



Military Despatches

Vol 56 February 2022

Fiercely and Faithfully

One of the oldest military units still in existence

City at sea

US Navy Nimitz-class aircraft carrier

Black Hawk Down

The Battle of Mogadishu

Paddy Mayne

International rugby player, lawyer, amateur boxer and SAS legend

For the military enthusiast



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Paratrooper Wings Quiz

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

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

Army Speak 101

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

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



New videos each week

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

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



Military Firearms Quiz

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



Elite Military Units Quiz

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

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



Who said that?

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

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



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This month we're taking a look at modern submachine guns. We show you 15, you tell us what they are.



Please remember to subscribe to our channel.

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



Editor's Sitrep

Well, here we are. It's February and the first month of 2022 is already over.

I want to begin this editorial by telling a joke I heard many years ago.

It was December in Durban and the beaches were packed with people. An on-duty lifeguard spotted a young boy that was in difficulties in the surf.

He jumped down from his lookout seat, ran down to the water and swam out and rescued the boy who was drowning.

By this time he got back to the beach the young boy was not breathing. He began giving the boy mouth-to-mouth until the boy spluttered out sea water and began to breath again. Job done.

The next day the lifeguard was called to the beach office. His superior told him that the father of the boy he had saved had come looking for him.

When the lifeguard saw the father he was impressed. The man was wearing designer jeans and an expensive tee-shirt. He was also sporting a gold Rolex watch. The lifeguard was sure that not only was the father going to thank him for saving his son,

he would probably reward him in some way.

"Are you the person that rescued my son from the sea yesterday?" the man asked. The lifeguard said that he was.

"Tell me, where is the cap that he was wearing when he went into the water," the man demanded.

Moral of the story - no matter what you do, most times it is not appreciated in the least. I'm sure you all know the feeling.

In the end you wind up becoming cynical. Why try and do something good or helpful for people that cannot even be bothered to say 'thank you'.

It often makes me think of many military veterans - worldwide - that served their country when their country needed them.

In many cases, once they had outlived their usefulness they were discarded without so much as a thank you. Hell, in some cases they were even ridiculed for their service.

Makes you think, doesn't it.

Until next time.

Matt

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Front Cover

A member of the Pontifical Swiss Guard stands at his post at Vatican City. Dating back more than 500 years, they are among the oldest military units still in existence.



Ten military disasters

It's bad enough losing a battle or even an entire war. But when your defeat is ranked as a military disaster it's another story. We look at 10 military disasters in modern history.

A military disaster is the defeat of one side in a battle or war which results in the complete failure of the losing side to achieve their objectives.

It often, but not always, involves a high and disproportionate loss of life. The causes are varied and include human error, inferior technology, logistical problems, underestimating the enemy, being outnumbered, and bad luck. Sometimes it is because of sheer stupidity.

Throughout history there are many examples of military disasters. Here are just a few of them.

- Battle of Gaugamela (331 BC) when Alexander the Great annihilated a much larger Persian army, thus ultimately conquering the Middle-east.
- Battle of Zama (202 BC) saw a Roman army of 34,000 under Scipio Africanus annihilated the Carthaginian army of 50,000 under Hannibal, thus bringing an end to the Second Punic War.
- Battle of Teutoburg Forest (9 AD) when Germanic warriors destroyed three Roman legions.
- Battle of Tours (732). The Muslim Moors marched into southern France meeting no foes, until encountering the Christian Frankish forces

led by Charles Martel at Tours. Despite the Moorish advantage over the Franks militarily, they were defeated decisively by the Franks.

- Battle of Agincourt (1415) when a large French army with a large contingent of knights was defeated by Henry V's much smaller army.
- Spanish Armada (1588) when an English fleet sent five ships into the Spanish invasion fleet destroying some and scattering the rest effectively ending the invasion threat. The Armada would later run into storms and almost half the ships never returned to Spain, as well as more than half the troops.

In this article, however, we are looking at disasters that took place in the 19th and 20th century. They are listed in chronological order.

10. Charge of the Light Brigade (1854)

The Charge of the Light Brigade was a failed military action involving the British light cavalry led by Lord Cardigan against Russian forces during the Battle of Balaclava on 25 October 1854 in the Crimean War.

Lord Raglan had intended to send the Light Brigade to pre-

vent the Russians from removing captured guns from overrun Turkish positions, a task for which the light cavalry were well-suited.

However, there was miscommunication in the chain of command and the Light Brigade was instead sent on a frontal assault against a different artillery battery, one well-prepared with excellent fields of defensive fire.

The Light Brigade reached the battery under withering direct fire and scattered some of the gunners, but they were forced to retreat immediately, and the assault ended with very high British casualties and no decisive gains.

The events were the subject of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's narrative poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1854), published just six weeks after the event. Its lines emphasise the valour of the cavalry in bravely carrying out their orders, regardless of the nearly inevitable outcome.

Responsibility for the miscommunication has remained controversial, as the order was vague and Captain Louis Nolan delivered the written orders with some verbal interpretation, then died in the first minute of the assault.

Of the 660 men of the Light Brigade that charged into the

'Valley of Death', 110 were killed and 161 were wounded.

9. Battle of Fredericksburg (1862)

The Battle of Fredericksburg was fought between 11 and 15 December 1862, in and around Fredericksburg, Virginia, in the Eastern Theatre of the American Civil War.

The combat, between the Union Army of the Potomac commanded by Major General Ambrose E. Burnside and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia under General Robert E. Lee, included futile frontal attacks by the Union Army on 13 December against entrenched Confederate defenders along the Sunken Wall on the heights behind the city.

It is remembered as one of the most one-sided battles of the war, with Union casualties more than twice as heavy as those suffered by the Confederates. A visitor to the battlefield described the battle to U.S. President Abraham Lincoln as a "butchery".

Burnside's plan was to cross the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg in mid-November and race to the Confederate capital of Richmond before Lee's army could stop him.

Bureaucratic delays prevented Burnside from receiving the necessary pontoon bridges in time and Lee moved his army to block the crossings. When the Union army was finally able to build its bridges and cross under fire, direct combat within the city resulted on 11-12 De-

cember.

Union troops prepared to assault Confederate defensive positions south of the city and on a strongly fortified ridge just west of the city known as Marye's Heights.

On 13 December, the Left Grand Division of Major General William B. Franklin was able to pierce the first defensive line of Confederate Lieutenant General Stonewall Jackson to the south, but was finally repulsed.

Burnside ordered the Right and Center Grand Divisions of Major Generals Edwin V. Sumner and Joseph Hooker to launch multiple frontal assaults against Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's position on Marye's Heights – all were repulsed with heavy losses.

On 15 December, Burnside withdrew his army, ending another failed Union campaign in the Eastern Theatre.

The Union Forces suffered 12,653 casualties compared to the 5,377 of the Confederates.

8. Battle of the Little Bighorn (June 1876)

The Battle of the Little Bighorn, known to the Lakota and other Plains Indians as the Battle of the Greasy Grass and also commonly referred to as Custer's Last Stand, was an armed engagement between combined forces of the Lakota Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho tribes and the 7th Cavalry Regiment of the United States Army.

The battle, which resulted in

the defeat of U.S. forces, was the most significant action of the Great Sioux War of 1876.

It took place on 25–26 June, 1876, along the Little Bighorn River in the Crow Indian Reservation in south-eastern Montana Territory.

The fight was an overwhelming victory for the Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho, who were led by several major war leaders, including Crazy Horse and Chief Gall, and had been inspired by the visions of Sitting Bull (Tháŋka Íyotake).

The U.S. 7th Cavalry, a force of 700 men, suffered a major defeat while commanded by Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer (formerly a brevetted major general during the American Civil War).

Five of the 7th Cavalry's twelve companies were annihilated and Custer was killed, as were two of his brothers, a nephew, and a brother-in-law. The total U.S. casualty count included 268 dead and 55 severely wounded (six died later from their wounds), including four Crow Indian scouts and at least two Arikara Indian scouts.

Public response to the Great Sioux War varied in the immediate aftermath of the battle. Libbie Custer, Custer's widow, soon worked to burnish her husband's memory, and during the following decades Custer and his troops came to be considered iconic, even heroic, figures in American history.

The battle, and Custer's actions in particular, have been

studied extensively by historians. Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument honours those who fought on both sides.

7. Battle of Isandlwana (22 January 1879)

The Battle of Isandlwana on 22 January 1879 was the first major encounter in the Anglo-Zulu War between the British Empire and the Zulu Kingdom. And it wasn't a good result for the British.

Eleven days after the British commenced their invasion of Zululand in Southern Africa, a Zulu force of some 20,000 warriors attacked a portion of the British main column consisting of about 1,800 British, colonial and native troops and perhaps 400 civilians.

The Zulus were equipped mainly with the traditional assegai iron spears and cow-hide shields, but also had a number of muskets and antiquated rifles.

The British and colonial troops were armed with the modern Martini–Henry breech-loading rifle and two 7-pounder mountain guns deployed as field guns, as well as a Hale rocket battery.

Despite a vast disadvantage in weapons technology, the Zulus ultimately overwhelmed the British force, killing over 1,300 troops, including all those out on the forward firing line. The Zulu army suffered anywhere from 1,000 to 3,000 killed.

The battle was a decisive victory for the Zulus and caused the defeat of the first British in-

vasion of Zululand. The British Army had suffered its worst defeat against an indigenous foe equipped with vastly inferior military technology.

Isandlwana both resulted in the British taking a much more aggressive approach in the Anglo-Zulu War, leading to a heavily reinforced second invasion, and the destruction of King Cetshwayo's hopes of a negotiated peace.

6. Battle of Tsushima (1905)

The Battle of Tsushima, also known as the Battle of Tsushima Strait and the Naval Battle of the Sea of Japan, was a major naval battle fought between Russia and Japan during the Russo-Japanese War.

It was naval history's first, and last, decisive sea battle fought by modern steel battleship fleets, and the first naval battle in which wireless telegraphy (radio) played a critically important role.

It has been characterized as the "dying echo of the old era – for the last time in the history of naval warfare, ships of the line of a beaten fleet surrendered on the high seas".

It was fought on 27–28 May 1905 in the Tsushima Strait located between Korea and southern Japan. In this battle the Japanese fleet under Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō destroyed the Russian fleet, under Admiral Zinovy Rozhdestvensky, which had travelled over 33,000 km to reach the Far East.

In London in 1906, Sir George

Sydenham Clarke wrote, "The battle of Tsushima is by far the greatest and the most important naval event since Trafalgar". Decades later, historian Edmund Morris agreed with this judgment.

The destruction of the fleet caused a bitter reaction from the Russian public, which induced a peace treaty in September 1905 without any further battles.

Prior to the Russo-Japanese War, countries constructed their battleships with mixed batteries of mainly 152 mm, 203 mm, 254 mm and 305 mm guns, with the intent that these battleships fight on the battle line in a close-quarter, decisive fleet action.

The Battle of Tsushima conclusively demonstrated that battleship speed and big guns with longer ranges were more advantageous in naval battles than mixed batteries of different sizes.

5. Gallipoli Campaign (April 1915 to January 1916)

The Gallipoli campaign was a military campaign in the First World War that took place on the Gallipoli peninsula (Gelibolu in modern Turkey), from 17 February 1915 to 9 January 1916.

The Entente powers, Britain, France and Russia, sought to weaken the Ottoman Empire, one of the Central Powers, by taking control of the Turkish straits. This would expose the Ottoman capital at Constantinople to bombardment by Allied



WALK OF SHAME: Lieutenant-General Arthur Ernest Percival (right), led by Ichiji Sugita, walks under a flag of truce to negotiate the capitulation of Allied forces in Singapore, on 15 February 1942. It was the largest surrender of British-led forces in history.

battleships and cut it off from the Asian part of the empire.

With Turkey defeated, the Suez canal would be safe, and a year-round Allied supply route could be opened through the Black Sea to warm water ports in Russia.

The attempt by the Allied fleet to force the Dardanelles in February 1915 failed and was followed by an amphibious landing on the Gallipoli peninsula in April 1915.

In January 1916, after eight months' fighting, with approximately 250,000 casualties on each side, the land campaign was abandoned and the invasion force withdrawn.

It was a costly campaign for the Entente powers and the Ottoman Empire, as well as for the sponsors of the expedition, especially the First Lord of the

Admiralty (1911–1915), Winston Churchill.

The campaign was considered a great Ottoman victory. In Turkey, it is regarded as a defining moment in the history of the state, a final surge in the defence of the motherland as the Ottoman Empire retreated.

The struggle formed the basis for the Turkish War of Independence and the declaration of the Republic of Turkey eight years later, with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who rose to prominence as a commander at Gallipoli, as founder and president.

The campaign is often considered to be the beginning of Australian and New Zealand national consciousness; 25 April, the anniversary of the landings, is known as Anzac Day, the most significant commemoration of military casualties and veterans

in the two countries, surpassing Remembrance Day (Armistice Day).

