken from the fact that they wear the coveted Maroon beret that no-one else wears.
- **Culling (Rhodesian Army)** - Killing the enemy.
- **Dad (Allied Forces WWII)** - The oldest member of a group.
- **Dart thrower (Australian)** - A member of the Australian Intelligence Corps. Refers to the perceived method of identifying compounds/ areas of interest for future operations, usually conducted eyes-shut with non-master hand to ensure statistically random results.
- **Devil Dodger, Siel Tiffie (SADF)** - Slang term for a padre, chaplain or priest.
- **Dicker (British)** - A look out, usually used to describe an enemy. A friendly look out is a stag.
- **Dirt dart (Australian)** -

Paratrooper.

- **Dirty Gertie of Bizerte (Allied Forces WWII)** - A promiscuous woman.
- **Doss bag (British)** - Sleeping bag.
- **Egyptian PT (British)** - Sleeping, particularly during the day. Probably dates from WW2 or before.
- **Elephant Virgin (SADF)** - Slang term given to slices of polony.
- **Engine Mountings (SADF)** - Slang term given to tinned braised Steak.
- **Flat dog (Rhodesian Army)** - Crocodile.
- **Fish and Chips (British)** - Slang term for urban warfare (Fighting in someone's house, causing havoc in people's streets).
- **Fitter and turner (SADF)** - Nickname for a chef, because he fits food into a pot and turns it into sh*t.
- **Flossie (SADF)** - Slang term for the Hercules C-130 transport aircraft.
- **Freds (Rhodesian Army)** - Frelimo. Mozambique Army.
- **Gimpy (British)** - The L7A2 GPMG 7.62x61mm belt-fed general purpose



Staaldak

machine gun.

- **Glasshouse, the (British)** - Military prison.
- **Go Kart (SADF)** - Slang term used for a twenty-man toilet. These were fibreglass toilet shells which were placed over a hole dug in the ground. They were mounted on wheels for easy movement.
- **God (British)** - The Regimental Sergeant Major.
- **Gomos (Rhodesian Army)** - Hills.
- **Gong (British)** - A campaign medal.
- **Green slime (British)** - Army intelligence personnel.
- **GV (SADF)** - A term used for someone who was very enthusiastic. It was short for the Afrikaans *Grens Vegter* or 'border fighter'.
- **Gypo (SADF)** - Used as a term for avoiding work. A person that was lazy was known as a *gypo gat*.
- **Gypo Guts (SADF)** - Slang term for diarrhoea.
- **Hondo (Rhodesian Army)** - War, conflict (Shona).
- **Houding (SADF)** - An Afrikaans word meaning 'attitude'.
- **Interflora (SADF)** - Derogatory term for a member of the Signals Corp. Their emblem of the winged figure of Mercury was also used by the national florists, Interflora.
- **Jimmy (SADF)** - Slang term for signaller.
- **Jol (SADF)** - An Afrikaans slang expression for a party.
- **Jollie patrollie (SADF)** - Used to denote any excursion or activity regarded as fun. Literal translation means 'jolly patrol'.
- **K-Car (Rhodesian Army)** - Nickname given to an Alouette III helicopter armed with twin FN-MAG light machine guns. The K stood for 'kill'.
- **Katunda (Rhodesian Army)** - Personal kit.
- **Kettenhunde (German WW II)** - Military Police, named for the chain and badge they wore as a symbol of their duties.
- **Lemon (Rhodesian Army)** - Nothing there. Normally used to describe an operation or patrol which produced nothing.
- **Long (Rhodesian Army)** - Many / much / a lot.
- **Min Dae (SADF)** - Afrikaans expression meaning 'few days'. This was used by troops who had only a short time before they completed their military service.
- **Min Dae Chips (SADF)** - Slang term for Cornflakes (breakfast cereal).
- **MMWC (Rhodesian Army)** - The leader / person in charge. (Main man what counts).



Tommy cooker

- **Mujiba (Rhodesian Army)** - Young insurgent supporter, their 'eyes and ears' (Shona).
- **Muti - (Rhodesian Army)** - Medicine of any description.
- **Mushi (Rhodesian Army)** - Really nice / good.
- **Noddy Car (SADF)** - Slang expression for an Eland-60 armoured car.
- **Numpty (Australian)** - An individual who just doesn't get it
- **Olifant Skilfers (SADF)** - Slang term for Cornflakes (breakfast cereal). It is an Afrikaans expression meaning 'elephant dandruff'.
- **Ou Man (SADF)** - Term used for a troop who only had a short time left of his national service. It is Afrikaans for 'old man'.
- **PB's (SADF)** - Term for local population. From the Afrikaans 'plaaslike bevolking'.
- **Pineapple (Allied Forces WWII)** - A hand grenade.
- **Pongo (SADF)** - Slang for members of the army. Refers to the often unavailability of washing facilities. The expression; "Everywhere the army goes, the pong goes," was the origin of this.
- **Put your slayer onto sing (Rhodesian Army)** - Put your LMG/rifle on automatic.



Varkpan

- **Retread (Allied Forces WWII)** - A veteran of World War I fighting in World War II.
- **Rofie (SADF)** - Term used for a new recruit. It comes from the Afrikaans word meaning 'scab'.
- **Santa Maria (SADF)** - SADF issued underpants. Hardly ever worn by the troops but rather used to polish floors or boots.
- **Screw (Australian)** - Corporal.
- **Shrapnel (SADF)** - Slang term for tinned mixed Vegetables.
- **Shumba (Rhodesian Army)** - Lion Lager. From the Shona word for Lion.
- **Skrapnel hoender (SADF)** - Term used to describe a meal consisting of shredded chicken. It is an Afrikaans expression meaning shrapnel chicken.
- **Sleeve trash (Australian)** - NCOs. They wear their rank on their sleeve as opposed to officers who wear theirs on their shoulder.
- **Slot (Rhodesian Army)** - To kill.
- **Sniffel tiffy (SADF)** - Member of the Intelligence Corps. From the Afrikaans 'sniffing mechanic'.
- **Staaldak (SADF)** - Afrikaans term for the helmet that was issued to SADF troops. It was hardly ever referred to as a steel helmet though. Even the English speaking people would refer to it as a staaldak.
- **Stay frosty (US)** - Regular term among Soldiers to both stay calm and stay alert.
- **Suurstof dief (SADF)** - Derogatory term for those in non-combatant roles. Afrikaans expression meaning 'oxygen thief'.
- **Tab (British)** - To march quickly with full pack and rifle. Used by the British Army.
- **Tampax Tiffy (SADF)** - Slang term for a medic.
- **Taxi's (SADF)** - Cloths or strips of blankets which were wrapped around your boots so as not to dirty the floor.
- **Throw some sky into my rounds (Rhodesian Army)** - Put air in the tyres of a vehicle.
- **Tiffy (SADF)** - Mechanic or member of the Technical Services Corps.
- **Tit's up (British)** - To be dead, lying on your back with your chest facing skyward, hence Tits-Up.
- **Tommy (German WW II)** - British soldier.
- **Tommy cooker (German WW II)** - German nickname for the American Sherman tank.
- **TTL (Rhodesian Army)** - Tribal Trust Land.
- **Tubbin (Australian)** - Thumb Up Bum, Brain In Neutral.
- **Varkpan (SADF)** - Slang term for the tray on which food was sometimes served.

It is an Afrikaans word meaning 'pig pan'.

- **Vasbyt (SADF)** - Afrikaans term meaning 'bite fast'. It was used to encourage each other.
- **Vleisbom (SADF)** - Derogatory term used to describe parabats (paratroopers), usually by non-parabats. Afrikaans term meaning 'meat bomb'.
- **Vindaloos (British)** - Fireproof underwear used by the SAS.
- **Vorster Orrel (SADF)** - Nickname for the Valkiri 127 mm multiple rocket launcher. It refers to the late President John Vorster. The feared Soviet equivalent was nicknamed the 'Stalin Organ'.
- **White Gold (SADF)** - Slang expression for toilet paper.
- **Wombles (Rhodesian Army)** - Police Special Reserve. Middle aged volunteers who patrolled the urban areas.
- **Yomp (British)** - To march quickly with full pack and rifle. Used by the Royal Marines.

Trust you enjoyed these.



White Gold



Jimmy

Weapons & Equipment: WW II

This month we compare the weapons and equipment of the major combatants in the European Theatre of World War II.

British Army

The British Army was, in 1939, a volunteer army, that introduced limited conscription in early 1939, and full conscription shortly after the declaration of war with Germany.

The pre-war British Army was trained and equipped to be a small, mechanised, professional army. Its main function was to garrison the British Empire.

The standard British rifle was the bolt action Lee–Enfield Rifle, No. 4 Mk I that outmatched the standard German rifle of the war. Mid-way through the war it began to be replaced by the Lee Enfield No.4 Mk.1.

The German MP 38/40 submachine gun took the British by surprise, and the army issued an urgent requirement for its own submachine gun.

The Thompson submachine gun was effective, but heavy, and initially hard to obtain because of its American patent.

The crude but simple to manufacture Sten gun was accepted and between 1941 and 1945, some 3,750,000 were produced.

The Bren light machine gun was the standard light machine gun used by the British infantry throughout the war.

Mills bomb is the popular name for a series of prominent British hand grenades. They

were the first modern fragmentation grenades used by the British Army and saw widespread use in World War I, as well as in World War II

Infantry Equipment

- A - Combat boots.
- B - Steel helmet.
- C - Lee Enfield ammo pouches.
- D - Lee Enfield No.1 Mk.III.
- E - Thompson M1A1.
- F - Sten gun.
- G - Mills bomb.
- H - Webley revolver.
- I - Lee Enfield bayonet.
- J - Gas mask case.
- K - No. 37 Pattern small pack.
- L - Mess kit.
- M - Water bottle.

German Wehrmacht

The total number of soldiers who served in the Wehrmacht during its existence from 1935 to 1945 is believed to have approached 18.2 million.

The Germans had been prepared for war some time before it started. At the start of the war their troops were well equipped and well trained.

The standard German boot was known as the ‘Jackboot’. It was made of leather with hobnails in the heel of the boot. They were impressing for drilling and ceremonial occasions, but not very practical in the field.

During the cold of the Rus-

sian winters the leather would freeze and the hobnails made it difficult to walk on the frozen surfaces.

Many Germans would replace their boots with those looted from dead Russians.

The standard German rifle was the Karabiner 98k. Later German rifles included the Semi-automatic rifles Gewehr 41, Gewehr 43 and the first assault rifle the StG 44.

Most German officers were issued with the Luger P08 pistol. However, many of them preferred the Walther P38 as a sidearm.

The MG-42 light machine gun was considered one of

the best machines guns during World War II and was used extensively by the Germans.

Infantry Equipment

- A - Combat boots.
- B - Steel helmet.
- C - Kar98k ammo pouches.
- D - Karabiner 98k.
- E - MP 40.
- F - StG 44 assault rifle.
- G - Walther P38.
- H - Karabiner 98k bayonet.
- I - Mess kit.
- J - Water bottle.
- K - Model 24 Grenade.
- L - Gas mask canister.
- M - Entrenching tool.
- N - Small pack.

Red Army (Russia)

The Soviet Union expanded its indigenous arms industry as part of Stalin’s industrialisation program in the 1920s and 1930s.

Yet when the Germans invaded Russia, the Red Army was not that well trained, nor were they well equipped.

The standard bolt-action rifle was the Mosin–Nagant M1891/30 and a number of variations of the weapon was produced during the war.

Designed by Georgy Shpagin, the PPSH-41 was a cheap, reliable submachine gun. It could use a 35 round box magazine or a 71 round drum magazine.

The SVT-40 semi-automatic rifle saw widespread service

during and after World War II. It was intended to be the Soviet Red Army’s new service rifle, but its production was disrupted by the German invasion in 1941, resulting in a change back to the older Mosin–Nagant bolt-action rifle for the duration of World War II.

The Tokarev TT33 pistol was adopted as the standard small arm. Interestingly enough, it did not have a safety catch.

The DP-27 / DP-28 was the most widely used Russian light machine gun during World War II.

While the Mosin-Nagant and Tokarev SVT-40 did have bayonets that could be used, most Russian troops were also issued with the NR-40 combat knife.

The F1 grenade was nick-

named the ‘limoka’ or lemon by the Russians.

Infantry Equipment

- A - Combat boots.
- B - Steel helmet.
- C - Mosin-Nagant ammo pouches.
- D - Mosin–Nagant M1891/30.
- E - PPSH-41.
- F - Tokarev SVT-40.
- G - Tokarev TT33.
- H - NR-40 combat knife.
- I - Mess kit.
- J - Water bottle.
- K - F1 grenade.
- L - Gas mask case.
- M - Duffel bag.

US Army (America)

During the war, over 16 million Americans served in the United States Armed Forces.

The M1 Garand was the standard rifle issued to US troops. However the bolt-action M1903 Springfield remained in service as a standard issue infantry rifle during World War II, since the US entered the war without sufficient M1 rifles to arm all troops.

Despite having a similar name and appearance, the M1 Carbine was not a carbine version of the M1 Garand rifle. They were different firearms, and they used different ammunition

The standard submachine gun was the Thompson M1A1,

also known as the ‘Tommy’ gun. In December 1942 the M3 submachine gun, known as the ‘Grease’ gun, was adopted into service. It chambered the same .45 ACP rounds as the Thompson, but was cheaper to produce, and lighter, although, contrary to popular belief, it was less accurate.

The standard sidearm was the Colt M1911A1, which also used the .45 ACP round.

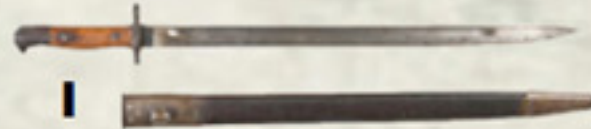
The Americans did not develop a light machine gun during World War II. The M1918 BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) was used as an Automatic rifle, Machine gun, Assault rifle, and Squad automatic weapon.

The Mk 2 grenade was nicknamed the ‘pineapple’ grenade and it remained in service until

the late 1960s. It was replaced by the M26 grenade in 1952.

Infantry Equipment

- A - Combat boots.
- B - Steel helmet.
- C - Rifle cartridge belt.
- D - M1 Garand.
- E - Thompson M1A1.
- F - M1 carbine.
- G - Colt M1911A1.
- H - M1 Garand bayonet.
- I - Mess kit.
- J - Water bottle.
- K - Mk 2 grenade.
- L - Gas mask case.
- M - Back pack.

**A****B****C****D****E****F****G****H****I****J****K****L****M****A****B****C****D****E****F****G****H****K****J****I****L****M****N**



Desmond Doss

US Army Corporal Desmond Doss became the only conscientious objector during World War II to be awarded the Medal of Honour for his actions during the war.

His life has been the subject of books, the documentary *The Conscientious Objector*, and the 2016 film *Hacksaw Ridge*.

He served as a combat medic with an infantry company during World War II. He was twice awarded the Bronze Star Medal for actions in Guam and the Philippines.

He would go on to become the only conscientious objector to receive the Medal of Honour for his actions during the war.

Yet who exactly was Desmond Doss?

Early Life

Desmond Thomas Doss was born on 7 February 1919 in Lynchburg, Virginia.

His father, William, was a carpenter and his mother Bertha was a home maker and shoe factory worker. He had an older sister, Audrey, and a younger brother, Harold.

His mother raised him as a devout Seventh-day Adventist and instilled Sabbath-keeping, non-vio-

lence, and a vegetarian lifestyle in his upbringing.

Doss attended the Park Avenue Seventh-day Adventist Church school until the eighth grade, and subsequently found a job at the Lynchburg Lumber Company to support his family during the Great Depression.

World War II

Before the outbreak of World War II, Doss was employed as a joiner at a shipyard in Newport News, Virginia.

Because of his shipyard work Doss was eligible for a deferment from military service. Despite this, Doss chose to do his military service because he felt it was his Christian duty.

He was sent to Fort Jackson in South Carolina for training with the reactivated 77th Infantry Division. Meanwhile, his brother Harold served aboard the USS Lindsey as a navy medic.

Doss refused to kill an enemy soldier or carry a weapon into combat because of his personal beliefs as a Seventh-day Adventist.

Doss was harassed by the other soldiers, and his commanding officer tried to get him discharged with a Section-8 (meaning he was mentally unfit for service).

Doss refused the discharge stating that he felt he would be a poor Christian if he accepted a discharge that implied he was mentally unstable due to his religion.

He consequently became a medic assigned to the 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 307th Infantry, 77th Infantry Division.

In 1944, Doss got his first taste of combat. He served in Guam and Leyte in the Philippines. He was awarded two Bronze Star Medals with a "V" device, for exceptional valour in aiding wounded soldiers under fire.

On 1 April 1945 the American launched Operation Iceberg, the invasion of Okinawa, which was only 550 km away from the Japanese mainland.

The Japanese had been there for years and Japanese forces were deeply entrenched on the island.

The 77th Infantry Division were tasked with attacking Maeda Escarpment, an approximately 100-metre high ridge that runs across most of the island of Okinawa. The Japanese were hiding everywhere, in caves, tunnels, holes and pillboxes, ready to cut down any enemies who approached. The escarpment was so deadly it was dubbed "Hacksaw Ridge."

The Americans used cargo nets to scale the cliff face and medic Desmond Doss was one of the three men who volunteered to go up the ridge and hang the cargo nets. They were the same cargo nets that the men had used to climb down from the army personnel carriers into the landing crafts that took them ashore.

The 77th Infantry Division managed to take Hacksaw

Ridge but on 5 May the Japanese countered and drove the Americans off of the escarpment. Facing heavy mortar, artillery and machine gun fire, the majority of the battalion retreated back down the Maeda Escarpment.

Dozens of injured soldiers were left behind to face death or capture at the hands of the Japanese. Doss made a commitment to remain behind with them.

"I had these men up there and I shouldn't leave 'em," said Doss. "They were my buddies, some of the men had families, and they trust me. I didn't feel like I should value my life above my buddy's, so I decided to stay with them and take care of as many of them as I could. I didn't know how I was gonna do it."

He patched up the wounded as best he could and then dragged them to the edge of the cliff and attempted to lower them down the escarpment.

He didn't have enough rope to do it, so he had to come up with another way. Falling back on his experience helping rescue flood victims when he was younger, Doss fashioned a special sling that enabled him to lower the men one by one to safety.

He later said, "So I just kept prayin', 'Lord, please help me get more and more, one more, until there was none left, and I'm the last one down.'"

While lowering the men down the ridge, the Japanese had a clear shot at Desmond Doss. One Japanese soldier re-

called having Desmond in his sights, but every time he went to fire, his gun jammed.

Army medic Desmond Doss had found a way to single-handedly rescue roughly 75 of his wounded comrades while under heavy mortar and gunfire. Doss estimated the number of lives he saved to be 50, but his commanding officer wanted to credit him with saving 100 lives, so they compromised at 75.

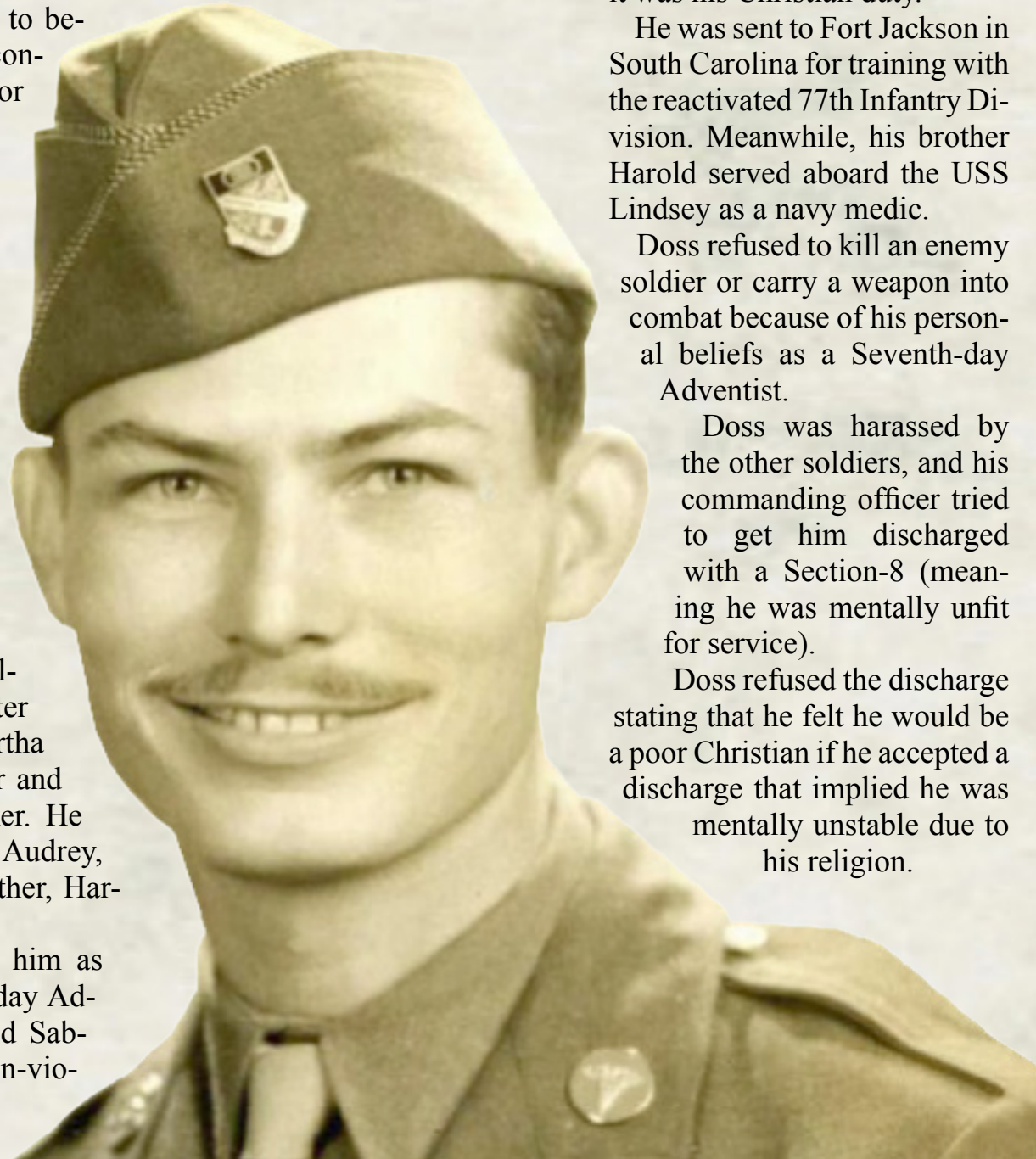
He spent 12 hours up on the ridge rescuing the men, averaging one man every 10 minutes.

The final assault to take the Maeda Escarpment happened on the morning of 5 May 1945, a Saturday, the day of Sabbath, which the Fourth Commandment says should be devoted to prayer. Given that Desmond was the only medic left in B Company, he agreed to go but requested that he first be given time to read his Bible.

The delay was approved up the chain of command and the assault was put on hold until Desmond finished his devotions. That day, the 307th Infantry Regiment of the 77th Infantry Division overtook Hacksaw Ridge for good.

On the night of 21 May 21, just past the escarpment on Okinawa, Doss' unit inadvertently walked into a company of Japanese soldiers. The unit engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy and Desmond scrambled to treat the wounded.

A grenade exploded near him, leaving 17 pieces of shrapnel embedded in his body, mostly in his legs.



Doss waited for five hours until fellow soldier Ralph Baker was able to reach him. Baker, along with a few other men, carried Doss on a litter (stretcher) through an intense enemy tank attack.

As they were carrying him, he saw a guy on the ground badly wounded. Doss rolled off the stretcher and crawled over to patch the man up.

Doss gave up his stretcher to the man, but while waiting for help to come back, he was wounded again, this time by a sniper's bullet that shattered his left arm.

He fashioned a splint out of a rifle stock and crawled the remaining 275 metres under fire, eventually reaching the safety of an aid station. He was transported to the hospital ship Mercy. He was later sent back to the United States.

Medal of Honour

In November 1945 Desmond Doss was awarded the Medal of Honour, America's highest medal for bravery.

The citation to his medal reads:

Private First Class Desmond T. Doss, United States Army, Medical Detachment, 307th Infantry, 77th Infantry Division. Near Urasoe-Mura, Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, 29 April – 21 May 1945.

He was a company aid man when the 1st Battalion assaulted a jagged escarpment 400 feet high. As our troops gained the summit, a heavy concentration of artillery, mortar and machinegun fire crashed into them, inflicting approximately 75 casualties and driving the



MEDAL OF HONOUR: US President Harry S. Truman presents Corporal Desmond Doss with the Medal of Honour. Doss was the only conscientious objector to be awarded the Medal of Honour during World War II.

others back. Private First Class Doss refused to seek cover and remained in the fire-swept area with the many stricken, carrying them one by one to the edge of the escarpment and there lowering them on a rope-supported litter down the face of a cliff to friendly hands.

On 2 May, he exposed himself to heavy rifle and mortar fire in rescuing a wounded man 200 yards forward of the lines on the same escarpment; and two days later he treated four men who had been cut down while assaulting a strongly defended cave, advancing through a shower of grenades to within eight yards of enemy forces in a cave's mouth, where he dressed his comrades' wounds before

making four separate trips under fire to evacuate them to safety. On 5 May, he unhesitatingly braved enemy shelling and small arms fire to assist an artillery officer. He applied bandages, moved his patient to a spot that offered protection from small-arms fire and, while artillery and mortar shells fell close by, painstakingly administered plasma.

Later that day, when an American was severely wounded by fire from a cave, Private First Class Doss crawled to him where he had fallen 25 feet from the enemy position, rendered aid, and carried him 100 yards to safety while continually exposed to enemy fire. On 21 May, in a night attack on high

ground near Shuri, he remained in exposed territory while the rest of his company took cover, fearlessly risking the chance that he would be mistaken for an infiltrating Japanese and giving aid to the injured until he was himself seriously wounded in the legs by the explosion of a grenade.

Rather than call another aid man from cover, he cared for his own injuries and waited five hours before litter bearers reached him and started carrying him to cover. The trio was caught in an enemy tank attack and Private First Class Doss, seeing a more critically wounded man nearby, crawled off the litter and directed the bearers to give their first attention to the other man. Awaiting the litter bearers' return, he was again struck, this time suffering a compound fracture of one arm.

With magnificent fortitude he bound a rifle stock to his shattered arm as a splint and then crawled 300 yards over rough terrain to the aid station. Through his outstanding bravery and unflinching determination in the face of desperately dangerous conditions Private First Class Doss saved the lives of many soldiers. His name became a symbol throughout the 77th Infantry Division for outstanding gallantry far above and beyond the call of duty.

Post-war

After the war, Doss initially planned to continue his career in carpentry, but extensive damage to his left arm made him unable to do so.

In 1946, Doss was diagnosed

with tuberculosis, which he had contracted on Leyte. He underwent treatment for five and a half years – which cost him a lung and five ribs – before being discharged from the hospital in August 1951 with 90% disability.

Doss continued to receive treatment from the military, but after an overdose of antibiotics rendered him completely deaf in 1976, he was given 100% disability; he was able to regain his hearing after receiving a cochlear implant in 1988.

Despite the severity of his injuries, Doss managed to raise a family on a small farm in Rising Fawn, Georgia.

Doss married Dorothy Pauline Schutte on 17 August 1942, and they had one child, Desmond "Tommy" Doss Jr., born in 1946.

Dorothy died on 17 November 1991, from a car accident. Doss remarried on July 1, 1993, to Frances May Duman.

After being hospitalized for difficulty breathing, Doss died on 23 March 2006, at his home in Piedmont, Alabama.

He was buried on 3 April 2006, in the National Cemetery in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Frances died three years later on February 3, 2009, at the Piedmont Health Care Centre in Piedmont, Alabama.

Desmond Doss was the only conscientious objector to be awarded the Medal of Honour during World War II.

Only two other soldiers, Thomas W. Bennett and Joseph G. LaPointe – both medics, were awarded the Medal of Honour. This was during the Vietnam War and both medals

were awarded posthumously. Neither Bennett nor LaPointe survived the war.

Media

Doss is the subject of The Conscientious Objector, an award-winning 2004 documentary by Terry Benedict.

The feature film Hacksaw Ridge, based on his life, was produced by Terry Benedict and directed by Mel Gibson.

Doss is also the subject of four biographical books.

Honours and recognition

- A portion of US Route 501 near Peaks View Park is named "Pfc. Desmond T. Doss Memorial Expressway." Local veterans of the area honour him by decorating the signs marking this portion of road several times during the year, particularly around patriotic holidays.
- In 1951, Camp Desmond T. Doss was created in Grand Ledge, Michigan to help train young Seventh-day Adventist men for service in the military. The camp was active throughout the Korean and Vietnam Wars before the property was sold in 1988.
- In the early 1980s, a school in Lynchburg was renamed Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy.
- In July 2008, the guest house at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., was renamed Doss Memorial Hall.

WW I Tanks

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

kers, often made of concrete.

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

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

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

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

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

normally have taken heavy casualties doing so.

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

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

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

The conceptual roots of the tank go back to ancient

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

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

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

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

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



batants combined.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

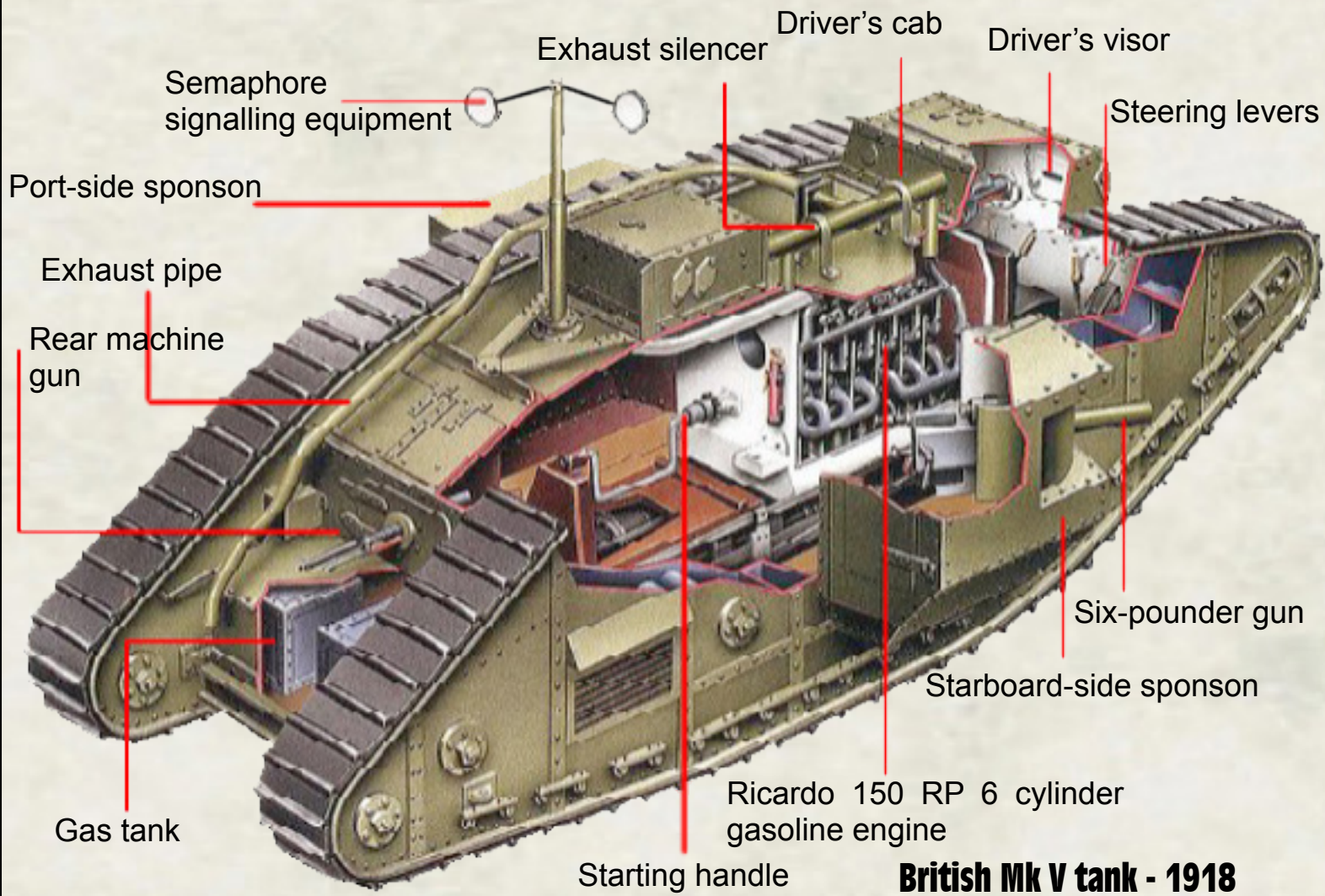
practice, their speed on broken ground could be as little as 1,6 km/h.