4. Battle of Singapore (February 1942)

The Battle of Singapore, also known as the Fall of Singapore, was fought in the South-East Asian theatre of the Pacific War when the Empire of Japan captured the British stronghold of Singapore - nicknamed the "Gibraltar of the East".

Singapore was the foremost British military base and economic port in South-East Asia. It was the key to British inter-war defence planning for the region.

The fighting in Singapore lasted from 8 to 15 February 1942. The Japanese victory was decisive. It resulted in the Japanese capture of Singapore and the largest British surrender in history.

General Tomoyuki Yamashita had led a force of about 30,000 down the Malayan Peninsula in the two months leading up to the battle. The British had considered the jungle terrain impassable and had prepared few defences.

Yet the Japanese were experts in jungle warfare, and raced down the peninsula. Arthur Percival led the 85,000 British troops, although many units were understrength, and most units lacked experience.

Despite this, they enjoyed a significant numerical and positional advantage on the island of Singapore.

In the lead up to the battle

the British destroyed the causeway into the city, forcing the Japanese to embark on a naval crossing. The island was so important that Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered Percival to fight bitterly to the last man.

The Japanese had a difficult task: the British outnumbered them three to one. But superior Japanese leadership and many failings on the part of the British allowed the Japanese to establish a beachhead starting on 8 February.

Percival had grossly miscalculated troops on the island, and the Japanese attacked the weakest part of the lines. Percival also failed to reinforce the attack in a timely fashion, allowing the Japanese to establish a beachhead. Communication and leadership failures beset the British.

The poor pre-battle planning left few entrenchments or reserves near the beachhead. As the week pushed on, the Japanese took more and more of the island, and the British supply became critical.

By the 15th, some one million civilians in the city had fled into the remaining Allied held area, a mere one percent of the island. By then, Japanese air attacks had bombed the civilian water supply non-stop; it was expected to fail within days if the attack did not stop.

Unbeknownst to the British, by the 15th the Japanese were also at the end of their supplies, with only hours of shells left. General Yamashita feared that

Percival would discover the Japanese numerical inferiority, and engage in costly house-to-house fighting.

In a desperate bluff, Yamashita demanded unconditional surrender. On the afternoon of the 15th, Percival ignored orders and capitulated. About 80,000 British, Indian and Australian troops in Singapore became prisoners of war, joining 50,000 taken by the Japanese in the earlier Malayan Campaign. Many would die performing forced labour.

About 40,000 mostly Indian soldiers would join the Indian National Army and fight alongside the Japanese. Churchill was shocked, and called it the "worst disaster" in British military history.

It greatly decreased confidence in the British army, and provided the Japanese with much needed resources, as well as an important strategic position. The city would stay in Japanese hands until the end of the war.

3. Battle of Midway (1942)

The Battle of Midway was a major naval battle in the Pacific Theatre of World War II that took place on 4–7 June 1942, six months after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour and one month after the Battle of the Coral Sea.

The U.S. Navy under Admirals Chester W. Nimitz, Frank J. Fletcher, and Raymond A. Spruance defeated an attacking fleet of the Imperial Japanese Navy under Admirals Isoroku

Yamamoto, Chūichi Nagumo, and Nobutake Kondō near Midway Atoll, inflicting devastating damage on the Japanese fleet.

Military historian John Keegan called it "the most stunning and decisive blow in the history of naval warfare", while naval historian Craig Symonds called it "one of the most consequential naval engagements in world history, ranking alongside Salamis, Trafalgar, and Tsushima Strait, as both tactically decisive and strategically influential".

Luring the American aircraft carriers into a trap and occupying Midway was part of an overall "barrier" strategy to extend Japan's defensive perimeter, in response to the Doolittle air raid on Tokyo.

This operation was also considered preparatory for further attacks against Fiji, Samoa, and Hawaii itself. The plan was undermined by faulty Japanese assumptions of the American reaction and poor initial dispositions.

Most significantly, American cryptographers were able to determine the date and location of the planned attack, enabling the forewarned U.S. Navy to prepare its own ambush.

Four Japanese and three American aircraft carriers participated in the battle. The four Japanese fleet carriers - Akagi, Kaga, Sōryū, and Hiryū, part of the six-carrier force that had attacked Pearl Harbour six months earlier - were sunk, as was the heavy cruiser Mikuma. The U.S. lost the carrier York-



GERMAN GRAVEYARD: The Battle of Stalingrad saw the destruction of the German 6th Army. It was also the first time that a German field marshal - Friedrich Paulus - had ever surrendered.

town and the destroyer Hamann, while the carriers USS Enterprise and USS Hornet survived the battle fully intact.

After Midway and the exhausting attrition of the Solomon Islands campaign, Japan's capacity to replace its losses in materiel (particularly aircraft carriers) and men (especially well-trained pilots and maintenance crewmen) rapidly became insufficient to cope with mounting casualties, while the United States' massive industrial and training capabilities made losses far easier to replace.

The Battle of Midway, along with the Guadalcanal campaign, is widely considered a turning point in the Pacific War.

2. Battle of Stalingrad (1942–43)

In the Battle of Stalingrad (23 August 1942 – 2 February

1943), Germany and its allies fought the Soviet Union for control of the city of Stalingrad (now Volgograd) in Southern Russia.

Marked by fierce close-quarters combat and direct assaults on civilians in air raids, it is one of the bloodiest battles in the history of warfare, with an estimated two million total casualties.

After their defeat at Stalingrad, the German High Command had to withdraw considerable military forces from other theatres of war to replace their losses.

Not only did the battle cost the Germans and entire army - the 6th Army - it was a turning point in the war. And not in favour of Nazi Germany.

The German offensive to capture Stalingrad - a major industrial and transport hub on the Volga River that ensured Soviet

access to the Caucasus oil wells - began in August 1942, using the 6th Army and elements of the 4th Panzer Army.

The attack was supported by intense Luftwaffe bombing that reduced much of the city to rubble. The battle degenerated into house-to-house fighting as both sides poured reinforcements into the city.

By mid-November, the Germans, at great cost, had pushed the Soviet defenders back into narrow zones along the west bank of the river.

On 19 November, the Red Army launched Operation Uranus, a two-pronged attack targeting the weaker Romanian and Hungarian armies protecting the 6th Army's flanks.

The Axis flanks were overrun and the 6th Army was cut off and surrounded in the Stalingrad area.

Adolf Hitler was determined to hold the city at all costs and forbade the 6th Army from attempting a breakout; instead, attempts were made to supply it by air and to break the encirclement from the outside.

Heavy fighting continued for another two months. At the beginning of February 1943, the Axis forces in Stalingrad, having exhausted their ammunition and food, surrendered after five months, one week, and three days of fighting.

1. Battle of Dien Bien Phu (1954)

The Battle of Dien Bien Phu was a climactic confrontation of the First Indochina War that

TOP TEN

took place between 13 March and 7 May 1954.

It was fought between the French Union's colonial Far East Expeditionary Corps and Viet Minh communist revolutionaries.

The United States was officially not a party to the war, but it was secretly involved by providing financial and material aid to the French Union, which included CIA contracted American personnel participating in the battle.

The French began an operation to insert, then support, their soldiers at Điện Biên Phủ, deep in the west of Tonkin, up in the hills of north-western Vietnam.

The operation's purpose was to cut off Viet Minh supply lines into the neighbouring Kingdom of Laos (a French ally), and draw the Viet Minh into a major confrontation in order to cripple them.

The plan was to resupply the French position by air - based on the belief that the Viet Minh had no anti-aircraft capability.

The Viet Minh, however, under General Võ Nguyên Giáp, surrounded and besieged the French. They brought in vast amounts of heavy artillery (including anti-aircraft guns) and managed to move these bulky weapons through difficult terrain up the rear slopes of the mountains. They then dug tunnels through the mountains and arranged the guns to target the French position.

In March, a massive artillery bombardment by the Viet Minh ensued. The strategic po-



TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE: French paratroopers jump into Dien Bien Phu in a valiant but vain effort to reinforce the position. This was a battle where Viet Minh General Võ Nguyên Giáp proved to be an excellent tactician.

sitioning of their artillery made it nearly impervious to French counter-battery fire.

Tenacious fighting on the ground ensued, reminiscent of the trench warfare of World War I. At times, the French repulsed Viet Minh assaults on their positions while supplies and reinforcements were delivered by air.

As key positions were overrun, the perimeter contracted, and the air resupply on which the French had placed their hopes became impossible.

As the Viet Minh anti-aircraft fire took its toll, fewer and fewer of those supplies reached the French.

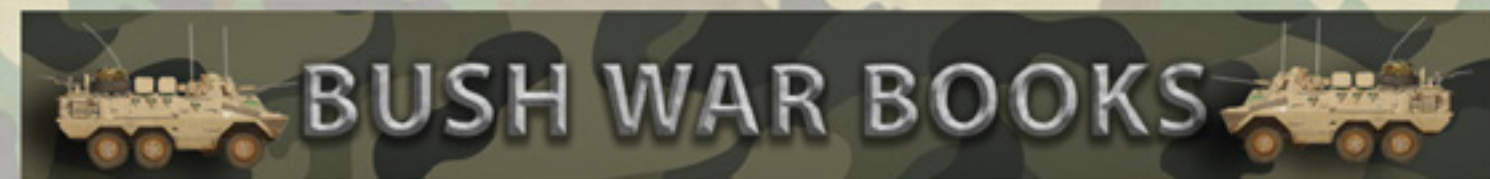
The garrison was overrun in May after a two-month siege, and most of the French forces surrendered. A few of them escaped to Laos.

The French government in Paris then resigned, and the

new Prime Minister, the left-of-centre Pierre Mendès France, supported French withdrawal from Indochina.

The Battle of Điện Biên Phủ was decisive; the war ended shortly afterward and the 1954 Geneva Accords were signed. France agreed to withdraw its forces from all its colonies in French Indochina, while stipulating that Vietnam would be temporarily divided at the 17th parallel, with control of the north given to the Viet Minh as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh, and the south becoming the State of Vietnam, nominally under Emperor Bảo Đại, preventing Ho Chi Minh from gaining control of the entire country.

And that's it for this month's Top Ten. We trust you enjoyed it.



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

Special Force Training - SAS

In our second article on Special Forces selection and training, we look at the British Special Air Service.

Special Air Service training forms the benchmark for many elite units. The training has two stages: Selection Training tests the candidate's physical fitness to the limits, while Continuation Training teaches and assesses elite military skills.

The British SAS has one of the most demanding selection courses in the world. It is designed to challenge a candidate both physically and mentally to the point of absolute exhaustion, for this is the only way in which to judge if a candidate has the right aptitude for SAS training.

The regular SAS Regiment considers only applicants already serving in the British Army who have completed at least three years' service. The TA (Territorial Army Reserve Force) SAS, however, accepts potential candidates from both serving members of the reserve forces and

outside civilian volunteers.

They are looking for men with physical and mental strength, initiative, self-reliance and the intelligence to work through highly complex issues while exhausted and under extreme stress.

Selection

The selection process is designed to weed out the unsuitable as soon as possible. There are always dreamers, chances and time wasters, who apply for SAS service without realising what is required. Typical candidates are generally in their mid-twenties, although older applicants do apply for selection.

Selection courses are run twice a year, once in summer and once in winter, and candidates have no choice as to which one they attend. As to which one is easier to pass, both have their good and bad points, but the ratio of success on each course is more or less the same.

It is assumed that if a man feels confident enough to apply for the SAS, he must also appreciate the physical and mental tasks that lie ahead and therefore be preparing for them as best he can. The Selection Training programme last for one month and is run by the Training Wing of 22 SAS at Credenhill, Hereford.

The selection programme was originally designed in 1953 and has changed very little since then. It commences with



a build-up period of two weeks for officers and three weeks for all other ranks.

The reason why the officers work-up is shorter than other ranks is simple – SAS officers are expected to outperform their men in every aspect of military knowledge and skills. If not, they have no business being officers in this regiment.

The first weeks

To attend selection, all candidates must first undergo a medical at their parent unit and be certified fit by their regimental medical officer. When they do begin the course, candidates are given a chance to work up their strength because some may have been on operational tours and had little time to prepare.

So, during the first week, candidates must complete training runs that become longer each day.

Each candidate must also be capable of passing the standard Battle Fitness Test (BFT) in the same time as an average infantryman – any longer and he will fail.

As the programme contin-

ues, the candidates are sent on a series of long, hard forced marches over the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains of South Wales. The marches are designed to test their navigation and map-reading skills, as well as their physical strength.

The marches place relentless demands on the candidates, who are given ever more complex and daunting problems to solve in all weather and by day or night, all this while carrying a packs that starts off weighing 11kg and will increase to 25kg by the week's end.

During the winter months, the Welsh mountains are often covered in mist and snow, making navigation extremely difficult because the candidates cannot see visual reference points. The winds blowing over the mountains can frequently reach gale force, making it very difficult for a man to stand upright, let alone walk.

Another problem is the ground itself, particularly after hard rain, which will make the ground marshy and the going very tough. Although Selection is designed to test candidates to their physical limits, there are frequent checkpoints along the route.