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

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

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

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



British Mk V tank - 1918

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

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

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

barbed wire.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

enough to defeat the standard German armour-piercing bullet.

The continued need for four men to drive the tank was solved with the Mark V which used Wilson's epicyclic gearing in 1918. Also in 1918 the French produced the Renault FT, the result of a co-operation between Estienne and Louis Renault. As mentioned before, it had the innovative turret position, and was operated by two men.

At just 8 tons it was half the weight of the Medium A Whippet but the version with the cannon had more firepower. It was conceived for mass production, and the FT became the most produced tank of World War I by a wide margin, with over 3,000 delivered to the French Army. Large numbers were used by the Americans and several were also lent to the British.

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

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

tanks to battle in that year.

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

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

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

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

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



Renault FT

On 20 November 1970, US Special Forces attacked Son Tay, a camp only 37 kilometres from Hanoi, that was believed to house American prisoners of war. The raid was a text book operation that succeeded with one exception - the prisoners were no longer there.

The briefing given by US Special Forces Colonel Arthur "Bull" Simons was simple, but straight to the point.

"We are going to rescue 70 American prisoners of war, maybe more, from a camp called Son Tay. This is something American prisoners have a right to expect from their fellow soldiers. The target is 23 miles (37 km) west of Hanoi."

By the spring of 1970 there were more than 450 known American POWs held in North Vietnam. Another 970 American servicemen were listed as missing in action.

Some of them had been in captivity for more than five years, the longest period in any war in American history.

Intelligence reports told of brutal conditions, torture, and even deaths of the POWs.

Background

In May 1970 aerial reconnaissance photographs revealed the existence of two prison camps west of Hanoi, the capital of North Vietnam.

At Son Tay, one photograph showed a large 'K' drawn in the dirt. This was the code for "come and get us".

The other camp, at Ap Lo, showed a photograph of the letters SAR (Search and Rescue) spelled out by the prisoner's laundry. An arrow with the number '8' indicated the distance the men had to travel to the fields they worked in.

Air Force Brigadier General LeRoy J. Manor and Army Colonel Arthur D. "Bull" Simons began to plan an operation to rescue the prisoners from Son Tay.

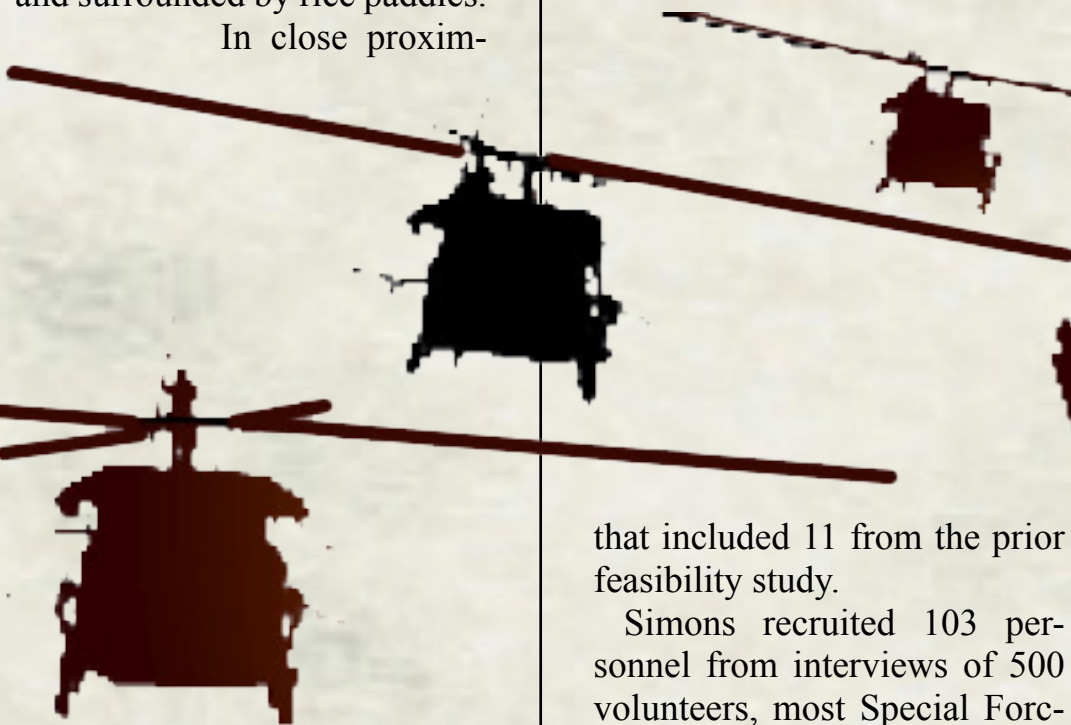
Reconnaissance photos taken by SR-71 "Blackbirds" revealed that Son Tay "was active". SR-71 reconnaissance aircraft took most of the Son Tay target photos from above 24,000 metres while streaking over North Vietnam at more than three times the speed of sound.

Planning and training

There were numerous obstacles that had to be considered. The camp itself was in the open and surrounded by rice paddies.

In close proxim-

ity was the 12th North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment totalling approximately 12,000 troops.

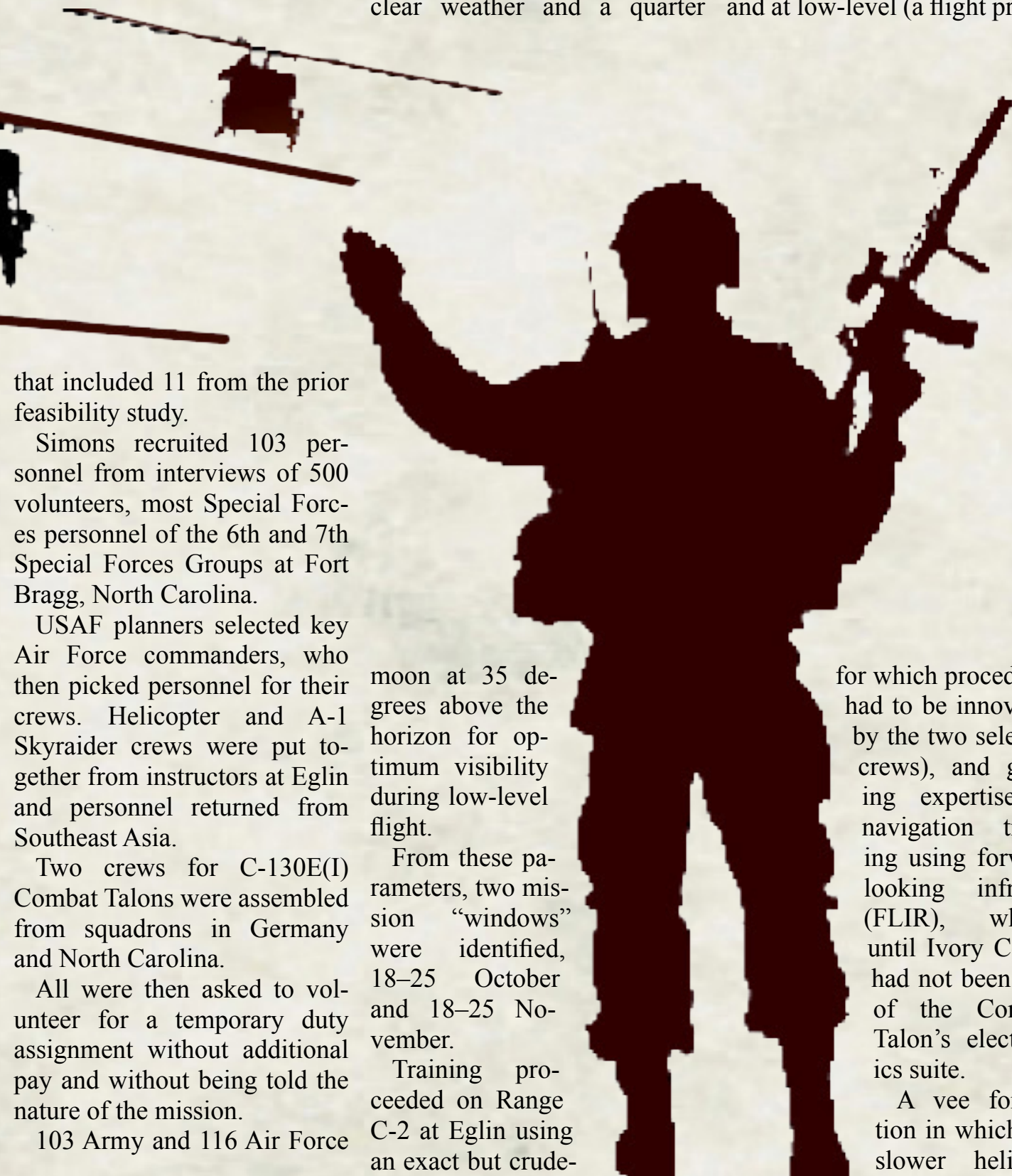


Also nearby was an artillery school, a supply depot, and an air defence installation.

500 metres south was another compound called the "secondary school", which was an administration centre housing 45 guards. To make matters more difficult, Phuc Yen Air Base was only 32 kilometres north-east of Son Tay.

The raiders would have to get in and out very quickly, before anyone could react to the situation.

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer,



that included 11 from the prior feasibility study.

Simons recruited 103 personnel from interviews of 500 volunteers, most Special Forces personnel of the 6th and 7th Special Forces Groups at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

USAF planners selected key Air Force commanders, who then picked personnel for their crews. Helicopter and A-1 Skyraider crews were put together from instructors at Eglin and personnel returned from Southeast Asia.

Two crews for C-130E(I) Combat Talons were assembled from squadrons in Germany and North Carolina.

All were then asked to volunteer for a temporary duty assignment without additional pay and without being told the nature of the mission.

103 Army and 116 Air Force

personnel were selected for the project, including ground force members, aircrewmembers, support members, and planners.

The 219 man task force planned, trained, and operated under the title of the "Joint Contingency Task Group" (JCTG).

The planning staff set up parameters for a night time raid, the key points of which were clear weather and a quarter

ly made replica of the prison compound for rehearsals and a \$60,000 1.5 x 15 metre scale table model (codenamed "Barbara") for familiarization.

Air Force crews flew 1,054 hours in southern Alabama, Georgia, and Florida conducting "dissimilar (aircraft) formation" training with both UH-1H and HH-3E helicopters at night and at low-level (a flight profile

moon at 35 degrees above the horizon for optimum visibility during low-level flight.

From these parameters, two mission "windows" were identified, 18-25 October and 18-25 November.

Training proceeded on Range C-2 at Eglin using an exact but crude-

for which procedures had to be innovated by the two selected crews), and gaining expertise in navigation training using forward looking infrared (FLIR), which, until Ivory Coast, had not been part of the Combat Talon's electronics suite.

A vee formation in which the slower helicop-

ters drafted in echelon slightly above and behind each wing of the Combat Talon escort aircraft was chosen and refined for the mission to give the helicopters the speed necessary to keep pace with the Talons flying just above their stall speeds.

Special Forces training began on 9 September, advancing to night training on 17 September and joint training with air crews on 28 September that included six rehearsals a day, three of them under night conditions.

By 6 October, 170 practice sessions of all or partial phases of the mission were performed on the mock up by the Special Forces troopers, many with live fire.

On that date, the first full-scale dress rehearsal, using a UH-1H as the assault helicopter, was conducted at night and included a 5.5-hour, 1,106 km flight of all aircraft, replicating the timing, speeds, altitudes, and turns in the mission plan.

The rehearsal spelled the end of the option to use the UH-1 when its small passenger compartment resulted in leg cramps to the Special Forces troopers that completely disrupted the timing of their assault, more than offsetting the UH-1's only advantage (smaller rotor radius) over the larger HH-3.

Two further full night rehearsals and a total of 31 practice landings by the HH-3E in the mock-up's courtyard confirmed the choice.

Manor issued the formal launch order at 15:56 local time 20 November, while the raiding force was in the final stages of crew rest, and brought together the entire ground contingent for

a short briefing regarding the objective and launch times.

Following the briefing, Manor and his staff flew by T-39 Sabreliner to Da Nang, where they would monitor the mission from the USAF Tactical Air Control Center, North Sector (TACC/NS) at Monkey Mountain Facility.

Three theater lift C-130s previously staged at U-Tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield arrived at Takhli to transport the Army contingent and helicopter crews to Udorn RTAFB and the A-1 pilots to Nakhon Phanom.

Mission organisation

The fifty-six Special Forces troopers selected to conduct the raid were flown from Takhli to their helicopter staging base at Udorn RTAFB by C-130 on the evening of 20 November.

The Special Forces were organised into three platoons: a 14-man assault group, code-named Blueboy, which would crash-land within the prison compound; a 22-man support group, Greenleaf, which would provide immediate support for the assault team, and a 20-man security group, Redwine, to protect the prison area from NVA reaction forces and provide backup support if needed for either of the other two groups. Simons (using the call sign Axle) accompanied the Greenleaf group, while the ground force commander, LTC Elliott P. "Bud" Sydnor, Jr. (Wildroot), was with the Redwine group.

The 56 raiders were heavily armed, carrying a total of 51 personal side arms, 48 CAR-15 carbines, two M16 rifles, four M79 grenade launchers, two



SPECIAL FORCES LEGEND: Colonel Arthur D 'Bull' Simons.

shotguns, and four M60 machine guns.

They carried 15 Claymore mines, 11 demolition charges, and 213 hand grenades and were equipped with a plethora of wire cutters, bolt cutters, axes, chainsaws, crowbars, ropes, bullhorns, lights, and other equipment (much of it acquired from commercial retail sources) to execute the mission.

The ground force was also equipped for voice communications with 58 UHF-AM and 34 VHF-FM radios, including a survival radio for each individual soldier.

116 aircraft (59 Navy and 57 Air Force) participated in the operation, with 28 aircraft (crewed by 92 airmen) assigned direct roles in the target area.

Two C-130E Combat Talons, modified with the temporary addition of FLIR sets, were assigned to navigate the mission. One was to lead the helicopter "assault formation" (Cherry 01) and the second to escort the A-1 "strike formation" (Cherry 02).

Because of the variances in cruising speeds between the



GOING IN: Some of the Son Tay raiders prior to the mission. It was one of the most audacious special forces raids carried out during the Vietnam War.

helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, the forces flew separate routes, with the faster strike formation trailing the helicopter formation by several minutes and zigzagging across its route.