These checkpoints serve three purposes: they prevent cheating, they provide information about the candidates' next route, and they ensure the candidates' safety. This last one is a priority as there have been numerous fatalities on the Brecon Beacons over the years, mainly due to hypothermia and severe falls.

Throughout Selection, the emphasis is on the individu-

al candidate and not the entire cadre, which generally number 120 men. Each candidate must rely on himself for motivation, as the instructors neither help nor hinder, but provide information and safety cover only.

At no time will they give a candidate any indication of how he is doing or how much time he has left to complete a task. Throughout Selection candidates drop out or are told that they have failed. Indeed, it is only when candidates report for the next march and see their name on the instructors' list that they know that they are still okay.

For those not on the list, a short journey back to the base camp awaits them, and there they will be thanked for attempting Selection and given a travel warrant back to their respective unit. Some of the candidates will be given a second chance to attempt Selection, but this will be the end of the line for most.

The SAS makes a point of talking to those who have failed Selection to reassure them that they are still good soldiers with many good qualities – just not those which the SAS is seeking.

As the remaining candidates ponder their fate each morning, they take some comfort from the fact that they are still in the programme and a day closer to passing.

As each day begins, the candidates are given a new route and a series of rendezvous points where they will gain further information. They are not allowed to write anything down and are forbidden from marking their maps in any way – in



enemy hands, any marks on a map could give away valuable information.

As they are on their own at all times and have no idea of their timings from checkpoint to checkpoint, they simply have to push as hard and as fast as they can until they are told to stop by the instructors.

On occasions, the instructors will order a candidate to stop and strip his weapon down, then reassemble it. They usually pick a time when the candidate is cold and exhausted, and therefore vulnerable because his coordination will be slower than normal.

One favourite trick of the instructors is to place a map and a magnetic compass on a vehicle's metal hood, which will distort a compass reading. They brief the candidates, issuing them a new bearing which will of course change significantly, and if the candidates fail to notice this, they are likely to become lost.

The final week

During one exercise on the final week, the instructors take away the map from the candidates and provide them instead with a poorly drawn sketch map that has little on it apart from a few marked points.

The candidates then have to use all their navigational skills to find the checkpoints that will provide the missing data.

On another exercise known as the 'Fan Dance', the candidates must negotiate an extremely difficult feature known as Pen-Y-Fan (or 'The Fan') three times in four hours from three different points.



THE FAN DANCE: A view of Pen-Y-Fan, the highest peak in the Brecon Beacons at 886 metres and the focus of the infamous route march known as the 'Fan Dance'.

However, at no point are they told the number of times they must climb the 994 metre peak or how much time has been allocated for the task. All of the climbs are difficult, especially when carrying a heavy pack and a rifle, and it comes as no surprise that this exercise is the most demanding in Selection phase.

As the Selection phase reaches its climax, the candidates are marching all day and even through most of the night, ending on the final day with an 81 kilometre march across the Brecon Beacons.

This march includes 'The Fan' and other local difficult terrain. Bearing in mind that an average person walks at a pace of between three and five kilometres per hour on flat ground, and that these already exhausted men have to carry a 25kg pack and a rifle across very high and treacherous terrain in less than 20 hours, it is a daunting task to

say the least.

It is hardly surprising that the failure rate is very high. On average only seven to 15 percent of each cadre completes it successfully.

Continuation

For those few passing the Selection phase, the worst is yet to come. Now they must complete a six-month training period, known simply as Continuation.

The first phase last for 14 weeks and is designed to teach new recruits basic SAS skills, including movement behind enemy lines, contact drills, signalling, and the operational roles of the standard SAS four-man team.

All recruits have to reach basic signaller standard, regardless of rank and future specialisation, as communications pay a key part in special forces operations. In addition, all recruits learn basic field medicine, sniping, ground to air communica-

tion, mortar and artillery fire, survival skills, sabotage and demolition skills, and foreign weapons handling.

After completing the skills phase, the recruits move on to the combat and survival element of Continuation, which teaches new SAS members how to fight and survive behind enemy lines with little or no support. They are taught how to find and build shelters, locate food and water, and escape and evade enemy capture.

Once this training is completed, the recruits embark on a five-day escape and evasion exercise in the Brecon Beacons, in which they have to evade capture by an enemy force.

The enemy is usually played by a local infantry battalion or, on occasion, a NATO battalion if it happens to be in the United Kingdom on exercise at the time.

No matter how good the recruits are throughout the exercise, the instructors ensure that they are caught at some time, as they cannot move forward without completing the 'Resistance to Interrogation' (RTI) phase of continuation.

Resistance to Interrogation

The RTI phase lasts for around 24 hours and is one of the harshest elements of Continuation. It has to be: the SAS must be sure of its men at all times because much of their work is behind enemy lines.

The Regiment has to be confident that they will not crack under pressure and betray their fellow operators, and the RTI is probably the best means of revealing a weak link. Much

of the RTI phase is classified, but it is no secret that it is both physically and mentally challenging.

Although no physical torture takes place, there is no shortage of mind games that border on severe mental torture. The instructors and expert interrogators do their utmost to unhinge the recruit and have many ways of breaking a man down without so much as touching him.

This can be done in many ways: subjecting the recruit to constant deafening white noise, blindfolding recruits and then handcuffing them to active railway lines, pouring petrol over them and leaving them near an open fire.

Again, it must be stressed that no physical harm comes to recruits from these methods. But for those who ask why the SAS subjects its men to such barbaric treatment in this day and age, there is a very simple answer – it works.

Jungle survival

After the RTI phase is over, recruits are sent on a jungle survival course, which lasts up to six weeks. This course is normally held in the Far East (usually in Brunei) and trains recruits in survival, building shelters, finding food and water, navigation and jungle warfare.

The SAS places great emphasis on its jungle warfare training, as it has fought many of its most remarkable campaigns in the jungle, including in Malaya and Borneo.

Those that pass the jungle phase move to RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire to undergo basic parachute training

with No.1 Parachute Training School.

Many recruits are ex-paras and are excused this course. However, the others will have to undergo four weeks of static-line training, followed by eight jumps, including one at night.

After passing parachute training, the recruits are awarded their Sabre wings and return to Hereford. They are presented with the sand-coloured beret, complete with winged-dagger badge. They are now members of the Special Air Service Regiment.

After Selection

Regardless of previous rank, all recruits revert to the lowest rank in the SAS (that of trooper), but continue to be paid according to their rank.

Although they have been accepted into the SAS, they are on probation for their first year and can still be dismissed at any point during this time.

The new soldiers are assigned to one of 22 SAS Regiment squadrons and have a choice between joining Boat, Air, Mountain or Mobility Troop.

Those selected for Boat Troop learn about maritime operations and how to handle small boats, including rigid raiders, kayaks and submersibles. Troopers also undergo scuba and specialist diving training, which includes underwater demolition and maritime counter-terrorist operations.

Troopers joining Air Troop undergo specialist training in HALO/HAHO techniques, in the United Kingdom and overseas. In addition, they learn



STANDBY, GO: SAS Soldiers train at the 'Killing House', the centre at Hereford for live-fire instruction for hostage rescue and urban assault techniques.

about all aspects of airborne insertion, both conventional and unconventional, including the use of heavily modified long-range helicopters.

Those joining Mountain Troop learn about all aspects of mountain and Arctic warfare, including survival training, climbing techniques and the use of equipment such as skis, sledges and skidoos.

Troopers joining Mobility Troop train in all aspects of vehicle operation, both in conventional and unconventional roles, including deep reconnaissance and hit-and-run missions, for which the SAS is renowned.

Troopers learn how to drive defensively and offensively in different types of terrain, ranging from woodland to desert, and practise ambush and counter-ambush techniques until they are second nature.

At some point, each trooper will rotate through counter-ter-

rorist training, as the SAS is the United Kingdom's primary counter-terrorist unit. Training includes close-quarter battle, sniping, fast roping, insertion techniques, tubular work and unarmed combat.

As the SAS is the world's most feared and respected special forces unit, there are many opportunities for troopers to cross-train with other units around the world, including the US Delta Force, German GSG-9 and KSK, and both with the Australian and New Zealand SAS. They also get the opportunity to train in many NATO countries.

The Killing House

The British Special Air Service's prime training facility for hostage rescue operations is the Killing House. The point of the Killing House is to train the SAS operatives to enter a room and be able to assess the

situation and shoot any threats. The Counter-Terrorism team of SAS uses it for Close Quarter Battle training (CQB).

The Killing House is located at the Stirling Lines barracks, near Hereford. It is a two storey building with four rooms on each level. It is designed just like a conventional building, with furniture, pictures, toilets, etc. The building has special rubber-coated walls to absorb bullets, extractor fans to clear out fumes, and video cameras in corners to record the action in the rooms. Each room has at least one metal target.

The facility has been visited by dignitaries including Prince Charles, Diana, Princess of Wales, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

The idea of the Killing House has been adopted by other elite units, including America's Delta Force, the FBI, Israeli special forces, and FSK (of Norway).

CQB Weapons of the SAS



HK MP5A3



Sig Sauer P226 / P228



HK MP5K

Flash-bang grenade

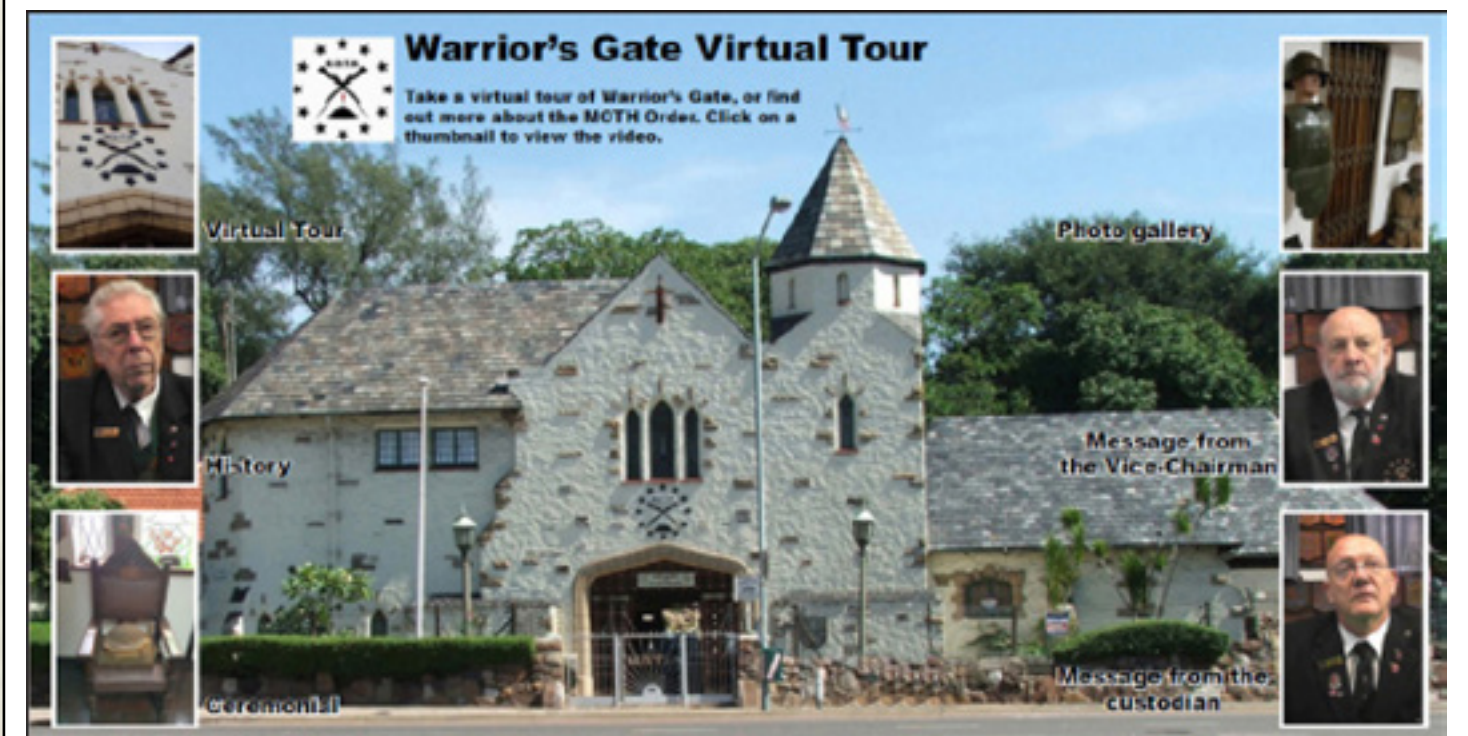


Remington 870



Memorable Order of Tin Hats

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



The Penal Battalions of World War II

During World War II both the Germans and the Russian made use of Penal Battalions. Discipline in these formations was extreme and to be sent to a penal battalion was akin to a death sentence.

Imagine the scenario. It's a Friday evening and you were paid just the day before. You're planning on meeting a few friends down at the Reeperbahn in Hamburg's St. Pauli district. The date is 1 September 1939.