Each Combat Talon crew cross-trained to assume the role of the other, but the assault formation was required to have a navigation leader with four fully functioning engines all the way to the objective.

Operation Kingpin

Operation Kingpin was the assault phase of Operation Ivory Coast.

Beginning at 22:00 on 20 November 1970, aircraft began leaving five bases in Thailand and one in South Vietnam.

Cherry 02, the Combat Talon escort for the A-1 strike formation, took off from Takhli at 22:25. Cherry 01, scheduled to take off a half hour later, had difficulty starting an engine and

took off 23 minutes late at 23:18.

Cherry 01 adjusted its flight plan and made up the time lost at engine start. At 23:07, two HC-130P aerial refuelers (call signs Lime 01 and Lime 02) took off from Udorn, followed by the helicopters ten minutes later.

Shortly after midnight, the A-1 Skyraiders lifted off four minutes early from Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base under clandestine, blacked-out conditions.

The helicopters encountered thick clouds over northern Laos at their refuelling altitude and climbed to 2,100 metres AGL (Above Ground Level) to refuel from Lime 01 on the flight plan's fourth leg. Lime 01 then led them to the next checkpoint for hand-off to Cherry 01 at 01:16.

The assault formation approached from the southwest using the clutter returns of the mountains to mask them from radar detection, while U.S. Navy aircraft launched at 01:00

on 21 November from the aircraft carriers USS Oriskany and USS Ranger in the largest carrier night operation of the Vietnam War.

Starting at 01:52, twenty A-7 Corsairs and A-6 Intruders, flying in pairs at stepped-up altitudes to deconflict their flight paths, entered North Vietnamese airspace on three tracks, dropping flares to simulate an attack. The last track also dropped chaff to mimic the mining of Haiphong harbour.

Over the Gulf of Tonkin, twenty-four other aircraft in thirteen orbits provided support and protection. The operation prompted a frantic air defence reaction at 02:17 that provided a highly effective diversion for the raiders and completely saturated the North Vietnamese air defense system.

Combat assault

At 02:18 Cherry 01 transmitted the execute command "Alpha, Alpha, Alpha" to all aircraft as it overflew the prison and deployed four illumination flares, then performed a hard-turning descent to 150 metres to drop two battle simulators south and southeast of Son Tay.

After Apple 03 made its strafing pass with side-firing mini guns on the prison's guard towers, Cherry 01 successfully dropped one of two planned napalm ground markers as a point of reference for the A-1s, then departed the objective area to a holding point over Laos where it would provide UHF direction-finding steers for the departing aircraft.

The assault helicopters in single file encountered winds that

caused them to break formation 140 metres to the right of their intended track. The pilots of Apple 03, the gunship helicopter preceding the others, observed a compound nearly identical to the prison camp in size and layout (previously labeled a “secondary school” by intelligence sources) and steered toward it, followed by the assault lift force.

However, they recognized their error when they saw the river next to the actual location and corrected their flight path. Banana, the HH-3E carrying the Blueboy assault team, descended on the wrong location and observed that the expected courtyard was much smaller than required and that the expected treeline enclosed the compound rather than crossing through it.

By that time, Blueboy (as previously rehearsed) was firing its weapons from all openings in the helicopter. Banana’s pilots also recognized the error, applied power, and quickly veered north to the actual target.

Despite the error, and trees taller than briefed that forced a steeper descent than rehearsed, the assault team crash-landed into the courtyard of Son Tây prison at 02:19 with all weapons firing.

Although one raider, acting as a door gunner, was thrown from the aircraft, the only casualty was the helicopter’s flight engineer, whose ankle was fractured by a dislodged fire extinguisher.

Army Captain Richard J. Meadows used a bullhorn to announce their presence to the expected POWs, while the team dispersed in four elements on a rapid and violent assault of the prison, killing guards and methodically searching the five prisoner blocks cell by cell.

Also at 02:19, Apple 01 (after its pilots saw Banana fire on the first location) landed the Greenleaf support group outside the south side of the secondary school, thinking it to be the target prison compound. Unaware that it was 400 meters from the objective, it lifted off to relocate to its holding area.

The “secondary school” was actually a barracks for troops that, alerted by Banana’s aborted assault, opened fire on Greenleaf as two of its elements assaulted the compound.

The support group attacked the location with small arms and hand grenades in an eight-minute fire-fight, after which Simons estimated that 100 to 200 hostile soldiers had been killed.

Two A-1s supported Greenleaf with an air strike using

white phosphorus bombs on a wooden footbridge east of the area. Apple 01 returned at 02:23, and by 02:28, the support group had disengaged under fire and re-boarded the helicopter for the short movement to the correct landing area.

The pilot of Apple 02 observed the errors in navigation by the helicopters in front of him and made a hard turn towards the prison. He also observed Apple 01 unload at the secondary school and initiated Plan Green, the contingency plan for the loss or absence of Greenleaf.

The Redwine security group, including ground force commander Sydnor, landed at 02:20 outside Son Tây prison and immediately executed the previously rehearsed contingency plan.

In the meantime, Cherry 02 arrived with the A-1 force, dropped two more napalm ground markers, and created other diversions to disguise the target area by dropping MK-6 log flares and battle simulators at road intersections that North Vietnamese reaction forces might be expected to use.

Cherry 02 then orbited in the area just west of the Black River acting as on-call support for the ground teams, jamming North Vietnamese radio communications, and providing a secure radio link to the mission command post in Da Nang.

After a thorough search that included a second sweep ordered by Meadows, Blueboy’s three teams found that the prison held no POWs.

Meadows transmitted the code phrase “Negative Items” to



the command group. Pathfinders clearing the extraction LZ blew up an electrical tower that blacked out the entire west side of Son Tây including the prison area.

At 02:29, Sydnor ordered the A-1s to attack the vehicle bridge over the Song Con leading into the area and, three minutes later, called for extraction by the HH-53s idling on the ground in a holding area a mile away.

Before the first helicopter arrived, a truck convoy approached the prison from the south, but was stopped by two Redwine security teams that each fired an M72 light antitank weapon into the lead vehicle.

The HH-53s returned singly to the extraction landing zone amidst the SAM barrage, flying well below the minimum effective level of the missiles, and Apple 01 landed first at 02:37.

It lifted off with its passengers at 02:40, followed a minute later by the landing of Apple 02, which departed at 02:45. Apple 03, the last aircraft out, was cleared to leave its holding area at 02:48.

The raid had been executed in only 27 minutes, well within the planned 30-minute opti-

mum time. Although at first it was feared one raider had been left behind, all the troopers were accounted for. One Redwine trooper had been wounded in the leg and was the only casualty to hostile fire on the raid.

Impact of the raid

The mission was deemed a “tactical success” because of its execution, but clearly involved an “intelligence failure”. The 65 prisoners at Son Tây had been moved on 14 July because its wells had been contaminated by flooding, or possibly due to the threat of further inundation, to a camp 24 km closer to Hanoi that the POWs dubbed “Camp Faith”.

Criticism of the raid, particularly in the news media and by political opponents of the Vietnam War and the Nixon Administration, was widespread and of long duration.

Not only was the failure denounced as the result of poor or outdated intelligence, but charges were made that the operation caused increased mistreatment of the prisoners.

However, as a result of the raid, the North Vietnamese consolidated their POW camps to central prison complexes. An area of the infamous “Hanoi Hilton” formerly housing civilian and South Vietnamese prisoners became “Camp Unity”, a block of large communal areas housing 50 POWs each.

After their repatriation, many POWs said that being in close contact with other Americans lifted their morale, as did knowledge of the rescue attempt. Some POWs said that food, medical care, and even

seemingly basic things like mail delivery vastly improved after the raid.

Recognition of participants

For their actions, members of the task force received six Distinguished Service Crosses, five Air Force Crosses, and at least 85 Silver Stars, including all 50 members of the ground force who did not receive the DSC. Manor received the Distinguished Service Medal.

The successful demonstrations of joint operating capability in Ivory Coast and Kingpin were, in part, a model for the creation of a joint United States Special Operations Command in 1987.

Son Tây raider HH-53 68-10357 (Apple 01) was subsequently converted to MH-53M Pave Low IV standard, served in Bosnia and Iraq and was finally retired in 2008 after 38 years of service, the last survivor of the five Apples.

It is now on display in the Cold War Gallery of the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio.

While the raid may have failed in its overall objective, it is still regarded as a text-book special forces operation.

Colonel Simons retired from the Army in July 1971. In 1978 Texas businessman Ross Perot requested help from Simons in organising a rescue mission to free two of Perot’s employees from an Iranian prison. The mission was a success.

Three months later Simons suffered a heart attack while on vacation. He died a month later at the age of 60.





Donning his surgeon's mask and rubber gloves Doctor Matt O' Brien enters the operating theatre. Be afraid, be very afraid.

Even at my ripe old age, I must confess that I'm a bit of a gaming junkie.

Just this past week I was a member of the SEAL team that took out Bin Laden (ARMA 3), won a PGA golfing event (2K23), won the FA Cup (FIFA 23), won the Rugby World Cup (Rugby 22), and overthrew a dictator (Jagged Alliance 3).

While I enjoy an array of different games, I really enjoy military-themed games. During the years I have shot, bombed, stabbed and otherwise harmed tens of thousands of my enemies. So it came as a breath of fresh air to find a game where the focus is not on taking lives, but rather on saving them.

And when I say breath of fresh air, maybe I should say breath of mustard gas. After all, the game is set in World War I.

Brave Lamb Studio, a Polish video game studio, was inspired by accounts of World War I surgeons, who said the constant difficult decisions caused them to feel desensitized.

The game attempts to replicate this by providing biographical information on the patients to get players to care about saving them, even though they may not have the resources to do so.

War Hospital was released by Nacon on 11 January 2024 and is available for Windows, Play-

Station 5, and Xbox Series X/S.

Players manage an isolated British field hospital in Belgium during World War I. War Hospital is a strategy game in which players must perform triage, keep morale up, and defend against German attacks.

If morale drops too low, they are replaced and lose the game. Losing patients and starvation cause moral loss. Morale can be improved by increasing rations and sending recovered soldiers home.

Alternately, soldiers who return to the trenches can help defend the hospital, and soldiers sent to Allied headquarters provide resources used to upgrade the hospital.

Upgrades can also be done after completing missions. When supplies run low, players can go to half-rations or take supplies from the locals, both of which reduce morale.

Engineers can produce food, make medicine, or upgrade the hospital, but they can only do one job at a time.

When I first played War Hospital I had a number of issues. While I liked the concept of the game, there were a number of bugs.

The frame rate was often terrible and slowed the game down to the point of frustration. One a few occasions the game

crashed, meaning I lost any progress I had made.

The good news is that they soon released a patch and that seems to have fixed the problems.

The game does not have a steep learning curve and it is a relatively long game. It will take you about 35 hours to complete all of the missions.

Playing as Major Henry Wells, you are the head of the hospital. So you have to make all the decisions.

The currency used in the game is resource points. The more resource points you have, the more you can do. You will, however, have to spend those resource points wisely.

One of the things you have to keep a hand on is supplies. There is a train station near you where supplies will arrive by rail. You will need to order surgical supplies, chemical medicine supplies, and trauma medical supplies. You will also need to order rations and alcohol. Your staff and patients need to eat and the alcohol is needed to clean wounds and surgical instruments.

Newly recruited staff will also arrive by train. You will have to recruit surgeons, physicians, trauma specialists and medical personnel such as nurses, stretcher bearers, orderlies,



ect. You will also need engineers and scouts.

Engineers can build certain buildings and facilities and they can also upgrade them. Scouts can keep you updated on what is happening in the surrounding area. They can also look for food and supplies.

Staff can also be upgraded and you will need to decide who and when to upgrade.

They also need to be rested and cannot work 24/7. Staff that are exhausted will work slower and are prone to making mistakes.

Choosing which buildings to construct or upgrade is vital. You will need a casualty clearing station for example. This is where triage is done. An operating theatre is also vital. This is where surgery can be done to save lives.

Build a pharmacy and it will allow you to produce your own medical supplies. Patients that are recovering or receiving treatment need to be accommo-

dated somewhere.

You will need a morgue and a cemetery to bury the dead. You can't just leave them in the street.

Triage is a vital aspect of the game. Often you will have to decide on whether to treat someone or just leave them to die. Having someone die on the operating table is bad for morale. So if a patient looks as if they may not survive surgery, it's better to let them die in the casualty clearing station.

You often have to make difficult decisions. Say someone has a bad leg wound. Do you spend time and resources trying to save the leg, or do you just amputate? Someone may have a high fever. Do you again spend time and resources trying to find the source of the fever and treat it, or do you just leave it to see if they recover or die?

I quickly started to use the old adage of RHIP (Ranks Has Its Privileges). If, for example, you heal a private you will receive

one resource point. If you heal a sergeant and return him to service you get three resource points. So anyone with rank gets priority treatment.

This is an interesting game and well worth playing.



Publisher - Nacon

Genre - RTS

Score - 7/10

Price - R539 (on Steam)



Movie Review

The Monuments Men

Released: 2014

Running time: 1118 minutes

Director: George Clooney

The Monuments Men is a 2014 war film directed by George Clooney, and written and produced by Clooney and Grant Heslov.

In 1943, the Allies are making good progress driving back the Axis powers in Italy. Frank Stokes convinces President Roosevelt that victory will have little meaning if the artistic treasures of Western civilization are lost. Stokes is directed to assemble an Army unit nicknamed the "Monuments Men", comprising museum directors, curators, art historians, and an architect, to both guide Allied units and search for stolen art to return it to its rightful owners.

In July 1944, Claire Simone, a curator in occupied France, is forced to assist Nazi officer Viktor Stahl in overseeing the theft of art for either Adolf Hitler's Führermuseum or as personal property of senior commanders such as Hermann Göring. All seems lost when she discovers that Stahl is taking all of her gallery's contents to Germany as the Allies approach Paris. Simone runs to the railyard to confront him, but can only watch as he departs aboard the train carrying the cargo.

Stokes' unit finds its work frustrated by Allied officers in the field, who refuse to endanger their own troops for the sake of his mission. The unit splits up to cover more ground, with varying degrees of success. James Granger meets Simone, but she suspects the Americans want to

confiscate the stolen art for their own country, and refuses to cooperate. British officer Donald Jeffries sneaks into occupied Bruges at night to save Michelangelo's Madonna of Bruges, but is killed in the attempt.

Richard Campbell and Preston Savitz learn that Van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece was removed by the priests of Ghent Cathedral for safekeeping, but their truck was stopped and the panels taken. Eventually, they find and arrest Viktor Stahl, who is hiding as a farmer, when they identify the paintings in his house as masterpieces, at least one stolen from the Rothschild Collection.

Simone provides a comprehensive ledger she has compiled that provides valuable information on the stolen art and the rightful owners.

Even as the team learns that the artwork is being stored in various mines and castles, it also learns that it must now compete against the Soviet Union, which is seizing artwork from its occupation zone as war reparations. Meanwhile, Colonel Wegner is systematically destroying whole art caches. Eventually, the team has some success, as it discovers at least one mine hiding over 16,000 art pieces. In addition, the team captures the entire gold reserves of the Nazi German national treasury.

Finally, as the war ends in May 1945, the team finds a mine in Austria that appears to have been demolished, and the Soviets will be there in hours. Dis-

covering that the entrances were actually blocked by the locals to prevent the Nazis from destroying the contents, the team evacuates as much artwork as possible before the Soviets arrive.

Afterwards, Stokes reports back to President Truman that the team has recovered vast quantities of artwork and various other culturally significant items. Truman then asks if, thirty years from then, anyone will remember that these men died for a piece of art. In the final scene, set in 1977, the elderly Stokes replies "Yeah", while he takes his grandson to see Michelangelo's Madonna. The cast includes George Clooney, Bill Murray, Matt Damon and John Goodman.



Click on the box cover to watch a trailer of the film.

Move the Border

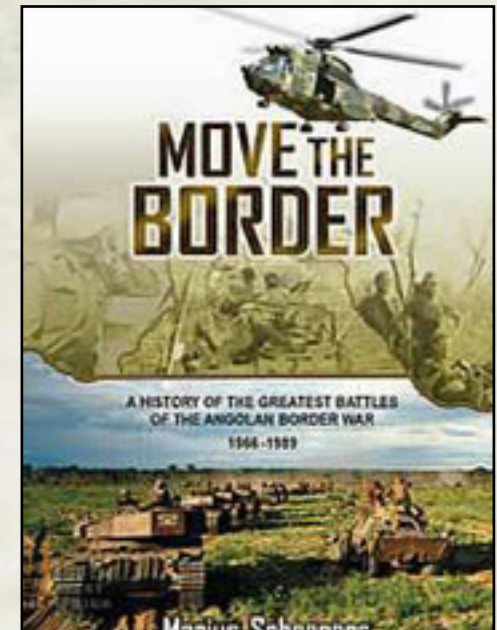
An account which strives to place the war which South Africa fought in Angola in a historically meaningful perspective. Although the conflict initially centered on the opposing agendas of the SADF and People's Liberation Army of Namibia of SWAPO, it was to escalate and take on an international Cold War character as Angolan, Cuban, and Soviet protagonists appeared on the stage of the unfolding drama.

Apart from the political resolution which was subsequently achieved in South Africa, the war represented the last African liberation struggle for independence from colonial rule.

The aim of this book is to present a concise history of the Angolan Border War from 1966 to 1989. It supplements previous books which have covered periods of the war by breaking the

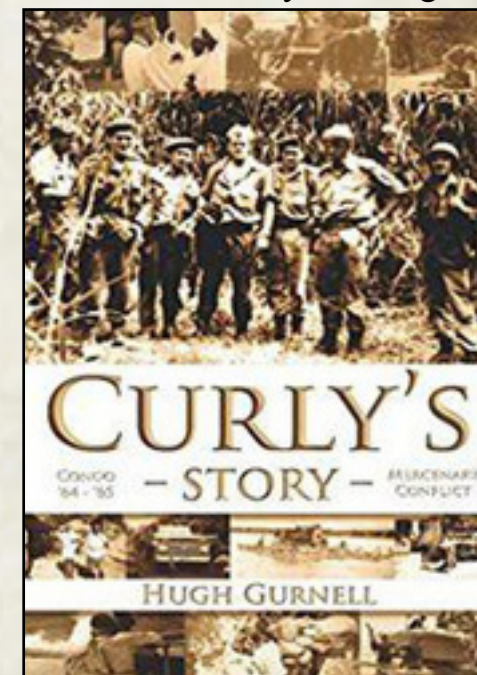
entire duration of the conflict down into six distinctive phases and meticulously reconstructing twenty specific military operations in Angola which changed the course of the war. The perspective which the strategy affords should enable readers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the individual phases of the war and the context which they provide for its final outcome. Two highly significant events of the war, the battles of Cuvelai (1983/84) and the battle at Indungo (1987), are subjected to particular scrutiny in the overall narrative. The battle at Indungo has been relatively neglected by writers and historians prior to the publication of this book.

The information included in some six chapters of this book forms part of a dissertation for the degree M SocSci at the University of Pretoria which the au-



thor completed under the supervision of the acclaimed historian, Professor Fransjohan Pretorius, at the end of 2019. The study carries the title: The Battle at Indungo, 31 October 1987: An SADF military venture against SWAPO in the Angolan Border War.

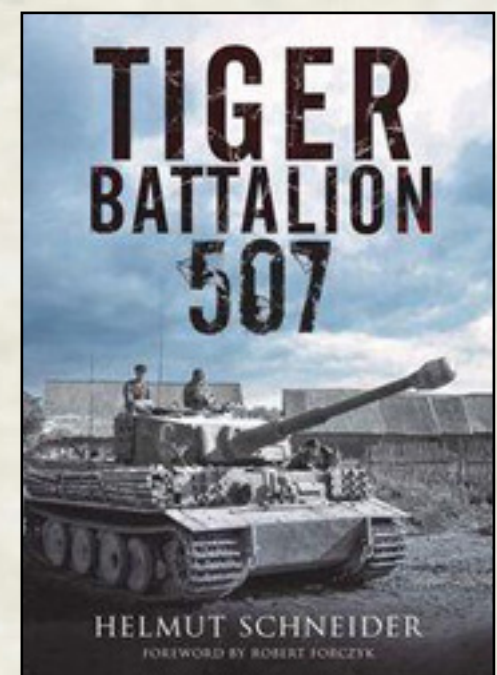
Softcover: 208 pages R255.00



Curly's Story
R375



Soldaat en Mens
R395



Tiger Battalion 507
R600

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

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

1 March

- **1896** - Ethiopian forces defeat Italians at Adwa, northern Ethiopia, ending Italy's quest to create a substantial African colony.
- **1941** - German troops enter Bulgaria.
- **1951** - Pilots Doug McKellar and "Dizzy" Deans of the SA Air Force's No 2 (Flying Cheetah) Squadron, assisting the UN in the Korean War, locate seven trucks hidden in hilly terrain and strike target dive-bombing with napalm a procedure used for the first time by the squadron.
- **1954** - Bikini: US detonates 15 megaton hydrogen bomb.
- **1981** - Rifleman Peter Hall from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was accidentally killed during anti-insurgent operations in the Eenhana Area. He was 19.
- **1988** - Special Constable Thomas Kanitus from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.
- **1990** - State President F.W. de Klerk announces plans to bring covert operations by government agents under Cabinet control.
- **1990** - Two members of the

SADF were killed while traveling as passengers in a military minibus vehicle when the vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with a truck on the Pretoria-Potchefstroom Road. They were: Private Gerhardus Stephanus De Bruin (22) from Danie Theron Combat School. Gunner Jaques Terblanche (19) from 10 Artillery Brigade.

2 March

- **1900** - A council of war at Poplar Grove, OFS, gives Danie Theron permission to form a Scout Corps consisting of about 100 men.
- **1938** - Stalin initiates the Purges.
- **1943** - During World War II in the Pacific, a Japanese convoy was attacked by 137 American bombers as the Battle of Bismarck Sea began.
- **1945** - Philippines: Japanese resistance on Corregidor ends.
- **1951** - Two pilots of the SA Air Force's Cheetah Squadron, Lieutenant D.A. Ruiter and Captain W.J.J. Badenhorst, are killed in action while assisting the United Nations in the Korean War.
- **1955** - Egypt and Syria sign a defensive alliance.
- **1962** - Coup in Burma initiates an ongoing military regime.

- **1982** - Rifleman Lewis Francesco from 31 Battalion (201 Battalion SWATF) Died of Wounds accidentally sustained in an explosion inside an ammunition bunker at Omega Base. He was 22.
- **1984** - Rifleman Hendrik Francois van der Merwe from the Vanderbijl Park Commando apparently drowned in unknown circumstances. He was officially declared dead by the State President in 1986. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 25.
- **1985** - Rifleman Hilton Isaac Jacobs from the South African Cape Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Kuils River. He was 20.
- **1986** - Sapper Daniel Wilhelmus van Schalkwyk from 11 Field Engineer Regiment was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Messina. He was 22.
- **1988** - Special Sergeant Hepute Wakumbilwa from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.
- **1999** - Eight foreigners die in a shoot-out in a Ugandan

game reserve as soldiers try to free fifteen tourists who were kidnapped by Rwandan rebels.

- **2005** - At least fifty Congolese militiamen are killed by South African and Pakistani United Nations peacekeeping troops in a bloody gunfight in the Congolese district of Ituri. Several South African soldiers of 12 SA Infantry Battalion (12 SAI) are slightly hurt in the action.

3 March

- **1901** - The Battle of Lichtenburg takes place. The British soldiers move their horses into the Dutch Reformed Church building to shelter them from the fire of General De la Rey's troops.
- **1918** - Russia withdraws from WW I, signs Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany.
- **1945** - RAF bombs The Hague in error, 511 die.
- **1964** - Rifleman Brian Ivan Dummer from the Tygerberg Commando was killed in a military vehicle accident at Bethlehem. He was 19.

- **1976** - President Samora Machel of Mozambique closes his frontier with Rhodesia, seizes all Rhodesian assets in the country and places Mozambique on a war footing as a result of a "hot pursuit" attack by Rhodesian security forces during the previous week in which twenty-four guerrillas were killed inside Mozambique.
- **1976** - US government under President Gerald Ford discloses that it has decided to sell weapons to Egypt.
- **1980** - Rifleman Manuel Yenga from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action when he triggered a Soviet POM-Z2 Anti-Personnel Picket Mine inside an enemy bunker near Naulila during Operation Makalani. He was 25.
- **1983** - Special Constable Sam Iyambo from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.
- **1988** - The South West Afri-

ca Territory Force claims to have killed sixty Swapo insurgents in various skirmishes in the previous month, bringing the total this year to eighty-six. According to the SWATF, the security forces suffered no losses.

- **1991** - Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) chief-of-staff Chris Hani says as long as the SADF continues recruitment and training, his organisation will continue recruiting members and building underground structures.
- **1993** - An American soldier is killed by a land mine in Somalia and a second dies in a truck crash, bringing to six the number of Americans killed in Operation Restore Hope.
- **2004** - Angered by the way President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced to flee his country, the 15-nation Caribbean Community says it will not provide troops for the UN peacekeeping force to Haiti. Aristide claimed that he was abducted at gunpoint by US Marines and sent into exile in South Africa.

4 March

- **1900** - Boers are defeated by Lord Roberts at Driefontein in the Free State.
- **1945** - US Army Air Force B-24s accidentally bomb Zurich.
- **1945** - Finland declares war on Nazi Germany.
- **1968** - Leading Air Mechanic James Ross Brum



Chris Hani

- mer from Air Operations School Langebaanweg was accidentally killed while mounting a radio antenna on the roof of a hanger at AFB Langebaanweg. The asbestos roofing gave way and he fell to his death. He was 24.
- **1970** - French submarine 'Eurydice' explodes while submerged in the Mediterranean, 57 die.
 - **1981** - Rifleman Frans Karel Petrus Burger from the Cape Town Highlanders was Reported Missing while crossing a river when on a patrol near Ruacana. He disappeared under the water and despite an intensive search, his body was never located. He was 22.
 - **1982** - Two members of 31 Battalion (201 Battalion SWATF) were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line. They were: Rifleman Mahorison Rodriques (21). Rifleman Llewellyn Verwey (20).
 - **1983** - Two members from 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola during Operation Snoek. They were: Sergeant Augusto Mande (30). Rifleman Joao Daniel Kativa (26).
 - **1984** - Rifleman Patrick Kudumo from 902 Battalion SWATF was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier while on duty in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
 - **1986** - Private Petrus Dolf from the Army Catering Corps was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident, at Os-hakati. He was 24.
 - **1986** - Rifleman Benjamin Tjenda from 201 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19
 - **1990** - Ciskei's President Lennox Sebe is overthrown in a coup. The homeland's new military leader, Brigadier Oupa Gqozo, announces that his government's ultimate goal is reincorporating the territory into South Africa. Looting and burning continue for two days and about twenty-seven people die in violence.

5 March

- **1916** - SA troops led by General Jan Smuts invade East Africa in their confrontation with German forces in World War I.
- **1936** - Maiden flight of the prototype Supermarine Spitfire.
- **1942** - Burma: British appoint Sir Harold Alexander Commander-in-Chief.
- **1942** - The US Navy Seabees are established.
- **1945** - US VII Corps captures Cologne.
- **1953** - Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin dies at the age of 73.
- **1968** - Rifleman Cornelius Andre Grobler from 6 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident in Grahams-town. He was 20.

- **1974** - Rifleman Gerhardus Johannes Jacobus van Rhyne from 6 SAI died from gunshot wounds accidentally sustained at Bwabwata, Western Caprivi. He was 18.
- **1980** - Rifleman Johannes Jacobus Maass from Regiment Erongo was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1980** - Rifleman Eric Norman van Reenen from 52 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line in Northern Owamboland. He was 29.
- **1990** - SA sends troops to Ciskei to suppress mob attacks on factories and shops after military coup under Brigadier Gqozo ousted authoritarian President Sebe.
- **1993** - Lance Corporal Sydwell Boer from 3 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident on the N3 at Keyridge. He was 25.

6 March

- **1836** - Fort Alamo fell to Mexican troops led by General Santa Anna. The Mexicans had begun the siege of the Texas fort on 23February, ending it with the killing of the last defender. "Remember the Alamo" became a rallying cry for Texans who went on to defeat Santa Anna in the Battle of San Jacinto in April.
- **1881** - Armistice negotiations are concluded during the First Anglo-Boer War.

- **1944** - USAF begins daylight bombing of Berlin.
- **1971** - Private Francois Nel from the Army Service Corps was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Pretoria. He was 16.
- **1976** - Sergeant Trevor Walter August Booysen from Regiment Westelike Provinsie was accidentally killed at Ruacana when he fell off the back of a moving vehicle. He was 29.
- **1980** - Lance Bombardier Matthew Johannes Naus from 14 Artillery Regiment died from a gunshot wound that was apparently self-inflicted. He was 19.
- **1983** - Two members from 1 Medium Battery, 4 Artillery Regiment that were attached to 61 Mech Battalion, were Killed in Action while on guard duty on a farm near Tsumeb that was located well below the "Red Line". A small group of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents attacked the farm and shot them both at point blank range. The casualties were: Gunner Christo Francois Bezuidenhout (20). Gunner Jameson Bosse (19).
- **1984** - Martin Niemöller, WW I U-boat skipper, anti-Nazi clergyman, at 92.
- **1985** - Special Constable Matheus Oukongo from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 28.
- **1986** - Private Dawid Johannes Retief from 6 Maintenance Unit accidentally drowned in the operational area when his Military vehicle skidded off the road and landed in a river, leaving him trapped inside the vehicle. He was 19.
- **1986** - Corporal Pieter Jeremias Smith from the Specialist Unit died in the Tygerberg Hospital from multiple shrapnel wounds sustained in an accidental mortar bomb explosion. He was 21.
- **1993** - Unita rebels capture Angola's second largest city, Huambo, after a two-month battle with government troops.

7 March

- **1876** - During the second invasion of Abyssinia by Egypt, the Egyptian forces are defeated at Gura by the Ethiopians under King Yohannes.
- **1900** - The Battle of Poplar Grove (or Modderivierspoort) takes place. President Paul Kruger escapes with the help of General De Wet.
- **1902** - General De la Rey defeats and captures General Methuen in the Battle of Tweebosch (or De Klipdrift) in Western Transvaal, the last important battle won by the Boer forces. Methuen

and more than 870 soldiers are captured.

- **1936** - Hitler breaks the Treaty of Versailles, sends troops into the Rhineland, and the Allies fail to act.
- **1941** - WWII: British troops invade Italian-occupied Abyssinia, now Ethiopia.
- **1941** - Gunther Prien, daring submarine captain of 'U-47', is killed in action at the age of 34.
- **1942** - First black cadets graduate from the USAAF flying school at Tuskegee.
- **1943** - Japanese refuse a German request to join war against Russia.
- **1945** - Troops of the US 9th Armored Div, commanded by German-born Lt. Karl Timmerman, capture the Ludendorff Bridge over the Rhine at Remagen.
- **1952** - Job Masego, WW2 veteran who sunk a German supply boat while a prisoner of war after the capture of Tobruk, dies in Springs, Tvl. A street and a school in Kwa Thema have been named after him and in 1997 the SAS Kobie Coetzee was renamed SAS Job Masego.
- **1977** - The Defence Amendment Bill, first published on 31 January 1977, becomes law. Under it the State President is empowered to invoke powers of censorship and of commandeering premises. Service in defence of the Republic now includes anti-terrorist operations as well as the prevention and suppression of internal dis

order and there can be greater flexibility and speed in mobilisation.