You learn from one of your friends that the short guy with the funny moustache had gone and invaded Poland earlier that morning. You're not really into politics and don't follow the news much. So you don't give it much thought.

The next thing you find yourself being conscripted into the *Wehrmacht*. You're not that keen on going, but you are carried off, kicking and screaming, and placed into the *Heer*, the German Army. Could things get worse?

After only a few days you decide that army life is not for you and you leave, without permission of course.

You don't get very far before you're picked up by the *Feldgendarmerie*, the German military police. A military court sentences you to service in a *Feld-Sonder Battalion* or Special Field Battalion. Guess what, things just did get worse.

Formation of Strafbataillon

The *Strafbataillon* were developed from the *Sonderabteilungen* (special departments) that existed in pre-war Nazi Germany.

Initially, Nazi policy was to rebuild the armed forces by

keeping "potential troublemakers" away from the troops and removing any "destructive elements" from military service.

But on 21 May 1935, Adolf Hitler decreed that under the new Nazi Defence Act, any conscript who was deemed "unfit for military service because of subversive activity" would be arrested.

However, soldiers who were deemed disruptive to military discipline, but were otherwise "worthy of service", would be sent to military *Sonderabteilungen*.

Those units were designed to change attitudes toward state and national policy while instilling a sense of duty, honour and purpose.

Those goals were to be achieved through harsh discipline and punishments, extensive indoctrination programs, and restrictions on home leave.

Troops who conformed were eventually transferred to regular units. However, those who continued to show indiscipline or opposed the military were transferred to Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

Before World War II, there were nine *Sonderabteilungen* within the *Wehrmacht* in Nazi Germany.

According to estimates, between 3,000 and 6,000 *Wehrmacht* personnel passed through those special departments. A total of 320 "incurable pests" were transported to concentration camps.

However, with the outbreak of war in 1939, the *Sonderabteilungen* were disbanded. They were replaced with the *Feld-Sonder Battalion* (Special Field Battalion) under the control of the *Feldgendarmerie*. However, as the war continued, the need for more military personnel grew accordingly.

Military tribunals were directed by the OKW to send incarcerated members of the *Wehrmacht*, as well as "subversives", to *Bewährungsbataillone* (probation battalions) at the front.

By 1943, the course of the war had turned against Nazi Germany. Military losses and the need to maintain discipline by example made the German High Command order that further punishment units should be formed from the thousands of *Wehrmacht* military prisoners that were held in its military prisons.

They were then used to conduct dangerous operations (sometimes akin to suicide missions) for the *Heer*, such as clearing minefields, assaulting difficult objectives and defending positions against overwhelming attacking forces. They were also made to do hard manual labour in front line locations, building and repairing military infrastructure and defences.

Prisoners who survived their missions would be deemed "fit to fight" and returned to the field with the "rights" of a com-



Anyone that served in a penal battalion had to wear a red triangle on their uniform.

bat soldier.

Although most *Strafbataillon* personnel were used on the Eastern Front, some were sent to the Ardennes, on the Western Front during the last major German offensive, in December 1944.

Discipline in any penal unit was harsh, no matter who you were.

"Before we were sent to the Eastern Front we received special training at Sennelager Barracks near Paderborn," said a man identified only as Oskar. He had served in a penal unit. "During one of our barracks inspections the instructors decided that the floor was not clean enough. So they made us lick the floor. And I'm not joking. We had to lick it until our tongues bled."

It was not uncommon for members of a penal unit to die during training, let alone while on operations.

"More than a dozen men of my platoon died during our training at Sennelager," said Oskar. "We had one old man in my platoon, I think he was 58 or 59. A few weeks earlier he had been an *oberst* (colonel) with an infantry unit. He was a hold-

er of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for bravery. He had refused to obey some order and had been reduced to the ranks and sent to us. I think he died in our second week of training. Some of our instructors really had it in for him."

Bewährungsbataillon 500

The 500th Probation Battalion was created by a secret Führer directive in December 1940.

The order stated that any first-time convicted soldier could return to his unit after he had served a portion of his sentence in "a special probation corps before the enemy".

However, recidivist criminals and hardcore elements in the German prison system were not allowed to join those units.

Beginning in April 1941, convicted soldiers - even those sentenced to death - who had shown exceptional bravery or meritorious service, were allowed to rejoin their original units.

However, those in probation units were expected to undertake dangerous operations at the front. Refusal entailed execution of the original sentence.

Those who did refuse were labelled "criminal entities" and sent to the harsh moorland labour camps in Emsland in Lower Saxony.

There was a strong incentive to join *Bewährungsbataillon* because convicted soldiers lost both their honour and citizen rights. The only way to get those rights back was probation in *Bewährungsbataillon 500*.

During World War II, more than 27,000 soldiers served

a probation period in a *Bewährungsbataillon* unit.

They were monitored and commanded by selected officers, NCOs, and assigned enlisted men, who made up a quarter of the total strength. Although battle losses were high, the desire to win the right to leave probation meant combat morale was high.

Major operations conducted by *Bewährungsbataillone* on the Eastern Front included Kamianka, Ukraine, as well as at Gruzino and Sinyavino, near Leningrad.

Bewährungsbataillon 999

In October 1942, the 999th Light Afrika Division was formed from civilian criminals and prison inmates who had been deemed "unfit for military service".

They were encouraged to volunteer on the promise that all past crimes would be wiped out by exemplary bravery in combat. However, anyone who refused to join the *Bewährungstruppe* would stay in prison without rights to parole, or be sent to a concentration camp.

A third of the 28,000 troops who joined the division were political prisoners from Baumholder and Heuberg.

The 999th Light Afrika Division initially fought in North Africa and later in the Soviet Union.

Some units were also used as garrison troops in Greece and in the fight against partisans in the Balkans.

Several hundred soldiers from the division deserted to the Allies. In September 1944, some troops from the 999th, includ-

ing Falk Harnack and Gerhard Reinhardt, took active part in armed resistance with the Greek Liberation Army (ELAS).

SS-Fallschirmjägerbataillon 500

500th SS Parachute Battalion (*SS-Fallschirmjägerbataillon 500*) was the parachute unit of the Waffen-SS employed in dangerous actions behind enemy lines.

It was decided to extend enlistment to those in the SS disciplinary units which were formed from officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers who had problems with military law.

An order of the SS-FHA (the SS High Command) fixed a percentage of 50% for the unit coming from volunteers of Waffen-SS units, the rest from volunteers from the disciplinary units.

36th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS

A notorious unit better known as the SS-Sturmbrigade Dirlewanger, led by Oskar Dirlewanger.

Under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler the Schutzstaffel, or SS, were known for their brutality.

Yet even among this organisation responsible for some of the worse war crimes and crimes against humanity in history, Dirlewanger was both feared and despised.

Dirlewanger's penal division was initially formed from military prisoners and POWs but also had a high number of criminals (including rapists, child molesters, murderers and those



BUTCHERS OF WARSAW: Members of the Dirlewanger Brigade pose for a photograph while carrying out house-to-house searches in Warsaw. They committed atrocities on such a scale that even the brutal SS were shocked.

that had been committed to asylums for the criminally insane).

Final years

In the final years of the war, order within all branches of the *Wehrmacht* was upheld by a specially-formed military police, the *Feldjägerkorps*.

These military police units, which had seniority over all other *Feldgendarmarie*, were formed from combat-decorated officers and NCOs.

Possessing the direct authority from the OKW, they had the power to maintain control and discipline throughout all the German armed forces including the SS.

The *Feldjägerkorps* had the authority in the field to summarily execute officers or enlisted men for any breach of military discipline, order or duty.

By September 1944, all soldiers and recruits who received a sentence of deferred execution in a drumhead court-martial were sent directly to *Straf-*

battallions. Numbers rapidly increased as the war drew to a close in May 1945.

Shtrafbats

Not to be outdone by the Germans in any way, the Russians had *shtrafbats* - their own version of penal battalions.

The *shtrafbats* were greatly increased in number by Joseph Stalin in July 1942 via Order No. 227. This order was a desperate effort to re-instill discipline after the panicked routs of the first year of combat with Germany.

The order - popularized as the "Not one step back!" Order - introduced severe punishments, including summary execution, for unauthorized retreats.

In his order, Stalin also mentioned Hitler's successful use of penal battalions as a means to ensure obedience among regular *Wehrmacht* units.

Organisation

Pursuant to Order No. 227,

the first penal battalions were originally planned at 800 men; penal companies were also authorized, consisting of between 150 and 200 men per company.

In addition to the battalions already serving with Armies, other battalions, subordinated to Fronts (the equivalent of Army Groups), were introduced.

The first penal battalion deployed under the new policy was sent to the Stalingrad Front on August 22, 1942, shortly before German troops reached the Volga river.

It consisted of 929 disgraced officers convicted under Order No. 227 who had been demoted to the lowest enlisted rank and assigned to the penal battalion.

After three days of assaults against the Germans, only 300 remained alive.

The order entitled 'Status of Penal Units of the Army' of 26 November 1942, by Georgiy Zhukov (then a Deputy Commander-in-Chief), formally standardized Soviet penal units.

Penal battalions or *shtrafbats* were set at 360 men per battalion, and were commanded by mid-range and senior Red Army officers and political officers (*politruks*).

Penal companies (100 to 150 per unit) were commanded by sergeants (NCOs) and privates.

Penal units consisted of two types of personnel: permanent and temporary.

Permanent personnel were staff officers, company commanders, platoon leaders, political officers, and other junior commanders.

Temporary personnel were the *shtrafniki* (punishees) who were sent to the unit for their

crimes or wrongdoings in order to redeem themselves with their service.

In some penal units like the 8th Detached Penal (Officer) Battalion, platoons sometimes had up to 50 men, companies comprised 300 men, and the battalion could be as big as 850 men; which implies that a penal battalion was sometimes larger than a regular rifle battalion of the Red Army.

Note that on paper, the battalion was to be commanded by a Colonel with two deputies, a chief of staff, and a political officer. The companies were to be commanded by Majors and their platoons by Captains.

This is probably because in this instance, the *shtrafniki* consisted of former officers of the Red Army.

The total number of people convicted to penal units from September 1942 to May 1945 was 422,700. Very few of them were known to have survived the war.

Categories

Men ordinarily subject to penal military unit service included:

- Those convicted of desertion or cowardice under Order No. 227. While cowardice under fire was punished with instant execution, soldiers or officers in rear areas suspected of having a "reluctance to fight" could (and frequently were) summarily stripped of rank and reassigned to a *shtrafbat* under Order 227.
- Soviet Gulag labour camp inmates.

Infantry battalions

Penal battalion service in infantry roles was the most common use of *shtrafniki*, and viewed by many Soviet prisoners as tantamount to a death sentence.

The term of service in infantry penal battalions and companies was from one to three months (the maximum term was usually applied to those qualifying for the death penalty, the standard punishment for Order No. 227).

Standard rates of conversion of imprisonment terms into penal battalion terms existed.

Convicts sentenced to infantry units were eligible for commutation of sentence and assignment to a Red Army line unit if they either suffered a combat injury (the crime was considered to be "cleansed in blood") or had accomplished extremely heroic deeds in combat.

They could also theoretically receive military decorations for outstanding service and if released were considered fully rehabilitated, though those suspected of political disloyalties remained marked men and often continued to be persecuted after the war's end.

Different commanders had different attitudes when releasing the *shtrafniks* from the unit and returning them to their regular units.

65th Army commander General Pavel Batov only rehabilitated *shtrafniks* who were killed or wounded in action and used the remaining *shtrafniks* until the end.

General Alexander Gorbатов released all *shtrafniks* who had

bravely fought in a battle, regardless of whether they were wounded or not.

Air force

Pilots or gunners serving in air force penal squadrons were at a marked disadvantage in obtaining the remission of sentence via a combat injury since the nature of air combat usually meant that any injury was fatal.

Pilots received no credit for missions flown, and were normally kept in service until they were killed in action.

Former Soviet Air Force pilot Artyom Afinogenov recalled the use of air force penal squadrons near Stalingrad:

“Penal squadron pilots were sent to the most dangerous places, first of all, to Volga bridge crossings, where the future of Stalingrad was decided, to air fields and enemy tank concentrations. So it was only penal squadrons that were sent to attack these targets, yet these operational flights were not taken into consideration. You keep flying missions and killing Germans, yet it is held that nothing happens, so nothing goes on your record. To be released from penal service you have to be wounded in fighting. But when a military pilot is flying a mission, the first wound he receives may very often be the last one.”

The death rate among gunners serving in penal squadrons was exceptionally high. While prisoners assigned as gunners could theoretically clear their sentences after surviving ten missions, like the infantry they were frequently transferred to penal mine-clearing units be-

fore reaching this total.

Combat Service

Pursuant to Order No. 227, any attempt to retreat without orders, or even a failure to advance was punished by barrier troops (*zagraditel'nye otriady*) or “anti-retreat” detachments of the Soviet special organization known as SMERSH (*Smert shpionam*), Russian for “Death to spies”.