- **1980** - Three members from 13 Field Engineer Squadron were Killed in Action at the Chandelier near Elundu when a booby-trapped landmine coupled together with other improvised explosive devices, exploded while they were in the process of defusing it. The casualties were: Sergeant Deon van der Vyver (21). Corporal Antonie Oberholzer (22). Sapper Willem Johannes Steenkamp Prinsloo (22).
- **1982** - Six Front Line States meet in Maputo and decide to coordinate further their military and economic policies to counter South Africa's economic and military aggression.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal Owen Christopher Williams from 5 SAI, attached to 101 Battalion Romeo Mike was accidentally killed in a Rifle Grenade explosion while on operations in Southern Angola. He was 21.
- **1985** - Corporal Deon van Niekerk from the Northern Transvaal Command Provost Unit was Reported Missing in Clubview, Pretoria while on official traffic control duty during a military exercise. A large truck filled with tons of builders gravel jack-knifed on the Old Johannesburg Road and overturned in the area where he had been doing duty. His body was only dis-

covered two days later when the builders gravel was removed. He was 20.

- **1986** - The State of Emergency imposed on 21 July 1985, is lifted.
- **1991** - 2nd Lieutenant Steven van Rooyen from the Dog Training Centre accidentally drowned in the Blyde River at Belvedere. He was 19.
- **1993** - Angola says its troops have withdrawn from Huambo after two months of fighting with rebels that left 10,000 dead.
- **1993** - The SADF's 31 Battalion, composed primarily of the San (Bushmen) battalion who fought in the war in Namibia and has lately been deployed in South African townships, is disbanded at a public ceremony in the Cape province. The 1,000 soldiers will be transferred to other units in the northern Cape and will help patrol the border to Namibia.
- **1994** - Multinational African army installs new government in Liberia.
- **2004** - Zimbabwe seizes a US-registered cargo plane carrying sixty-four suspected mercenaries and military equipment. Simon Mann, of the mercenary outfit Executive Outcomes, is arrested along with five others on the tarmac, after the Zimbabwean authorities have been tipped off by the SA government.

8 March

- **1902** - General De la Rey releases General Lord Methuen after his wounds are treated.
- **1916** - Battle of Dujaila: The Turks beat off a British attempt to relieve the siege of Kut.
- **1942** - Netherlands Indies surrender to the Japanese.
- **1950** - USSR announces they have developed the atomic bomb.
- **1963** - Air Mechanic Pieter Jacobus Hattingh from 35 Squadron was killed in a Ferret Armoured car accident while carrying out in-lying Picket duty patrol of the Security Fence at Air Force Base Ysterplaat. He was 20.
- **1964** - General of Infantry Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, dies aged 83.
- **1965** - First US combat troops (3,500 Marines) arrive in Vietnam.
- **1972** - Trooper Hubert Terrance Caddy from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed at Zeerust when his Eland Armoured Car overturned during a training exercise. He was 20.
- **1973** - Maritime headquarters at Silvermine is opened.
- **1977** - Corporal Abraham Liebergh Pelser from 7 SAI saved the lives of his fellow soldiers on the afternoon of 08 March 1977. Some of the troops used to straighten the pins on the hand grenades, making them easier

to extract and then hook the grenades into their webbing via the grenade handle. Unfortunately, when Abraham took off his webbing after returning to Nkurukuru Base from a patrol, his thumb caught on the grenade pin and pulled it out. The armed M26 grenade fell onto the floor in the middle of the tent and without hesitation, he dived onto the grenade and absorbed the full force of the explosion that killed him instantly but saved the lives of all the others in the tent. He was 21.

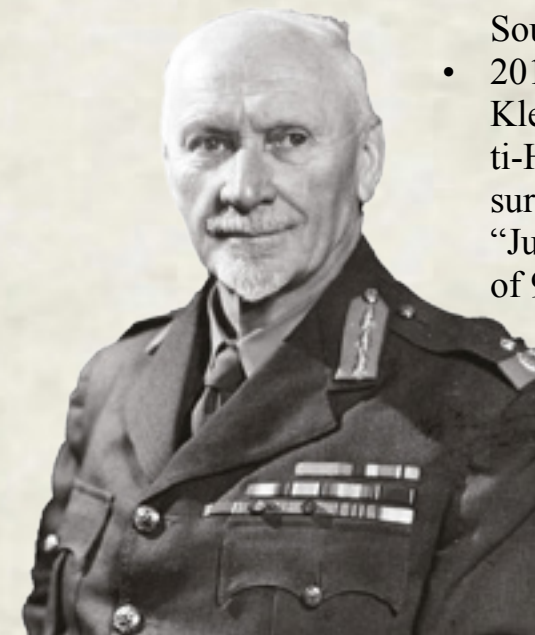
- **1983** - Rifleman Adriaan Jacobus Booysen Thirion from the Boksburg Commando was accidentally killed in a mortar bomb explosion in Southern Angola. He was 24.
- **1987** - Two members from 54 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents at Elundu. They were: Corporal Irvine Manuel Daniels (28). Rifleman Henry Jo-

hannes Metcalfe (27).

- **1987** - Private Allen Alberto Mariano from 101 Field Workshops was accidentally killed at Omauni in Owamboland while loading a damaged vehicle onto a low-bed. The crane lift chain broke and the vehicle fell onto him, killing him instantly. He was 19.
- **1988** - Trooper Mark Steven Bannell from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed whilst doing riot patrol on the outskirts of East London when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned. He was 19.
- **1994** - President Lucas Mangope calls out troops as unrest flares in Bophuthatswana.
- **1996** - Lt Col John "Mad Jack" or "Fighting Jack" Churchill, DSO, MC, who fought WW II with a longbow, claymore, & bagpipes, dies at the age of 89.
- **2004** - Fifteen suspected mercenaries are arrested in Equatorial Guinea, including the alleged leader of the advance party, Nick du Toit. Most of the suspects are South African.
- 2013 - Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist, German officer, anti-Hitler conspirator, last surviving veteran of the "July Plot", dies at the age of 90.

9 March

- **1831** - The French Foreign Legion is founded in Algeria to serve in the French colonies in Africa.
- **1864** - Ulysses S. Grant was commissioned as a Lieutenant General and became commander of the Union armies.
- **1916** - Germany declares war on Portugal.
- **1922** - General Jan Smuts declares martial law in the Transvaal after mobilising the active citizen force in a bid to quell the dispute of striking mineworkers.
- **1945** - US B-29s drop 1,665 tons of incendiaries on Tokyo, creating a firestorm; by dawn on the 10th between 80,000-120,000 have died, the highest toll in a single air raid, exceeding even the atomic bombs
- **1969** - Lt General Moneim Riad, chief of staff of Egypt's armed forces, is killed during Israeli-Egyptian gun battle across Suez Canal.
- **1977** - Lieutenant Gerrit Keulder from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action whilst on patrol in Henombe area of Southern Angola. He was 21.
- **1977** - Rifleman P. Katanga from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a Contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 19.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Errol Carl Moolman from the



Jan Smuts

Rand Light Infantry was accidentally drowned in a rowing boat accident while serving in the Operational Area. He was 20.

- **1982** - Rifleman John Verrooy from the South African Cape Corps attached to Wenela Base was accidentally drowned when he fell off a pont near Wenela Base in Eastern Caprivi. He was 21.
- **1984** - Rifleman W.K. Matende from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 20.
- **1985** - Two members from 6 SAI were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Grahamstown. The casualties were: Rifleman Shaun Patrick Atkins (21). Rifleman Orlando de Portugal Goncalves (19).
- **1985** - Rifleman Eduardo Jonas from 101 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 23.
- **1987** - Corporal Matthew William Wallace McGregor from 2 Field Engineer Regiment attached to 25 Field Squadron was critically wounded in Action during operations in South Western Angola.
- **1988** - Special Constable Fransiskus Lukas from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet)

was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.

- **2007** - Chief of the SA Air Force (SAAF) Lieutenant-General Carlo Gagliano announces Waterkloof air force base the country's most prominent air force base is closing for all flying operations for eighteen months in order to upgrade the base's main runway. Work is to start in July and should last about eighteen months.

10 March

- **1880** - The Salvation Army was founded in the United States. The social service organization was first founded in England by William Booth and operates today in 90 countries.
- **1900** - The British under Lord Roberts defeats the Boers in the battle of Driefontein.
- **1922** - Angry White workers, on strike since 28 December, storm and occupy police stations, railway installations and mines on the Rand. They also attack the city's main post office and power station in a mass protest that has, in a few hours, turned into open rebellion against the state. Within four days the revolt is crushed. 153 people, including 72 of the state forces, lie dead, 534 are injured.
- **1944** - Severe restrictions

are imposed on all private travel in the UK, in preparation for D-Day.

- **1964** - US begins reconnaissance flights over East Germany.
- **1966** - North Vietnamese capture US Green Beret Camp in the Ashau Valley.
- **1970** - Corporal Hermanus Stephanus van der Merwe from Northern Air Defence Sector, Devon was killed while travelling in a military bus as part of a convoy en route to Devon. He was 18.
- **1982** - Rifleman Joao Baptista from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident near Rundu. He was 26.
- **1982** - The trial begins in the Natal Supreme Court of the mercenaries accused of hijacking an airliner to flee from the Seychelles after a failed coup on 25-26 November 1981.
- **1986** - Rifleman Pinecas Amupolo from 101 Battalion SWATF Died of Wounds received when his Samil 100 Kwevoel vehicle was hit by a Soviet RPG-7 anti-tank rocket. He was 25.
- **1988** - Rifleman Lodewickus Johannes Moolman from Regiment Bloemspruit was killed when he was attacked and trampled to death by an elephant during a patrol near the Nwamedzi Base in the Kruger National Park. He was 29.
- **1997** - South African arms manufacturer Denel an-

nounces that it will unveil six new products at a United Arab Emirates weapons exhibition to increase its sales, especially in the Middle East.

11 March

- **1779** - The US Army Corps of Engineers is established.
- **1941** - During World War II, the Lend-Lease program began allowing Britain to receive American weapons, machines, raw materials, training and repair services. Ships, planes, guns and shells, along with food, clothing and metals went to the embattled British while American warships began patrolling the North Atlantic and U.S troops were stationed in Greenland and Iceland.
- **1942** - Paris: First deportation train leaves for Auschwitz.
- **1945** - 1,000 Allied bombers drop over 4,000 tons of bombs on Essen.
- **1979** - Rifleman Paul William Ernest Carroll from 7 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 20.
- **1984** - Staff Sergeant David John Ward from 101 Battalion SWATF was critically wounded in the hip when his team was ambushed by SWAPO/PLAN and FAPLA forces in Southern Angola. He died from blood loss be-

fore he could be evacuated. He was 24.

- **1985** - Rifleman K. Iyango from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN and FAPLA forces in Southern Angola. He was 24.
- **1987** - Rifleman E. Nangula from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike Team 901 SSC-RM-3 SWATF was Killed in Action in Southern Angola after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds when he triggered a Soviet POM-Z2 Anti-Personal Picket Mine. He was 22.
- **1988** - Rifleman Piet-er Leon Hendrik van Dyk from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned during anti-crime operations in Mamelodi Township. He was 18.
- **1994** - Three AWB members shot and killed during the invasion of Bophuthatswana.
- **1879** - A convoy of the British 80th Regt. is over-run at Ntombe River, northern Zululand by a force of 2 000 Zulus. Of the sixty men in the camp, only fifteen escape.
- **1918** - The British submarine 'D-3' is sunk off the French coast, by a French airship which mistook her for a U-boat.
- **1938** - Nazis invaded Austria, then absorbed the country into Hitler's Reich.

12 March

- **1945** - Anne Frank, dies in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp of typhus. She was 14.
- **1951** - North Korean/Red Chinese troops driven out of Seoul.
- **1962** - Defence Minister J.J. Fouché outlines the basic principles of South Africa's defence policy and gives details of measures being taken to build up the Defence Forces and to make South Africa self-supporting in military equipment.
- **1963** - Major Anthony Dennis Michael Lawrenson AFC from Air Force Base Waterkloof was killed when his Dornier Do-27A, Serial No. 5431 crashed near Belfast while on a training flight. He was 43.
- **1968** - P.W. Botha, the Minister of Defence, reports to the Senate on the progress of the Arms Industry and defines the main aims of South Africa's defence policy.
- **1975** - Lieutenant Christopher Stuart Franklin from 7 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed near Oudtshoorn. He was 21.
- **1984** - Rifleman L. Dala from 31 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 22.
- **1987** - Rifleman J.W.L. Johannes from 5 Recce Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy

- forces. He was 24.
- **1987** - Rifleman Faustino Sikote from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with FAPLA forces near Evale in Southern Angola during Operation Kakebeen. He was 27.
 - **1987** - Special Constable Simon Venusiu from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
 - **1988** - Rifleman Stephen Ebenezer Futchter from 32 Battalion was Reported Missing after he disappeared in the Okavango River one night while swimming behind the Pont near Buffalo Base. It is suspected that he was either taken by a crocodile or a hippo. His body was never located despite an intensive search. He remains unaccounted for. He was 20.
 - **1989** - Rifleman Thulani Maxwei Khuluse from 121 Battalion was killed in a shooting incident in the Community Hall at Verulam. He was 25.
 - **1999** - Poland, Hungary, & the Czech Republic join NATO.
- Goebbels Minister of Information.
- **1942** - Julia Flikke, of the Nurse Corps, becomes the first woman colonel in the US Army.
 - **1942** - The U.S. Army K9 Corps is established.
 - **1943** - A plot to kill Hitler by German army officers failed as a bomb planted aboard his plane failed to explode due to a faulty detonator.
 - **1954** - General Giap's Viet Minh attack That Bien Phu.
 - **1977** - Rifleman Jacobus Frederick Steyn from 5 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident at the Kongola Bridge. He was 19.
 - **1982** - Three members of 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during Operation Super in Southern Angola. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Petrus Johannes Stephanus Nel (HC Posthumous) (19). Corporal Phillip Thomas Stewart (23). Corporal Yombi João (32).
 - **1983** - Rifleman Andrew Matthews Smit from 5 SAI was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion in Southern Angola. He was 18.
 - **1986** - Corporal Victor Rodrigues Pedro from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment accidentally drowned in Durban during a training exercise. He was 31.
 - **1988** - Private Carel Johannes Beneke from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed when his military vehicle

13 March

- **1900** - British forces under Lord Roberts take Bloemfontein.
- **1933** - Hitler makes Josef

- overtaken near Buffalo. He was 18.
- **1988** - Lieutenant (Doctor) Herman Jan Roelof Gerding from the SA Medical Corps Headquarters was killed while travelling as a passenger in a military ambulance. He was 35.
- **2002** - The Angolan government announces a unilateral ceasefire in its 27-year civil war against Unita, to begin the next day.