Blocking detachments positioned at the rear would use heavy-handed discouragement towards retreat, but the most likely way that a soldier or officer would interact with a barrier troop was not through being cut down by a Maxim, but through arrest and drumhead court martial.

As a result, with nowhere else to go, the penal battalions usually advanced in a frenzy, running forwards until they were killed by enemy minefields, artillery, or heavy machine-gun fire.

If the men survived and occupied their objective, they were rounded up and used again in the next assault.

In some cases, *shtrafniks* performed their duty very well even though there were no barrier troops blocking the unit's rear.

The battalions were headed by staffs or ordinary soldiers and officers. While out of the line, discipline was enforced by an armed guard company, backstopped by NKVD or SMERSH detachments. Staff and guards were highly paid and got special pension benefits for their unpleasant and sometimes dangerous work.



The dreaded NKVD were often used as ‘barrier troops’, put in place to stop Russian troops from retreating during an attack.

During the war, Soviet penal units were widely employed. Some units achieved considerable fame.

The simultaneous formation of penal units and ancillary rear-guard blocking troops in Order No. 227 has occasionally led to a modern misconception that penal units were rear-guarded by regular units of the Red Army.

Although the practice of using regular army troops as a rearguard or blocking force was briefly implemented, it was soon discovered that the rear-guard did not always carry out their orders with regards to penal unit personnel who retreated or fled from the Germans.

Consequently, until the end of the war, the task of preventing unauthorized withdrawal of penal unit personnel from the battlefield was handled by the anti-retreat SMERSH detachments of the Soviet Red Army.



Modern submachine guns

This month we're taking a closer look at submachine guns that went into service after World War II. How many of them can you identify, and give yourself a bonus point if you know which country they are from. You'll find the answers on page 90.



Acriter et Fideliter

For 516 years, the Pontifical Swiss Guard have been among the oldest military units in continuous operation. Their mission - to protect the Pope and the Apostolic Palace within the territory of the Vatican City.

The Pontifical Swiss Guard has its origins in the 15th century. Pope Sixtus IV (1471–1484) had already made an alliance with the Swiss Confederacy and built barracks in Via Pellegrino after foreseeing the possibility of recruiting Swiss mercenaries.

The pact was renewed by Pope Innocent VIII (1484–1492) in order to use Swiss troops against the Duke of Milan. Alexander VI (1492–1503) later actually used the Swiss mercenaries during their alliance with the King of France.

During the time of the Borgias, however, the Italian Wars began in which the Swiss mercenaries were a fixture in the front lines among the warring factions, sometimes for France and sometimes for the Holy See or the Holy Roman Empire.

The mercenaries enlisted when they heard King Charles VIII of France was going to war with Naples. Among the participants in the war against Naples was Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, the future Pope Julius II (1503–1513), who was well acquainted with the Swiss, having been Bishop of Lausanne years earlier.

The expedition failed, in part thanks to new alliances made by Alexander VI against the French. When Cardinal della Rovere became Pope Julius II in 1503, he asked the Swiss Diet to provide him with a constant corps of 200 Swiss mercenaries. This was made possible through financing by German merchants from Augsburg, Bavaria, Ulrich and Jacob Fugger, who had invested in the Pope and saw fit to protect their in-

vestment.

In September 1505, the first contingent of 150 soldiers set off on march to Rome, under the command of Kaspar von Silenen, and entered the city on 22 January 1506, now regarded as the official date of the Guard's foundation.

"The Swiss see the sad situation of the Church of God, Mother of Christianity, and realize how grave and dangerous it is that any tyrant, avid for wealth, can assault with impunity, the common Mother of Christianity," declared the Swiss Huldrych Zwingli, later became a Protestant reformer. Pope Julius II later granted the Guard the title "Defenders of the Church's freedom".

The force has varied greatly in size over the years and on occasion has been disbanded and

reconstituted. Its most significant hostile engagement was on 6 May 1527, when 147 of the 189 Guards, including their commander Caspar Röist, died fighting the troops of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in the stand of the Swiss Guard during the Sack of Rome in order to allow Clement VII to escape through the Passetto di Borgo, escorted by the other 42 guards.

The last stand battlefield is located on the left side of St Peter's Basilica, close to the Campo Santo Teutonico (German Graveyard). Clement VII was forced to replace the depleted Swiss Guard by a contingent of 200 German mercenaries (*Cus-todia Peditum Germanorum*).

Ten years later, under Pope Paul III, the Swiss Guard was reinstated, under commander Jost von Meggen.

Early Modern History

After the end of the Italian Wars, the Swiss Guard ceased to be used as a military combat unit in the service of the pope and its role became mostly that of the protection of the person of the pope and of an Honor guard. However, twelve members of the Pontifical Swiss Guard of Pius V served as part of the Swiss Guard of Admiral Marcantonio Colonna at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.

The office of commander of the Papal Guard came to be a special honour in the Catholic region of the Swiss Confederacy. It became strongly associated with the leading family of Lucerne, Pfyffer von Altishofen, a family which between 1652 and 1847 provided nine out of a total of ten the commanders (the ex-

ception being Johann Kaspar Mayr von Baldegg, also of Lucerne, served 1696–1704).

In 1798, commander Franz Alois Pfyffer von Altishofen went into exile with the deposed Pius VI. After the death of the pope on 29 August 1799, the Swiss Guard was disbanded and only reinstated by Pius VII in 1801.

In 1808, Rome was again captured by the French and the guard was again disbanded. Pius VII was exiled to Fontainebleau. The guard was reinstated under the same commander, Karl Leodegar Pfyffer von Altishofen, when the pope returned from exile in 1814.

Modern History

The guard was disbanded yet again in 1848, when Pius IX fled to Gaeta, but was reinstated when the pope returned to Rome the following year.

After the Piedmontese invasion of Rome, the Swiss Guard declined in the later 19th century into a purely ceremonial body with low standards. Guards on duty at the Vatican were "Swiss" only in name, mostly born in Rome to parents of Swiss descent and speaking the Roman Trastevere dialect.

The guards were trained solely for ceremonial parade, kept only a few obsolete rifles in store and wore civilian dress when drilling or in barracks. Administration, accommodation, discipline and organization were neglected and the unit numbered only about 90 men out of an authorized establishment of 133.

The modern Swiss Guard is the product of the reforms pur-

sued by Jules Repond, commander during 1910–1921.

Repond proposed to recruit only native citizens of Switzerland and he introduced rigorous military exercises. He also attempted to introduce modern arms, but Pius X only permitted the presence of firearms if they were not functional.

Repond's reforms and strict discipline were not well received by the corps, culminating in a week of open mutiny in July 1913, and the subsequent dismissal of thirteen ringleaders from the guard.

In his project to restore the Swiss Guard to its former prestige, Repond also dedicated himself to the study of historical costume, with the aim of designing a new uniform that would be both reflective of the historical Swiss costume of the 16th century and suited for military exercise.

The result of his studies was published as *Le costume de la Garde suisse pontificale et la Renaissance italienne* (1917). Repond designed the distinctive Renaissance-style uniforms still worn by the modern Swiss Guard. The introduction of the new uniforms was completed in May 1914.

The foundation of Vatican City as a modern sovereign state was negotiated in the Lateran Treaty of 1929. The duties of protecting public order and security in the Vatican lay with the Papal Gendarmerie Corps, while the Swiss Guard, the Palatine Guard and the Noble Guard served mostly ceremonial functions.

The Palatine and Noble Guards were disbanded by Paul



VI in 1970, leaving the Swiss Guard as the only ceremonial guard unit of the Vatican.

At the same time, the Gendarmerie Corps was transformed into a Central Security Office, with the duties of protecting the Pope, defending Vatican City, and providing police and security services within its territory, while the Swiss Guard continued to serve ceremonial functions only.

Paul VI in a decree of 28 June 1976 defined the nominal size of the corps at 90 men. This was increased to 100 men by John Paul II on 5 April 1979. As of 2010 the guard numbered 107 halberdiers divided into three squads, with commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

Since the assassination attempt on John Paul II of 13 May 1981, a much stronger emphasis has been placed on the guard's non-ceremonial roles.

The Swiss Guard has developed into a modern guard corps equipped with modern small arms, and members of the Swiss Guard in plain clothes now accompany the pope on his travels abroad for his protection.

On 4 May 1998 commander Alois Estermann was murdered on the day of his promotion. Estermann and his wife, Gladys Meza Romero, were killed by the young guardsman Cédric Tornay, who later committed suicide.

The case received considerable public attention and became the subject of a number of conspiracy theories alleging Cold War politics or involvement by the Opus Dei prelature. British journalist John Follain, who published a book on the case in

2006, concluded that the killer acted purely out of personal motives.

On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the Swiss Guard, in April–May 2006, 80 former guardsmen marched from Bellinzona in southern Switzerland to Rome, recalling the march of the original 200 Swiss guards to take up Papal service, in 1505.

The march had been preceded by other celebrations in Lucerne, including a rally of veterans of the Guard and a Mass.

In a public ceremony on 6 May 2006, 33 new guards were sworn in on the steps of St. Peter's Basilica instead of the traditional venue in the San Damaso Courtyard. The date chosen marked the anniversary of the Sack of Rome when the Swiss Guard had been nearly destroyed.

Present at this event were representatives of the Company of Pikemen and Musketeers of the Honourable Artillery Company of London and the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company of Massachusetts.

In December 2014, Pope Francis directed that Daniel Anrig's term as commander should end on 31 January 2015, and that he be succeeded by his deputy Christoph Graf. This followed reports about Anrig's "authoritarian style".

With the rise of Islamic terrorism in Europe and open threats against the Vatican issued by the Islamic State (ISIS), Vatican officials in 2015 collaborated with Italian authorities to improve the protection of Vatican City against attacks that cannot be reasonably defended against by the Swiss Guard and Vati-

can gendarms, notably against drone attacks.

In October 2019 the Swiss Guard reached a total personnel of 135. It is the result of the expansion of the Corps announced at the press conference held on the occasion of the swearing in of the new guards in 2018. Previously, according to article 7 of the regulation, the Swiss Guard was made up of 110 men.

Recruitment and Service

Recruits to the guards must be Catholic, single males with Swiss citizenship who have completed basic training with the Swiss Armed Forces and can obtain certificates of good conduct.

Recruits must have a professional degree or high school diploma and must be between 19 and 30 years of age and at least 174 cm tall.

In 2009, the Pontifical Swiss Guard commandant, Daniel Anrig, suggested that the Guard might someday be open to recruiting women, but he added that the admission of female recruits remained far in the future.

Qualified candidates must apply to serve. If accepted, new guards are sworn in on 6 May every year in the San Damaso Courtyard (Italian: *Cortile di San Damaso*) in the Vatican (6 May is the anniversary of the Sack of Rome).

The chaplain of the guard reads aloud the oath in the languages of the guard (German, Italian, or French).

(English translation) I swear that I will faithfully, loyally and honourably serve the Supreme Pontiff (name of pope) and his



TAKING THE OATH: A new member of the Pontifical Swiss Guard is sworn in. The extended thumb, index finger and middle finger symbolizes the the Holy Trinity.

legitimate successors, and dedicate myself to them with all my strength, sacrificing, if necessary, my life to defend them. I assume this same commitment with regard to the Sacred College of Cardinals whenever the Apostolic See is vacant. Furthermore, I promise the Commanding Captain and my other superiors respect, fidelity and obedience. I swear to observe all that the honour of my position demands of me.

When his name is called, each new guard approaches the Pontifical Swiss Guard's flag, grasping the banner in his left hand.

He raises his right hand with his thumb, index, and middle finger extended along three axes, a gesture that symbolizes the Holy Trinity and the

Rütlichschwur, and swears in his native tongue (which might be one of the Swiss Romansh languages):

(English translation) I, (name), swear to diligently and faithfully abide by all that has just been read out to me, so help me God and his Saints.

Those who are accepted serve for a minimum of two years, but can also stay in service for an additional year or two, which was the case for many guards during the "Jubilee of Mercy" in 2015.

Regular guardsmen (halberdiers) receive a tax-free salary of EUR 1,300 per month (about R23,500) plus extra pay for hours worked overtime. In addition, accommodation and board are provided.

Members of the guard are eli-

gible for pontifical decorations. The Benemerenti medal is usually awarded after three years of faithful service.

Uniforms

The official full dress uniform is of blue, red, orange and yellow with a distinctly Renaissance appearance. It was introduced by commandant Jules Repond (1910–1921) in 1914. Repond's design was inspired by 16th-century depictions of the Swiss Guard.

A clear expression of the modern Pontifical Swiss Guard uniform can be seen in a 1577 fresco by Jacopo Coppi of the Empress Eudoxia conversing with Pope Sixtus III. It shows the precursor of today's recognisable three-coloured uniform with boot covers, white gloves,

a high or ruff collar, and either a black beret or a black Comb morion (silver for high occasions). Sergeants wear a black top with crimson leggings, while other officers wear an all-crimson uniform.

The colours blue and yellow were in use from the 16th century, said to be chosen to represent the Della Rovere coat of arms of Julius II, with the colour red added to represent the Medici coat of arms of Leo X.

The ordinary guardsmen and the sub-corporals wear the “tricolor” (yellow, blue and red) uniform without any rank distinctions except for a different model of halberd in gala dress. The corporals have red braid insignia on their cuffs and use a different, more spear-like, halberd.

Head wear is typically a large black beret for daily duties, while a black or silver morion helmet with red, white, yellow, black, and purple ostrich feathers is worn for ceremonial duties, the former for guard duty or drill; the latter for high ceremonial occasions such as the annual swearing-in ceremony or reception of foreign heads of state. Historically brightly coloured pheasant or heron feathers were used.

The senior non-commissioned and warrant officers have a different type of uniform. All sergeants have essentially the same pattern of dress as ordinary guardsmen, but with black tunics and red breeches.

Each sergeant has a red plume on his helmet, except for the sergeant major, who displays distinctive white feathers. When the gala uniform is worn,

sergeants have a different pattern of armour with a gold cord across the chest.

The commissioned officers (captains, major, vice-commander and commander) are distinguished by a completely red uniform with a different style of breeches, and golden embroidery on the sleeves. They have a longer sword, which is used when commanding a group or a squadron of guards.

In gala dress all ranks use a bigger purple plume on their helmets, except for the commander, who has a white one. Usually the commander and the chief of staff (usually the vice-commander) use armour when present at gala ceremonies. On such occasions “armour complete” – including sleeve armour, is worn. Except for ceremonial occasions and exercises, officers of the guard wear civilian dress when on duty.

The tailors of the Swiss Guard work inside the Vatican barracks. There the uniform for each guardsman is tailor-made individually.

The total set of Renaissance style clothing weighs 3.6 kg, and may be the heaviest and most complicated uniform in use by any standing army today. A single uniform requires 154 pieces and takes nearly 32 hours and three fittings to complete.

The modern regular duty service dress uniform is more functional, consisting of a simpler solid blue version of the more colourful tricolour grand gala uniform, worn with a simple brown belt, a flat white col-

lar and a black beret.

For new recruits and rifle practice, a simple light blue overall with a brown belt may be worn. During cold or inclement weather, a dark blue cape is worn over the regular uniform.

In 2019, after more than 500 years, the Swiss Guard received new and modernized helmets. The old metal helmet has been replaced by a 21st-century high-tech, 3D-printed version, made of UV-resistant PVC, a common type of plastic.

The new helmets have hidden air vents to better keep the guards cool in the warm Roman sun. The new design was created by engineer Peter Portmann and Swiss firm 3D-Prototyp, by scanning the 16th century original to create a model which was then moulded in PVC and painted with a water-based, UV resistant paint. It now takes just one day to make a helmet, whereas the metal model took several days.

Equipment

The eponymous main weapon of the halbardiers is the halberd; corporals and vice-corporals are equipped with a partisan polearm. Ranks above corporal do not have polearms, but on certain ceremonial occasions carry command batons.

The banner is escorted by two flamberge great swords carried by corporals or vice-corporals. A dress sword is carried by all ranks, swords with a simple S-shaped crossguard by the lower ranks, and elaborate basket-hilt rapiers in the early baroque style by officers.

Arms and armour used by the Swiss Guard are kept in the *Ar-*



UNIFORM STYLES: On the left two Swiss Guardsmen in full dress uniform, while the Guardsman on the right is in regular duty service dress uniform.

meria (armoury). The Armeria also contains a collection of historical weapons no longer in use.

The armoury holds a collection of historical plate armour (cuirasses or half-armour). The oldest specimens date to c. 1580, while the majority originates in the 18th century.

Historical armour was worn on the occasion of canonizations until 1970, since when their use has been limited to the oath ceremony on 6 May. A full set of replicas of the historical cuirasses was commissioned in 2012. The cuirasses are hand-made, and the production of a single piece takes about 120 hours.

The replicas are not financed by the Vatican itself but by private donations via the Foundation for the Swiss Guard in the Vatican, a Fribourg-based organisation established in 2000.

The Swiss Guard in their

function as bodyguards are equipped with the SIG Sauer P220 pistol and the SIG SG 550 rifle (or its SG 552 variant) also in use by the Swiss Army.

As recruits to the Swiss Guard must have undergone basic military training in Switzerland, they are already familiar with these weapons when they begin their service. The pepper spray used by the Swiss Army (RSG-2000) is also in use.

The Glock 19 pistol and Heckler & Koch MP7 submachine gun are reportedly also carried by Swiss Guard members in their function as plainclothes bodyguards.

In the 19th century (prior to 1870), the Swiss Guard along with the Papal Army used firearms with special calibres such as the 12.7 mm Remington Papal.

The Swiss Guard historically also used the M1842 T.59-67, 1871 Vetterli, Schmidt-Rubin,

Gewehr 98, K31, and SIG SG 510 rifles, the Dreyse M1907 pistol, and the SIG MKMO, Hispano-Suiza MP43/44 and Heckler & Koch MP5 submachine guns.

Rank

Commissioned officers

- Oberst (Colonel – the commandant of the Guard)
- Oberstleutnant (Lieutenant Colonel – the vice-commandant)
- Kaplan (Chaplain – considered the same rank as a lieutenant colonel)
- Major
- Hauptmann (Captain)
- Leutnant (Lieutenant, new rank introduced with promotions on 1st December 2020)

Non-commissioned officers

- Feldwebel (Sergeant-major)
- Wachtmeister (Sergeant)
- Korporal (Corporal)
- Vizekorporal (Vice-corporal; closest British equivalent would be lance corporal)

Enlisted

- Hellebardier/Gardist (Halbardier/Guardsman)

In conclusion

For more than half a millennium the Pontifical Swiss Guard have kept their oath to protect the Pope and the Apostolic Palace.

While the Pontifical Swiss Guard will always remain a major tourist attraction, they are first and foremost soldiers. And very professional ones at that.

And they live by their motto “Acriter et Fideliter” - Fiercely and Faithfully.

Dad's Army

You would have probably qualified to become a member of Dad's Army?

One of my favourite television series is Dad's Army. It's a sitcom that ran for nine seasons and revolves around the men of the fictitious Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard Unit.

The Home Guard consisted of local volunteers otherwise ineligible for military service, either because of age (hence the nickname "Dad's Army") or by being in professions exempt from conscription.

The unit is led by Captain Mainwaring, the pompous, if essentially brave and unerringly patriotic local bank manager, Mainwaring appointed himself leader of his town's contingent of Local Defence Volunteers.

His second-in-command is Sergeant Arthur Wilson, a diffident, upper-class bank employee who is very laid back.

Lance Corporal Jack Jones, the local butcher, is the oldest member of the platoon and saw action in the Boer War. One of his most heard expressions is "Don't panic", normally said while he is panicking.

Other members of the platoon include Private Fraser (a dour Scotsman who is the local undertaker), Private Walker (who runs the local black market), Private Godfrey (the platoon's medic. Although a conscientious objector during World War I he served as a medic and won the Military Medal for bravery), and Private Pike (the youngest of the platoon, who Mainwaring refers to as "You stupid boy.")).

Anyone that served in the mil-

itary will find the series funny, mainly because you will recognise characters that you came across.

While the series is a scream, the real Dad's Army was not that funny. In Britain in 1940 the people were worried about a German invasion from the sea and from the air. They started to arm themselves with shotguns and any weapons they could lay their hands on.

The government decided it would be better to organise them into a proper army. In 1939 Winston Churchill had wanted a Home Guard formed - when he became Prime Minister in May 1940 he got it. Churchill had hoped for 500,000. He got 250,000 on the first day and 1,500,000 by June. They were first known as the Local Defence Volunteers - the LDV.

At first these untrained men were a bit of a joke. They weren't given proper weapons, they just armed themselves with anything that could kill. One boy said: "We were set to defend a factory with broom handles. I pinched a knife from my mum's kitchen and tied it to the top."

One 14 year old boy took along a boy and arrow. That would have worried some German tank commander if the Germans really had invaded. Others took along a nice heavy golf club.

The government said Home Guard soldiers had to be aged between 17 and 65. But boys as young as 14 joined.

Some old soldiers from the First World War and before lied

about their age and they were eighty years old. No wonder they were given the nickname 'Dad's Army'.

The men in Dad's Army were keen. It was great that they were doing something to help, but sometimes they were a little too keen - and clumsy. Then they became Dad's Disasters.

Horrible Home Guard Facts

1. Home Guard soldiers were worried about how to spot a German. They were warned that enemy paratroopers might be disguised as a nun, a vicar or even a woman carrying a baby. The dumbest idea for uncovering a spy was to shout "Heil Hitler!" and no German would be able to stop himself from raising his arm, clicking his heels and replying, "Heil Hitler."
2. Home Guards were in more danger from their own weapons than from the enemy who never arrived. They were given sticky bombs - a bit like explosive toffee apples on a stick. The idea was that they would run up to an enemy tank and slap the bomb onto the side. But many tried to throw the bombs, the sticks came loose and the bombs fell at their feet. 768 Home Guard members managed to kill themselves in this manner and nearly 6,000 were injured.
3. And their families were not safe either. More than one of them managed to shoot either their wife or one of their



DAD'S ARMY: From left to right - Sergeant Wilson, Private Pike, Private Fraser, Lance Corporal Jones, Chief Air Raid Warden Hodges, Captain Mainwaring, Private Godfrey and Private Walker.

- children while cleaning their rifles at home.
- Early in the war Home Guard soldiers seemed to believe that anyone landing by parachute must be a German. An RAF pilot, James Nicolson, was hit by cannon fire from a German fighter. His foot was smashed and he was on fire. Yet he still managed to shoot down the enemy plane before bailing out. As he drifted down, wounded and still on fire, some Home Guard began blasting away at him with shotguns. Somehow he survived but was more injured by his Home Guard colleagues than by the enemy attack. Nicholson would go on to become the only Second World War fighter pilot to be awarded the Victoria Cross.
- Home Guards saw spies everywhere. If you had a Hitler moustache you were immediately suspected of being a German spy.
- School children weren't safe. Alan Chadwick enjoyed going down to the local aircraft factory to watch new planes being tested. As Alan cycled near the fence a Home Guard ordered him to stop. When he didn't the Home Guard fired a shot into the road. It bounced up and hit Alan in the back and killed him. Why hadn't Alan stopped? Because he was deaf.
- Some Home Guard soldiers saw themselves as a wartime police force. They set up road blocks to stop and question everyone who came that way. One man complained that he was stopped twenty times on an eight mile journey.
- A government inspector was measuring a field one day when local villagers accused him of being a German spy. An old farm worker tried to protect the inspector and was shot and killed by a panicking Home Guard member.
- The inspector tried to show his identity papers but he was also shot. During the Second World War 50 innocent Brits died at the hands of the Home Guard.
- It was probably even worse being a member of the German Home Guard, the Volkssturm. Karl Weiglein, a 59 year old farmer called up to serve, complained when the local bridge was blown up. "The people who did this are idiots and ought to be hanged." But it was Karl that was hanged. His commander, the local school teacher, heard what he had said. Karl was hanged from his own pear tree outside his own front door while his wife watched from the window. The body was left hanging for three days as an example to anyone else who wanted to complain.

One Man's War

World War II ended on 14 August 1945 when Japan surrendered. Yet not for Second Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda. He would continue to fight the war for another 29 years.



On August 14, 1945, Japan surrendered, bringing World War II to an end. Two weeks earlier an atomic bomb had been exploded over Hiroshima, destroying three-quarters of the city and killing nearly 80 000 people. Four days later, on August 10, a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

The war had been long and costly and soldiers of all nations just wanted to return home and be with their families.

Yet all over the Pacific, on tiny remote islands, pockets of Japanese soldiers fought on, unaware that the war had ended.

One of these soldiers was 23 year old second lieutenant Hiroo Onoda. In 1944 he had been sent to Lubang Island, about 130 km south of the Philippines capital of Manila.

His orders were to carry out guerrilla warfare and conduct intelligence duties. He was told to carry on fighting even if his unit was destroyed. And young Lt Onoda did just that. He carried on fighting World War II for the next 29 years.

After the war's end, leaflets were dropped by plane announcing Japan's surrender. They were signed by Onoda's chief of staff. The lieutenant picked up several of them, but dismissed them as American propaganda.

Over the years the world changed drastically. The Iron Curtain split Europe in two.

Man walked on the moon. Japan once again grew prosperous, now a staunch ally of its former enemy, the United States.

But Onoda continued with his lonely war, carefully conserving his dwindling ammunition. He lived on bananas and coconuts, with the occasional snared jungle birds or stolen cow as a welcome luxury.

During his first few years in the jungle, Onoda was in touch with other isolated Japanese guerrillas. But, one by one, his comrades 'surrendered' or died, some of them by committing suicide. Finally, he was alone - one man surrounded by illusory enemies whom he attempted to shoot on sight.