14 March

- **1915** - German cruiser 'Dresden' scuttled off Chile.
- **1933** - Winston Churchill calls for better air defensive of Britain.
- **1941** - German Air Raid on Clydbank: After two night of bombing nearly every building the town is damaged or destroyed, more than 500 are dead, and over 50,000 homeless.
- **1961** - Two members from Air Force Base Zwartkop were killed when their Ferret Scout Car overturned while on a night Base Perimeter Patrol. The casualties were: Air Sergeant James George McKelvey (30). Air Sergeant Nicolaas Jacobus Neveling (23).
- **1979** - Two members of 12 Squadron deployed to Grootfontein for Operation Rekstok and Safraan were killed in action. They were: Lieutenant (Pilot) Dewald Wally Marais (24). 2nd Lieutenant (Navigator)

- Owen John Doyle (21).
 - **1980** - 2nd Lieutenant Phillipus Jacob Rudolph Oosthuizen from 5 SAI was Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds during an ambush on the Chandelier Road, about 10km from Nkongo Base when a Soviet 82mm High Explosive mortar bomb exploded next to him. He was 20.
 - **1984** - Lieutenant Stanley Saillard Ponder from the South African Medical Corps, a Dental Practitioner attached to 2 Field Engineer Regiment, was killed at Grootfontein when his vehicle was involved in a head-on collision with a police vehicle while he was traveling to a nearby clinic. He was 25.
 - **1985** - 2nd Lieutenant Guy Claude Udo Winsto Mogens De Beurges from 121 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy
- forces in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1985** - Special Constable Joans Andungi from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.
 - **1987** - Special Constable Ndjendjela Vilho from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.
 - **1988** - Rifleman Zwelithini Andrias Lukhelo from 121 Battalion was killed while on patrol in the Tembe Elephant Park when he was trampled to death by an enraged elephant. He was 32.
 - **1992** - Rifleman Marius Gottfreidt Uitenweerde from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident near Benoni. He was 26.

15 March

- **1900** - Lord Roberts issues his first proclamation, offering amnesty to burghers, except for the leaders.
- **1922** - The artillery bombards the strikers' strong-

Josef Goebbels



- hold at Fordsburg Square during the Rand Revolt and it falls to the government. Before presumably committing suicide in this building, the two communist leaders, Fisher and Spendiff, left a joint note: 'We died for what we believed in the Cause'.
- **1943** - Third Battle of Kharkov: Germans under Manstein retake the city from the Soviets.
- **1944** - The ancient Abbey of Monte Cassino is destroyed by Allied bombing and shelling.
- **1957** - Britain becomes the third nation to detonate a nuclear bomb.
- **1972** - Rifleman Werner Albrecht from the Technical Service Corps attached to 1 Field Ambulance Unit was accidentally killed when a steam pressure cooker exploded at Elandsfontein. He was 19.
- **1982** - Rifleman Johannes Jasva from Northern Transvaal Command was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 18.
- **1986** - Special Constable Ernesto Hishidivali from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 28.
- **1988** - Angola releases the bodies of two SA Defence Force commandos killed in

a raid on Cabinda oil depots in 1985, and the SADF repatriates twelve captured MPLA soldiers.

16 March

- **1802** - The U.S. Military Academy at West Point opens its doors on this day.
- **1916** - The new Dutch passenger liner 'Tubatina' is torpedoed off the Netherlands, Germany denies responsibility despite recovery of portions of the torpedo.
- **1935** - Hitler announces German rearmament, after years of covert efforts under the Weimar Republic, in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.
- **1968** - During the Vietnam War, the My Lai Massacre occurred as American soldiers of Charlie Company murdered 504 Vietnamese men, women, and children. Twenty-five U.S. Army officers were later charged with complicity in the massacre and subsequent cover-up, but only one was convicted, and later pardoned by President Richard Nixon.
- **1983** - Chief Petty Officer Nadiem Mooi from the South African Navy Provost Unit was accidentally killed while attached to 102 Battalion SWATF. He was 34.
- **1984** - Two members of the South African Cape Corps and one from the Army Catering Corps were killed after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds in an accidental mortar bomb ex-

plosion at Ruacana. They were: Corporal Theo Christopeus Noel Maseti (Army Catering Corps) (21). Rifleman Charles Johannes Coram (19). Rifleman Willem Swartz (22).

- **1984** - Rifleman P. Hauptindi from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 20.
- **1984** - Prime Minister P.W. Botha and President Samora Machel of Mozambique sign the Nkomati Accord at the common border on the banks of the Komati River a step hailed as a major move towards peace, stability and international co-operation in Southern Africa.
- **1987** - Two members from 5 SAI were killed when their Samil 50 vehicle overturned 10km east of Colenso while ferrying troops from Durban Airport to the 5 SAI Base at Ladysmith. They were: Rifleman Gavin Gainsford (18). Rifleman John Adriaan Marlow (18).

17 March (St Patrick's Day)

- **1900** - President Kruger and President Steyn appoint Count Georges de Villebois-Mareuil as general in Kroonstad during the South African War. He is killed three weeks later in combat in Boshof, Free State.
- **1900** - A Great combined Republican Council of War is held at Kroonstad, attended by both presidents and com-

manders of the Boer forces, during which far-reaching tactical decisions are taken about the future conduct of the war.

- **1916** - The Imperial Japanese Naval Air Service is established.
- **1942** - Belzec Concentration Camp opens.
- **1966** - US mini-sub locates a missing H-bomb in the Mediterranean off Palomares, Spain.
- **1977** - Sapper Christo Kemp from 14 Field Regiment was Killed in Action during mine clearing operations. He was 23.
- **1977** - Angolan troops invading Zaire take important copper-mining centre of Kolwezi.
- **1981** - Rifleman Petrus Jacobus Viljoen from the Pietermaritzburg Commando was Killed in Action during a skirmish with FRELIMO troops near Ponta do Ouro. He was 23.
- **1984** - A Defence Force spokesman confirms in Cape Town that South Africa is to stop supplying the United States and Britain with intelligence reports on the movements of Soviet warships around the Cape by the end of the year.
- **1987** - Two members from 101 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents in Southern Angola just north of the Cutline. The Casualties were: Rifleman Craig Douglas

Wetton (19). Rifleman M. Moses (20).

- **1997** - Denel says no deal has been reached over the sale of arms to Syria.

18 March

- **1915** - British & French lose six ships attempting to force the Dardanelles.
- **1917** - French battleship 'Danton' is sunk off Sardinia by a German u-boat, 296 die.
- **1922** - The strike by mine-workers on the Witwatersrand, also known as the Rand Revolt, ends. More than 200 people were killed during the strike, which put thousands out of work and caused a devastating loss in coal and gold production.
- **1940** - Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini hold a meeting at the Brenner Pass during which the Italian dictator agrees to join in Germany's war against France and Britain.
- **1944** - German troops seize control of Hungary.
- **1949** - The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is founded.
- **1952** - Communist offensive in Korea begins.
- **1963** - War of independence is launched against Portugal in Guinea-Bissau.
- **1969** - Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, attends the launching in France of the first of three Daphne class submarines being built for the South African Navy.
- **1975** - Herbert Chitepo, 52,

ZANU leader, is killed in Lusaka when his car blows up in an explosion.

- **1986** - Warrant Officer Class 1 Frederick Petrus Johannes Cornelius from 5 Maintenance Unit was critically wounded in Northern Owamboland when his vehicle detonated a landmine. Evacuated back to the RSA, he succumbed to his wounds in 1 Military Hospital later that evening. He was 31.
- **1987** - Israel freezes military contracts and imposes cultural and tourism sanctions on South Africa.

19 March

- **1858** - War against the Basuto is declared in Bloemfontein.
- **1945** - Adolf Hitler orders total destruction of German infrastructure.
- **1979** - Private Louis Gerhard Nel was critically injured in an aircraft ejection seat accident on the Squadron and succumbed to his injuries in 1 Military Hospital. He was 20.
- **1981** - Gunner Cornelius Johannes Janse van Rensburg from 14 Field Regiment died in 1 Military Hospital after being diagnosed with a brain tumour. He was 19.
- **1988** - Major Jan Willem van Coppenhagen from 1 Squadron was Reported Missing in Action in Southern Angola when his Dassault Mirage F1AZ failed to return from a low level night diversion strike on enemy

installations at Baixa Longa in Angola with radio silence being enforced. After an intensive search, the wreckage of the aircraft together with the body of the pilot were located inside Angola, not far from the Cut Line. He was 33.

- **1989** - Maiden flight of the Boeing V-22 Osprey VTOL aircraft.
- **1994** - Rifleman Phethiso Simeon Makhatha from 115 Battalion was killed after suffering multiple head injuries when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned while on Township Patrol. He was 27.
- **2003** - The United States launched an attack against Iraq to topple dictator Saddam Hussein from power. The attack commenced with aerial strikes against military sites, followed the next day by an invasion of southern Iraq by U.S. and British ground troops.

20 March

- **1896** - The second Matabele war breaks out.
- **1902** - In the British House of Commons David Lloyd George suggests that there are as many as 30 000 armed Blacks in British military employ in South Africa.
- **1933** - The Nazis open their first concentration camp, at Dachau, near Munich.
- **1942** - General Douglas MacArthur vows "I shall return".
- **1981** - Seaman Derek Jerome Meyer of the 1st Ma

- rine Brigade, South African Marine Corps, was killed instantly in a shooting incident while participating in military exercises being held near Vryburg. He was 19.
 - **1982** - Rifleman Dumba Katibelo from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action near the Cut-Line during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 23.
 - **1983** - Special Sergeant Atytale Amalua from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 32.
 - **1984** - Gunner Joachim Jacobus Badenhorst from 61 Mechanised Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned on a wet road at Tsumeb. He was 19.
 - **1985** - Rifleman Jan Andries Coetzee from 7 SAI was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident on the Witbank Highway. He was 20.
 - **1988** - Corporal Gregory MacKenzie Steward from 44 Parachute Pathfinder Company was called up for a three-month camp in March 1988. He was officially Reported Missing after participating in a Sunday night practice parachute jump at Murray Hill just north of Pretoria. An intensive search was launched and his body was located an hour later and recovered. He was 20.
 - **1989** - Lance Corporal Philip Swartz from 52 Battalion was killed in a motor cycle accident at Oshakati. He was 28.
 - **1999** - The African People's Liberation Army (APLA), armed section of the PAC, is disbanded in the Umtata stadium by Dr Stanley Mogoba.
- 21 March**
- **1918** - During World War I, the Second Battle of the Somme began as German General Erich von Ludendorff launched an all-out drive to win the war.
 - **1943** - A suicide/assassination plot by German Army officers against Hitler failed as the conspirators were unable to locate a short fuse for the bomb which was to be carried in the coat pocket of General von Gersdorff to ceremonies Hitler was attending.
 - **1945** - Okinawa: Japanese use Okha suicide planes for the first time.
 - **1946** - The US Strategic Air Command is established.
 - **1966** - Two members from Central Flying School Dunsfottar were killed when their AT-6 Harvard crashed near Eendrag during a routine training flight. They were: Lieutenant (Pilot Instructor) Johannes Nicolaas Taljaard (22). Candidate Officer (Pupil Pilot) Ian Ashton Fraser

- (19).
- **1975** - Two members from 17 Squadron were killed when their Alouette III, Serial Number 23 struck power lines 7km North of Windhoek and caught fire. The Crew and civilian passengers were killed during the subsequent emergency landing. The Crew were: Lieutenant (Pilot) Geoffrey Herbert Clark (28). Sergeant (Flight Engineer) Christiaan Hermanus Pretorius (29).
- **1976** - Warrant Officer Class II Keith Hugh Hamilton from 250 Air Defence Artillery Group, South African Air Force died in 1 Military Hospital after developing blood clots on the lungs. He was 30.
- **1979** - Lance Corporal Johannes Gerhardus Olivier from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in South Eastern Angola near the Kavangoland Border. He was 22.
- **1979** - Rifleman John Henry van Drutten from the Lydenburg Commando collapsed and died from heat exhaustion during a Route March at Phalaborwa. He was 23.
- **1980** - Rifleman Carlos Conceicao Da Trindade from 32 Battalion Died of Wounds in the Grootfontein Hospital after being critically wounded on 13 March 1980 during Operation Makalani in Southern Angola. He was 20.

- **1981** - Major Carel Arnold Briers from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike was accidentally electrocuted at the Miershoop training base just south of Okatope. He was 27.
- **1984** - Rifleman Eugene Cedric Terblanche from 6 SAI contracted malaria and was admitted to the Grahamstown Provincial Hospital where he died on 21 March 1984. He was 19.
- **1984** - Soviet sub collides with USS 'Kitty Hawk' (CV-63) off Japan.
- **1990** - Authorities ordered an inquiry into the funding of the Civil Co-operation Bureau, a secret military unit, accused of political assassinations.
- **1997** - South African mercenaries, hired by the Papua New Guinea government to help crush a separatist rebellion, arrive back in South Africa. Executive Outcomes say that the men should not be seen as mercenaries, but as consultants.

23 March

22 March

- **1900** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War the Portuguese government sanctions the passage of British troops and stores via Beira, Mozambique, thereby violating their previous policy of neutrality.
- **1945** - Patton's Third Army crosses the Rhine.
- **1881** - During the First Anglo-Boer War a peace agreement between the Transvaal Republic and England is ratified and the final agreement is incorporated into the Pretoria Convention, which was signed on 3 August 1881.
- **1881** - The 3-months siege of British soldiers in the Old Fort in Potchefstroom ends amicably with Boer leader Piet Cronje inviting the British officers to dinner at the Royal Hotel. Twenty-five British soldiers and six Boer soldiers died during the siege.
- **1918** - Paris is shelled by German very-long range artillery.
- **1944** - RAF Flight Sergeant

- Nicholas Alkemade survives a 5,500 m fall without a parachute after his Lancaster is hit near Berlin.
- **1962** - French government uses fighter planes and tanks in attempt to end insurrection by European rightists in Algeria.
- **1965** - Two SAAF members, one from 7 Squadron and one from 8 Squadron were killed when their AT-6 Harvard crashed near Bloemfontein during a night cross country exercise. It appears that the crew may have become disorientated as the aircraft flew vertically into the ground while still under full power. The crew were: 2nd Lieutenant (Pilot Instructor) Jacobus Johannes le Roux (22). Candidate Officer (Pupil Pilot) Robin Leslie Jarman (21).
- **1965** - Gunner Leonard Edward Parsons from Eastern Province Command was accidentally electrocuted. He was 18.
- **1980** - Corporal Renier Stephanus van Zyl from Regiment Namutoni SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1980** - Rifleman Robert Frederick McShane from the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg was critically injured in a hit-and-run accident just outside Hoopstad on 18 November 1979 while hitch-hiking home to Cape



George S Patton

Town on weekend pass. He succumbed to his injuries in hospital on 23 March 1980. He was 19.

- **1982** - Rifleman Johannes Dimbo from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds from a Soviet 60mm mortar bomb explosion during a SWAPO/PLAN insurgent attack near Nkongo. He was 22.
- **1982** - South Africa is to expand its military call-up to include all White men aged between seventeen and sixty-five, almost doubling the size of its forces. Commando units are to be strengthened.
- **1985** - 2nd Lieutenant Delarey Matthee from 3 SAI was accidentally shot and killed by own forces in his own ambush at Kamanjab. He was 24.
- **1988** - Constable Jacobus Ignatius van Zyl from the SWA Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action when his Z4S Casspir was hit by a Soviet RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1990** - Commandant Henry Walter Venter from 4 Vehicle Reserve Park was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Old Warmbaths Road near Pretoria. He was 40.
- **1997** - The first wave of a US military task force moves

cautiously into central Africa, preparing for a possible evacuation of Americans from Zaire.

- **2006** - Desmond Doss, conscientious objector who had earned a Medal of Honour as a medic on Okinawa, dies at the age of 87.

24 March

- **1900** - Newly appointed Combat General Count Georges de Villebois-Mareuil leaves Kroonstad with a 'flying column' consisting of fifty Dutchmen, twenty-five Frenchmen and eleven Afrikaners, aiming to blow up the railway line south of Kimberley to disrupt British lines of communications.
- **1941** - Donald Duck enlists in the US Army, for the first of six war cartoons.
- **1944** - The Great Escape: 76 Allied officers flee Stalag Luft 3.
- **1945** - Operation Varsity: Allied airborne crossing of the Rhine.
- **1951** - Two pilots of SA Air Force's No 2 (Flying Cheetah) Squadron, assisting the United Nations in the Korean War, blast a convoy of twelve stationary and camouflaged trucks with rocket-fire and destroy ten. In another operation, two "Flying Cheetahs" wipe out nine trucks.
- **1963** - Five members of the South African Defence Force were killed when the military vehicle in which

they were traveling as passengers, overturned at Voortrekkerhoogte. They were: Private Jacobus Gerhardus Roos Runkel (18). Signaller Ivan Leslie Taylor (19). Signaller Ulrich Andre Mulder from 2 Signal Regiment (18). Signaller Jacobus Johannes Helberg (17). Signaller Abraham Lodewicus Botha (20).