He kept switching hideouts to avoid detection, sniping at islanders, stealing cattle, burning crops. Police and search parties sent from Japan to try to make him surrender were met with bullets.

Onoda made sandals from woven straw and bits of old tyres held together with string and wooden pegs. When his clothes rotted, he patched them with tent canvas, using a piece of wire as a needle and plant fibre as thread. He built shelters of branches, bamboo, vines and leaves, but never dared stay for too long in one place.

Hunger was a permanent part of his life, and he was plagued by giant tropical ants, bees, centipedes, scorpions and snakes. To make fire he rubbed together two pieces of split bamboo pre-

pared with a mixture of coconut fibre and gunpowder from old bullets.

Friends, relatives and old comrades visited the island to tell him that the war was over, and often he saw them and heard them calling to him through loudspeakers.

From his high ground he could see twinkling lights of the towns below. And he spotted luxury liners ablaze with lights out to sea. But he never once doubted that the war was still going on.

On February 20, 1974, Onoda met a Japanese man, Norio Suzuki, who was traveling around the world, looking for "Lieutenant Onoda, a panda, and the Abominable Snowman, in that order". Suzuki found Onoda after four days of searching.

Onoda described this moment in a 2010 interview: "This hippie boy Suzuki came to the is-

land to listen to the feelings of a Japanese soldier. Suzuki asked me why I would not come out

Onoda and Suzuki became friends, but Onoda still refused to surrender, saying that he was waiting for orders from a superior officer.

Suzuki returned to Japan with photographs of himself and Onoda as proof of their encounter, and the Japanese government located Onoda's commanding officer, Major Yoshimi Taniguchi, who had since become a bookseller.

He flew to Lubang where on March 9, 1974, he finally met with Onoda.

As soon as the tattered figure recognised Taniguchi, he snapped to attention and shouted: "Lieutenant Onoda reporting for duty, sir!"

Taniguchi fulfilled the promise made in 1944, "Whatever happens, we'll come back for

you," by issuing him the following orders:

1. In accordance with the Imperial command, the Fourteenth Area Army has ceased all combat activity.
2. In accordance with military Headquarters Command No. A-2003, the Special Squadron of Staff's Headquarters is relieved of all military duties.
3. Units and individuals under the command of Special Squadron are to cease military activities and operations immediately and place themselves under the command of the nearest superior officer. When no officer can be found, they are to communicate with the American or Philippine forces and follow their directives.

So, at 15h00 on 10 March 1974, Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda at last stopped fighting World War II. It was his 52nd birthday.

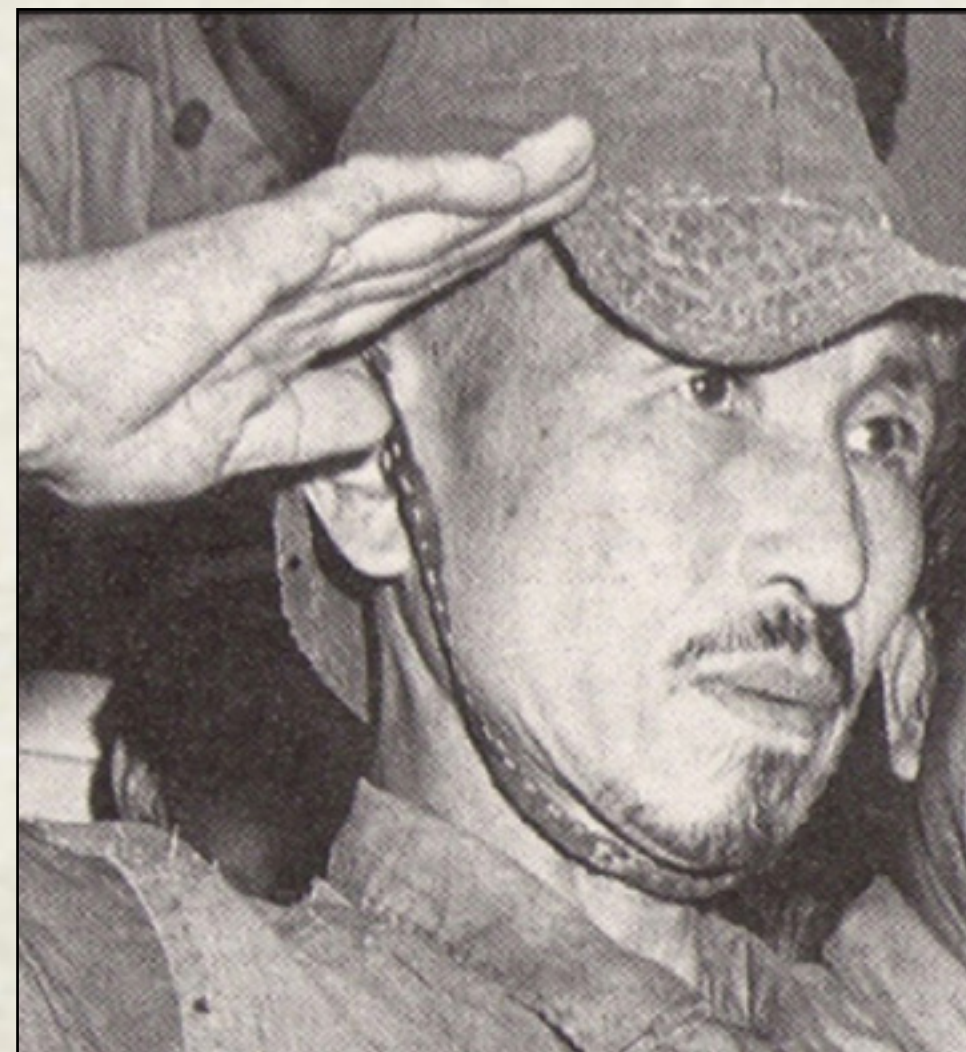
Onoda was pardoned for his misdeeds in the Philippines by President Marcos.

He went home and saw again his aged parents, who showed him the tombstone they had ordered for him at a time when they believed he had died in the jungle.

Onoda was greeted as a hero, and became famous around the world. But he could not stand the adulation. The man who had fought on alone for Japan decided to emigrate to Brazil.

After half a lifetime of war, he just wanted to find some peace.

Hiroo Onoda died of heart failure in Tokyo on 16 January, 2014. His war was finally over.



American Civil War - a few facts

It was a war that lasted just over four years. A war that saw brother fighting brother, and father fighting son. It remains the deadliest conflict in American history. This was the American Civil War.

It was a war that lasted four years and 27 days, from 12 April 1861 to 9 May 1865. A civil war that saw a country tear itself apart. A war in which brother fought brother and father fought son. It was known as the American Civil War.

It war in the United States fought between the Union (states that remained loyal to the federal union, or "the North") and the Confederacy (states that voted to secede, or "the South").

The central cause of the war was the status of slavery, especially the expansion of slavery into territories acquired as a result of the Louisiana Purchase and the Mexican-American War.

On the eve of the civil war in 1860, four million of the 32 million Americans - about 13% - were enslaved black people, almost all in the South.

What was it all about?

The practice of slavery in the United States was one of the key political issues of the 19th century. Decades of political unrest over slavery led up to the civil war. Disunion came after Abraham Lincoln won the 1860 United States presidential election on an anti-slavery expansion platform.

An initial seven southern slave states declared their secession from the country to form the Confederacy.

Confederate forces seized federal forts within territory

they claimed. The last minute Crittenden Compromise tried to avert conflict but failed; both sides prepared for war. Fighting broke out in April 1861 when the Confederate army began the Battle of Fort Sumter in South Carolina, just over a month after the first inauguration of Abraham Lincoln.

The Confederacy grew to control at least a majority of territory in eleven states (out of the 34 U.S. states in February 1861), and asserted claims to two more.

The states that remained loyal to the federal government were known as the Union. Both sides raised large volunteer and conscription armies. Four years of intense combat, mostly in the South, ensued.

During 1861-1862 in the war's Western Theatre, the Union made significant permanent gains, though in the war's Eastern Theatre, the conflict was inconclusive.

In September 1862, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which made ending slavery a war goal. To the west, the Union destroyed the Confederate river navy by the summer of 1862, then much of its western armies, and seized New Orleans.

The successful 1863 Union siege of Vicksburg split the Confederacy in two at the Mississippi River. In 1863, Confederate General Robert E. Lee's incursion north ended at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Western successes led to General Ulysses S. Grant's command of all Union armies in 1864. Inflicting an ever-tightening naval blockade of Confederate ports, the Union marshalled resources and manpower to attack the Confederacy from all directions. This led to the fall of Atlanta in 1864 to Union General William Tecumseh Sherman and his march to the sea. The last significant battles raged around the ten-month Siege of Petersburg, gateway to the Confederate capitol of Richmond.

The civil war effectively ended on 9 April 1865, when Confederate General Lee surrendered to Union General Grant at the Battle of Appomattox Court House, after abandoning Petersburg and Richmond.

Confederate generals throughout the Confederate army followed suit, the last surrender on land occurring on 23 June.

By the end of the war, much of the South's infrastructure was destroyed, especially its railroads. The Confederacy collapsed, slavery was abolished, and four million enslaved black people were freed.

The war-torn nation then entered the Reconstruction era in a partially successful attempt to rebuild the country and grant civil rights to freed slaves.

The Civil War is one of the most studied and written about episodes in the history of the United States. It remains the

subject of cultural and historiographical debate.

Of particular interest is the persisting myth of the Lost Cause of the Confederacy. The American Civil War was among the earliest to use industrial warfare.

Railroads, the telegraph, steamships, the ironclad warship, and mass-produced weapons saw wide use. In total the war left between 620,000 and 750,000 soldiers dead, along with an undetermined number of civilian casualties.

President Lincoln was assassinated just five days after Lee's surrender. The Civil War remains the deadliest military conflict in American history.

"It was only as recently as the Vietnam War that the number of American deaths in foreign wars [combined] eclipsed the number who died in the Civil War."

The technology and brutality of the Civil War foreshadowed the coming World Wars.

Here are a few facts about the American Civil War that you may, or may not, have known.

Casualties

The single most costly battle during the Civil War was the Battle of Gettysburg. It took place between 1 and 3 July 1863 and saw a total of 51,112 casualties - 23,047 from the Union and 28,063 from the Confederacy.

During the Civil War, 2% of the U.S. population died. This is equivalent to six million men today. While rifles were the deadliest weapons during the war, disease killed more men.

Camps became breeding grounds for measles, chicken pox, and mumps. One million Union soldiers contracted malaria.

A Civil War soldier's chance of surviving the war was about one in four.

More Americans died at the Battle of Bloody Angle at Spotsylvania, Virginia, in May 1864 than at Omaha Beach on D-Day in 1944.

An estimated 800 wounded men burned to death at the Battle of the Wilderness because they were unable to crawl away from advancing brush fires.

During the Civil War, diarrhea (Greek, meaning "I flow away") was the most common and deadly disease. More Civil War soldiers died from diarrhea than were killed in battle. About one in 40 cases was fatal. Death came from dehydration, exhaustion, or the rupture of the intestinal wall. The bullet (especially the Minie) accounted for more than 90% of battle fatalities. The soft, low-velocity bullets tumbled and spread apart inside the body, which caused excessive and irreparable tissue damage. Only 4% of Civil War battlefield casualties came from the muzzle of a canon.

On average, of every 100 fatalities on the battlefield, five men died from limb wounds, 12 from punctures to the lower abdomen, 15 from damage to the heart or liver, and more than 50 from lacerations to the head or neck.

In Vietnam, one in 400 of the wounded died of their injuries. In the Korean War, one in 50 wounded American soldiers died. In the Civil War, one in seven wounded Federals died and one in five wounded Confederates died - sometimes within minutes,

sometimes after months of suffering.

Gettysburg

Not only was Gettysburg the most costly battle of the Civil War, it was also the largest battle ever fought in North America. Its victor, Union Army General George Meade, was brand new. He had only been appointed as commander three days before the battle started. Incidentally, he was born in Spain.

The Battle of Gettysburg was about shoes. Many of the Confederate soldiers were barefoot because all of the shoe factories were in the north. A contingent went to Gettysburg because there was a shoe factory there. They wanted to capture it, but when they arrived they found thousands of Union soldiers already in Gettysburg.

The Twenty-Sixth North Carolina Infantry suffered the worst regimented losses in a single battle: 708 of 800 killed, wounded, or missing at Gettysburg.

On the night before the Battle of Gettysburg, Confederate commander Robert E. Lee had a heart attack. This has been cited as one of the reasons why he made some critical mistakes, such as the costly and notoriously foolhardy Pickett's Charge.

In the battle of Gettysburg, 1,100 ambulances were in use. The medical director of the Union army boasted that all the wounded were picked up from the field within 12 hours after the battle was over. This was a far cry from the second battle of Bull Run, when many of the wounded were left on the field in the rain, heat, and sun for three or four days.

One of the unlikely heroes of the

Battle of Gettysburg was General George Custer. A few miles from the main battle the Southern cavalry under General J.E.B Stuart was attempting to ride around the rear of the Northern position, where they could have caused chaos on the North's supply lines. They were stopped by Custer who defeated a much larger force.