- **1972** - Private Leon George Muller from the Air Force Gymnasium died from heat exhaustion in 1 Military Hospital. He was 19.
- **1974** - Uganda crushes a coup attempt against President Idi Amin.
- **1975** - Rifleman Peter John van der Walt from 4 SAI died from a gunshot wound as a result of the accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while stationed in the Caprivi Strip. He was 18.
- **1976** - Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, British field marshal during World War 2 and commander of the Eighth Army in North Africa, dies at the age of 88.
- **1982** - Rifleman Gringo Jose' Manuel from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Buffalo. He was 23.
- **1986** - Commandant Charles Vernon Hochapfel from the South West Africa Gymnasium attached to 101 Battalion SWATF, died in 1 Military Hospital from Wounds received during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 44.

25 March

- **1858** - The battle of Koranaberg takes place during the Orange Free State-Basuto War.
- **1915** - First USN submarine disaster: USS 'F-4' sinks off Hawaii, 21 die.
- **1945** - US First Army breaks out of the Remagen bridgehead.
- **1966** - Lieutenant Francois Theron Mentz from Central Flying School Dunnottar was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed after flying into rising ground during low level flying near Middelburg. He was 22.
- **1976** - Trooper Reginald Edward Smith from the Natal Mounted Rifles died in Northern Owamboland from a gunshot wound as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle. He was 23.
- **1976** - Lance Corporal Willem Christoffel Swanepoel from 2 Parachute Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents north of Oshikango. He was 30.
- **1977** - Five members from Regiment Westelike Provinsie were killed and 71 injured on when a goods train loaded with iron ore collided with their stationary troop train at the Keetmanshoop station. The Casualties were: Rifleman Gary Albert Bricknell (22). Rifleman Petrus Johannes Jacobus Holtzhausen (27). Rifleman Wilhelm Hugo (26). Rifleman Hermanus Johannes Uys (25). Rifleman Paul Kady Donovan van Zyl (24).
- **1978** - Rifleman R. Desenga from 31 Battalion was accidentally shot and killed by a fellow soldier in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1980** - Two members from 42 Squadron were killed when their AM-3C Bosbok, Serial No. 923 crashed near Potchefstroom while carrying out low level flying. The crew were: Lieutenant Edwin Johannes le Roux (20). Lieutenant Pieter Frederick Smit (22).
- **1980** - Two crewmembers from 44 Squadron and a SAAF female Personnel Officer (passenger), were killed when their C-47 Dakota, based at Air Force Base Grootfontein, crashed between Tsumeb and Grootfontein while carrying out unauthorised low level flight. The casualties were: Lieutenant Johan Heinrich Leeuw (22). Lieutenant Cornelis Johannes Wessels (21). Candidate Officer (Miss) Elna Susan Swart (23).
- **1982** - Two members of Witwatersrand Command Headquarters were killed in a Military Vehicle Accident in Houghton. They were: Rifleman Johannes Theodorus Lombard (21). Rifleman Ivan John van Heerden (20).
- **1982** - In announcing the 1982 Defence Budget, Owen Horwood reaffirms

that the government's highest priority remains that of giving South Africa an effective defence capability and a self-sufficient arms industry.

- **1985** - Rifleman Colin Graham Dockerill from 6 SAI, detached to the Equestrian Centre, was killed instantly in Northern Owamboland while returning from a waterhole when he fell off his galloping horse and hit a tree trunk, breaking his neck. He was 20.
- **1988** - Rifleman Nicolaas Jacobus Vermeulen from 54 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 23.
- **1988** - Rifleman Simon Haindula from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 22.
- **1994** - Lance Corporal Phiti Joel Mokgolo from 7 SAI was killed in a motor vehicle accident near Rustenburg. He was 27.
- **1994** - American troops withdraw from Somalia after a 16-month humanitarian mission marred by fighting with the Somalis.

26 March

- **1917** - First Battle of Gaza: The Turks hold the British.
- **1945** - Seventh Army attacks Worms on the Rhine.
- **1957** - Two members from Central Flying School Dun

nottar were killed when their Harvard flew into rising ground near Trichardt during a night cross country flight. The aircraft disintegrated on impact and burnt out. The crew were: Lieutenant Andre Dewald de Klerk (25). 2nd Lieutenant Neil Rhodes Edward Ken-naugh (23).

- **1965** - Rifleman Andrew Mark Newton-Thompson from 1 SAI collapsed from heat exhaustion while on a cross country run and died in the Groote Schuur Hospital. He was 21.
- **1965** - Rifleman Johannes Rudolf Fourie from 5 SAI died from a gunshot wound resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle during a training exercise at Ladysmith. He was 18.
- **1976** - Rifleman Hermanus Stephanus Lombard Moss from the Kaffrarian Rifles was Killed in Action when his Unimog detonated a landmine just north of Ondangwa in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.
- **1977** - Rifleman Joao Antonio from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Buffalo while delivering supplies to the Base. He was 27.
- **1978** - Corporal Nicolaas Johannes Koekemoer from the Johannesburg Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Rhodesia. He was 24.
- **1979** - Camp David peace

treaty is signed, ending 30 years of war between Egypt and Israel.

- **1980** - Rifleman John Stephen Botha from 32 Battalion died at Buffalo Base from a gunshot wound apparently accidentally self-inflicted. No foul play was suspected. He was 19.
- **1984** - Lieutenant Hendrik Hans Jacob Maree from the South African Medical Corps attached to 202 Battalion SWATF was killed in a motor vehicle accident at Rundu. He was 23.
- **1991** - Soldiers overthrow Mali's military dictator after days of rioting and protests that leave dozens dead.

27 March

- **1881** - A Boer force of 150 men storms Majuba and drives out 400 British troops in the decisive battle of the Anglo-Transvaal War.
- **1900** - General Piet Joubert, commandant-general of the Boer forces and vice-president of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, dies of gastritis in Pretoria.
- **1933** - Japan leaves the League of Nations.
- **1941** - Himmler orders building of the Auschwitz concentration camp.
- **1945** - The last German V-2 rocket attack on Britain: 134 people, many of them Jewish, are killed Whitechapel, London.
- **1964** - UN peacekeeping troops arrive on Cyprus.

• **1968** - Captain Andries Jacobus Mouton from Air Operations School was killed when his De Havilland Vampire T-55 Mk II was involved in a mid-air collision with a Canadair C13L Sabre piloted by Lt Liebenberg of 1 Squadron near Pietersburg. He was 29.

- **1975** - Minister of Defence P.W. Botha presents a White Paper outlining defence policy and justifying the increased expenditure which now accounts for one-fifth of the country's revenue budget.
- **1979** - Rifleman Dixon Njunge from 201 Battalion SWATF was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1981** - Rifleman Daniel Johannes Louw from the South African Cape Corps killed at M'pacha after suffering a fatal gunshot wound as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 20.
- **1983** - Three members from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Special Sergeant Edward Mutuku (29). Special Constable Matheus Funet (24). Special Constable Johannes Muyongo (25).

- **1987** - Rifleman Manuel Maundu from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 22.

28 March

- **1879** - Nearly one hundred officers and men of Wood's column are killed in a desperate fight against a Zulu impi on Hlobane Mountain during the Anglo-Zulu War.
- **1915** - German submarine 'U-28' torpedoes the British liner 'Falaba' in St. George's Channel, 104 die.
- **1942** - Operation Chariot: Nocturnal Royal Navy/Royal Marine commando raid blocks the 'Normandie' dock in Nazi-occupied St Nazaire. Five VCs are awarded as a result of the raid.
- **1945** - Last V-1 buzz bomb attack on London.
- **1969** - Dwight D. Eisenhower, US President, 5-star general and Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe, dies at the age of 78.

• **1978** - Sapper Michael Andries Stephanus Nel from 101 Field Engineer Regiment was Reported Missing while swimming in the Okavango River after he was attacked by a crocodile. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 19.

- **1979** - The World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa is launched in London, with the support of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid. Several Heads of State and Government are its patrons and Abdul S. Minty its Director.
- **1979** - Sergeant Robert Daniel Burt from Sector 70 Headquarters SWATF was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 26.
- **1979** - Rifleman Dennis Colin Golden from 1 Parachute Battalion was accidentally killed by own forces near Otavi. He was 19.
- **1979** - Rifleman Nikos Pavlakis from Infantry School Died of Wounds when his patrol, while moving along the Cut-line, was ambushed by a numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents between Beacon 11 and Beacon 12. He was 20.
- **1980** - Trooper Leon Oosthuizen from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed after suffering multiple shrap-

nel wounds in an accidental hand grenade explosion at the General De Wet Training Area. He was 18.

- **1981** - Three members of 1 Parachute Battalion died of multiple shrapnel wounds at the Barracks in Bloemfontein. The casualties were: Rifleman Petrus Jacobus Pieterse (18). Rifleman Johannes Daniel van der Westhuizen (19). Rifleman Elias Jacobus Nicolaas Beukes (18).
- **1982** - ARMSCOR's Chairman announces that South Africa has produced a world-beating 155-millimetre artillery system the G5 gun.
- **1983** - Special Constable Ng-hiwaniva Nghiyayela from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.
- **1985** - Rifleman Kleopas Mbango from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut Line. He was 23.
- **1987** - Special Sergeant Martin Lukas from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 32.



V1
'Buzzbomb'

- **1988** - Special Constable Manuel Sevelenu from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1990** - Commandant John Orr, Officer Commanding 2 Squadron returned from a training sortie in his Mirage IICZ and while debriefing at the Squadron, he suddenly collapsed. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he succumbed. He was 37.

29 March

- **1879** - The battle of Kambula during the Anglo-Zulu War, takes place.
- **1911** - The U.S. Army adopts the M1911 .45 ACP pistol as its official sidearm.
- **1962** - The minister of defence, J.J. Fouché, discloses that South Africa is buying supersonic Mirage III jet fighters from France, and that South African forces are being equipped with French alouette helicopters.
- **1971** - 1st Lt William L Calley Jr found guilty in the My Lai massacre.
- **1973** - Private Johan Marthinus Kruger from 2 Mobilisation Centre was killed in a military vehicle accident at Petrusburg. He was 18.
- **1973** - Last US troops leave Vietnam, nine years after the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.

- **1977** - Staff Sergeant Gert Jacobus Voges from 29 Field Workshops died from injuries sustained in a military vehicle accident at the Otavi-Tsumeb crossroads. He was 39.
- **1988** - Gunner Hendrik Jacobus van der Westhuizen from Regiment Potchefstroom University was killed when he accidentally shot himself in Southern Angola during operations against FAPLA Forces near Cuito Cuanavale. He was 33.
- **1994** - Cease-fire ends Serbo-Croat War.

30 March

- **1945** - Soviet troops enter Austria.
- **1945** - The Red Army captures Danzig.
- **1972** - Private Sydney Eric Wienand from the Air Force Gymnasium was killed in a military vehicle accident in Pretoria. He was 19.
- **1973** - Private Andrew James MacPherson from Natal Command Headquarters was killed in a military vehicle accident in Durban. He was 18.

ters was killed in a military vehicle accident in Durban. He was 18.

- **1977** - Sergeant Daniel Petrus Theron from the Military Headquarters, Grootfontein, died from injuries sustained in a military vehicle accident which occurred on 29 March at the Otavi-Tsumeb crossroads near Grootfontein. He was 35.
- **1979** - Private Douw Teuns Gerbrand De Beer from Western Province Command Headquarters was killed in a military motorcycle accident at Groote Schuur. He was 19.
- **1980** - Sergeant Barend Zacharias Gericke from 32 Battalion was Killed in action in Southern Angola. He was 21.
- **1980** - Rifleman Johannes Oarum from 41 Battalion SWATF was killed in Northern Owamboland when he was struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 18.



**M1911
.45 ACP
Pistol**

- **1984** - Four members from the Congella Regiment and one member from Group 10 attached to the Regiment were killed and one critically injured when their Military Landrover Vehicle was struck and flattened by an articulated vehicle loaded with logs that jack-knifed across the road approximately 9 km outside Richmond. The casualties were: Staff Sergeant Kevin Ernest Parker (37). Lance Corporal Roderrick William Bekker (28). Rifleman Winston Churchill (25). Rifleman Stefan Henry Conrad (27). Rifleman Grant Edward Brierley (27) died from his injuries on 31 March 1984.
- **1984** - Corporal Daniel Matsetse from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with

SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.

- **1987** - Sergeant (Flight Engineer) Daniel Lan from 16 Squadron was Killed in Action after being hit by enemy small arms fire while acting as door gunner in Alouette III 624 during a close-air support operation against SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in the Oshivello area. He was 27.

31 March

- **1900** - General Christiaan de Wet and his men, in a battle that marks the first of the guerrilla phase of the Second Anglo-Boer War, clash with British forces under General R Broadwood and capture 421 men, seven guns and 83 wagons. The battle is fought at Sannaspost (Sannah's Post), east of Bloemfontein.
- **1921** - The Royal Australian Air Force is established.
- **1941** - Germans launch a counter-offensive in North Africa in World War II.
- **1943** - USAAF accidentally bombs a residential area of Rotterdam, 326 die.
- **1954** - USSR offers to join NATO.
- **1960** - Four more regiments

of the Citizens' Force are mobilised. Legal authorities in Johannesburg state the emergency regulations create a situation of virtual martial law.

- **1970** - Marshal of the Soviet Union Semion Timoshenko dies at the age of 75.
- **1977** - A Defence White Paper analyses South Africa's defence requirements in the context of the Soviet and Cuban intervention in Angola. South Africa is to be placed on a war footing.
- **1977** - Private Wilhelm Jacobus Johannes van Nieuwenhuizen from 32 Field Workshop Squadron was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 28.
- **1989** - Johan Papenfus, a SA Defence Force rifleman captured in Angola nearly a year previously, returns to South Africa from Cuba. His return is part of an exchange for prisoners held by Unita.
- **1992** - UN Security Council votes to ban flights and arms sales to Libya, branding it a terrorist state for shielding six men accused of blowing up Pan Am Flight 103 and a French airliner.
- **1994** - South African President F.W. de Klerk declares a state of emergency in Natal and orders the army into the Zulu stronghold.



**Semion
Timoshenko**



QUIZ

Weapon Silhouettes

1. South African Armour Corps
2. South African Catering Corps
3. South African Engineer Corps
4. South African Corps of Signals
5. Parachute Battalion
6. South African Technical Services Corps
7. South African Corps of Military Police
8. 31 Battalion
9. Reconnaissance Regiment
10. South African Personnel Services Corps
11. South African Artillery Corps
12. South African Infantry Corps
13. South African Medical Services
14. 32 Battalion
15. South African Army Intelligence Corps

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5



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Useful links

Every month we feature a few useful links to military websites, newsletters and online 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 gain access to individual articles.

You will find articles on numerous different topics that have been published over the past five years as well as video clips and documentaries.



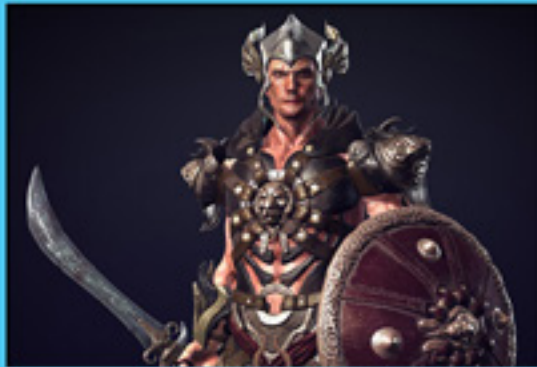
Hipe! media

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