At Gettysburg, the First Minnesota captured the battle flag of the Twenty-eighth Virginia. In 2001, the state of Virginia requested that Minnesota return it. As of writing this article, Minnesota still possessed the banner.

All at sea

The first battle between ironclads occurred during the Civil War in March 1862, between the Confederate ship Merrimack and the Union Monitor. No winner was declared.

The Confederate cruiser Shenandoah sailed completely around the world, raiding Union whalers and commerce vessels. The ship and its crew surrendered to English authorities in Liverpool more than six months after Lee's surrender at Appomattox.

The Civil War was the first time a submarine ever sank an enemy ship when the submarine the Hunley sank the USS Housatonic. However, the Hunley was damaged in the attack, wandered seaward, and sank drowning all eight hands. Only five of Housatonic's 155 died. The Hunley was finally recovered 136 years later.

On a personal note

The youngest soldier in the Civil War was a 9 year-old boy from Mississippi. The oldest was an 80 year-old from Iowa. More than 10,000 soldiers serving in

the Union Army were under 18 years old.

Thomas Stewart, aged 92 years, of East Newtown, Ohio, was a private in the 101st Ohio regiment, and took part in the battle of Perryville, where he was complimented for his bravery and soldierly bearing.

Seven future U.S. presidents served in the Civil War: Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, William McKinley, James Garfield, Benjamin Harrison, Chester A. Arthur, and Andrew Johnson.

Confederate General Martin Green's last words were "A bullet has not yet been molded that will kill me." He said this in response to a warning to keep his head down while inspecting the defenses at Vicksburg. Moments later he was shot in the head and killed by a Union sharpshooter.

Amy Clarke wanted to fight near her husband during the Civil War and so disguised herself as "Richard Anderson" to join a Tennessee unit of the Confederacy. Although her husband died at Shiloh, she continued to fight until she was wounded and captured by Union soldiers. When they discovered she was a woman, she was sent back to the Confederate - in a dress.

During the Battle of Antietam, Clara Barton tended the wounded so close to the fighting that a bullet went through her sleeve and killed a man she was treating.

Dr. Mary Edwards Walker was not only the first woman surgeon in U.S. Military history, but she was also the first - and only - woman to be awarded the Medal of Honour.

During the war, the Union confiscated Robert E. Lee's estate and turned it into a cemetery so

Medal of Honour



The first U.S. Medal of Honour was awarded during the Civil War on 25 March 1863.

It was awarded to six survivors of the April 1862 Andrew's Raid.

In all, 2,625 soldiers and sailors received the medal during the war.

There were 433 awarded during WWII.

that he would be reminded of the carnage he caused. It later became Arlington National Cemetery.

Confederate General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson got his nickname during the first Battle of Bull Run. During battle, his men noted he stood "like a stone wall." He was later accidentally shot and killed by his own men.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., future chief Justice, was wounded three times during the Civil War - in the chest at Ball's Bluff, in the back at Antietam and in the heel at Chancellorsville.

Senator John J. Crittendon of Kentucky had two sons who became major generals during the



THE MEDIA GETS INVOLVED: The Civil War was the first war to be immediately reported in the press. The first 'war' photographs were taken at the Battle of Antietam.

Civil War: one for the North, one for the South.

Daniel Emmett, the composer of "Dixie" was not only from the North, but he was also a loyal Unionist. He was disgusted by the song's popularity in the South. In fact the song became the unofficial anthem of the South. Lincoln claimed that it was one of "the best tunes I ever heard." Listen to the song by clicking [here](#).

Not fond of ceremonies or military music, Ulysses S. Grant said he could only recognize two tunes. "One was Yankee Doodle, the other one wasn't."

Confederate Private Henry Stanley fought for the Sixth Arkansas, and was captured at Shiloh, but survived to go to Africa to find Dr. Livingston and utter the famous words "Doctor Livingstone I presume."

Trivia

- The Civil War prison camp Elmira had two observation towers constructed for onlookers. Citizens paid 15 cents to look at the inmates.

Concession stands by the towers sold peanuts, cakes, and lemonade while the men inside starved.

- To prevent escape at Camp Douglas in Chicago, prisoners were not allowed to wear clothes. Even blankets were taken away. Many Confederates froze to death.
- Nearly 3,000 people died in the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. About the same number of men died in the first 15 minutes at Grant's assault at Cold Harbour on 3 June 1864.
- The amphibious landing of 110,000 troops at Iwo Jima in World War II cost 5,931 American lives and wounded 17,372 more. Roughly the same numbers and losses were involved in the Civil War battle at Chickamauga. Iwo Jima spanned 36 days. Chickamauga lasted 36 hours (19-20 September 1863).
- African American soldiers were allowed to join the Union Army in 1863, but they were

paid lower wages than white soldiers and were charged rent for their clothing. Some black Union soldiers refused their salary for 18 months as protest. In September 1864, they finally received equal pay.

- Of the nearly 200,000 African Americans who fought for the North, more than 100,000 were runaway slaves. The number of African Americans who enlisted in the Union Army was larger than the number of soldiers in the entire Confederate Army in the final months of the war. Twenty-five African American soldiers were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour. Approximately 35,000 of the nearly 200,000 died during the war.
- During the Civil War, generals usually led their soldiers into battle, a rare occurrence in modern wars. Because of this, generals were 50% more likely to die in combat than privates were.
- Although both the North and South did not allow women in the army, it is estimated that between 250 and 400 women fought disguised as men.
- The Union uniform was blue and the Confederate uniform was grey. But because clothes were scarce during the war, it was common for soldiers to wear "enemy" colours and mistakenly be fired upon by their own men.
- Only two people were convicted of war crimes in the Civil War. The first was Confederate Capt. Henry Wirz. He was tried and executed after the war for murder and conspiracy associated with his



AMPUTATION BOX: The most common operation performed on soldiers during the Civil War was amputation. The best surgeon could have a limb severed and discarded within five minutes. Civil War doctors were nicknamed “sawbones.” There were 60,000 partial or complete amputations during the war. Surgeons never washed their hands after an operation, because all blood was assumed to be the same, nor did he wash his instruments.

- command at Andersonville, an infamous prison camp. The second was Confederate guerilla Champ Ferguson.
- Nearly 1/3 of Union Army soldiers were immigrants (7.5% were Irish; 10% were German). Other immigrant soldiers were French, Italian, Polish, English, and Scottish. Approximately one in 10 were African American.
- On 4 July 1863, after 48 days of siege, Confederate General John C. Pemberton surrendered the city of Vicksburg, Mississippi to Union General, Ulysses S. Grant. For the next 81 years, the city - Vicksburg, Mississippi - did not celebrate the Fourth of July.
- On both sides of the conflict, potential recruits were offered monetary rewards, or “bounties,” for enlisting, as much as \$677 in New York. “Bounty jumping” soon became so popular, that hundreds of men signed up, and then deserted, to enlist again elsewhere.
- For those who were drafted, the law allowed them to pay a substitute to go in their place. Another type of “bounty jumper” was born when men would hire out to more than one draftee and then make a hasty exit once they were paid. The record for bounty jumping was held by John O’Connor, who admitted to hiring himself out 32 times before being caught. He received a four year prison term.
- The Confederate forces lost 63 Brigadier Generals, seven Major Generals, and three Lieutenant Generals during the war.
- On 13 May 1865, a month after Lee’s surrender at Appomattox, Private John J. Williams of the 34th Indiana became the last man killed in the Civil War, in a battle at Palmito Ranch, Texas. The final skirmish was a Confederate victory.
- The rebel yell was a battle cry used by Confederate soldiers during the American Civil War. Confederate soldiers used the yell during charges to intimidate the enemy and boost their own morale. Watch rare footage, taken in 1935, of Confederate veterans recreating the rebel yell by clicking [here](#).

We trust that not only did you find this article interesting, but that maybe, just maybe, you learnt a fact or two about the American Civil War that you did not know.

Springbok



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

The Springbok is the official journal of the South African Legion. Read the December 2021 issue of Springbok by clicking on the cover to the left.



SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

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

Click on the logo above to visit the SAAFA website

Potential 2022 flash points

This month we take a look at two potential flash points where a war could start. We take a quick look at the forces that could be involved in these potential conflicts.

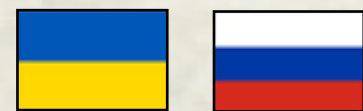
First and foremost, you have to take into account that I am writing this article in mid-December 2021.

So by the time you read this article in February, things may have changed. Just bear that in mind.

Currently there are two areas that could potentially develop into conflicts or even full out war. These areas are the Ukraine and the South China Sea.

We will take a closer look at the reasons for the tension in these areas, as well as take a look at the forces that could become involved in any potential conflicts. We will begin with the Ukraine.

UKRAINE



Background

Seven years ago Russia seized part of southern Ukraine and backed separatists who started a conflict in large areas of the east.

Ukraine shares borders with both the European Union (EU) and Russia, but as a former Soviet republic it has deep social and cultural ties with Russia and Russian is widely spoken there.

Russia has long resisted Ukraine's move towards European institutions, and its key de-

mand is that it never joins Nato or has the military alliance's offensive weapons on its soil.

When Ukrainians deposed their pro-Russian president in 2014, Russia seized and then annexed the southern Crimean peninsula from Ukraine and Russian-backed separatists captured large swathes of Ukraine's two eastern regions collectively known as the Donbas.

Russian President Vladimir Putin says that they have no plans to invade the Ukraine. But Western intelligence services as well as Ukraine's think an incursion or invasion could happen some time in early 2022.

US intelligence says as many as 175,000 Russian troops could become involved as early as January, and CIA Director William Burns believes President Putin "is putting the Russian military, the Russian security services in a place where they could act in a pretty sweeping way".

Russia initially described satellite photos showing troop build-ups in Crimea and not far from eastern Ukraine as alarmist. But by early December, a presidential aide insisted that "we have the right to move troops on our territory".

In a video call with American President Joe Biden, President Putin that he had no plans to invade and that Russian troops

did not pose a threat to anyone.

Mr Biden said he had made it clear to Mr Putin that there would be "economic consequences like none he's ever seen" if he invaded Ukraine.

The G7 echoed that, saying: "Russia should be in no doubt that further military aggression against Ukraine would have massive consequences and severe cost in response."

No-one is saying what these consequences will be. With the G7 it will probably take the form of economic sanctions against Russia.

While President Biden is talking about "economic consequences", it is not sure whether the United States would be prepared to take military action against Russia.

The US has already sent weapons to Ukraine, including the lethal Javelin anti-tank missile.

In late January the US Air Force sent F-15 fighter jets to Amari Air Base in Estonia. The Royal Danish Air Force then sent F-16 multi-role fighter jets to Siauliai Air Base in Lithuania.

Both the U.S. and NATO have been very public with any new or potential military call-ups or deployments to message to Russia that the alliance remains strong and has the capability of quickly reinforcing member na-

tions that request assistance.

Let's now take a look at the respective strengths of the Russian and Ukrainian armed forces.



Russia

Currently Russia is ranked as the second most powerful military force in the world. It's current annual defence budget is \$42,129,000,000.

Manpower

Russia has a total of 1,350,000 military personnel. This is made up of 850,000 active military personnel, a reserve force of 250,000 and a paramilitary force of 250,000.

Ground Forces

Since 2017 most Russian infantry troops are armed with either the 7.62×39mm AK-15 or the 5.45×39mm AK-12. Most squads will also carry a 5.45×39mm RPK-74M light machine gun.

Russia has more tanks than any other armed force in the world, with a total of 13,000. The Russian Main Battle Tanks (MBT) are the T-90, T-80 and the T-72.

The T-90MS, which is Russia's most modern tank, entered service in 2017. It is armed with a 125 mm smooth-bore gun.

Russia has a total of 27,100 armoured vehicles. These consist mainly of Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) and In-

fantry Fighting Vehicles (IFV).

The main Russian APC is the BTR-80/82A. It has a crew of three and can carry seven troops. It is armed with either a 14.5 mm KPVT machine gun or 30mm 2A72 automatic cannon.

The BMP-3 is the main IFV and has a crew of three and can also carry seven troops. It is armed with either a 2A70 100mm gun or the 9M117 Bastion Anti-tank Guided Missile (ATGM). Its secondary armament includes a 2A72 30mm auto-cannon and a 7.62mm PKT machine gun.

Russia has 6,640 self-propelled artillery (SPA) vehicles. Of these the 2S19 "Msta-S" is one of the most modern SPA vehicles and entered service in 1989. It is armed with a 2A65 152.4 mm howitzer and has a range of 25 kilometres. Russia has 820 of them in service with more being produced.

The Russian Army has 4,465 towed artillery pieces with the 152mm 2A36 Giatsint-B being used to suppress and destroy enemy manpower and equipment. It is also suitable for counter-battery fire.

Finally, they have 3,860 rocket launchers. The most modern of these is the 24-barrel TOS-1A 220mm thermobaric multiple rocket launcher (MRL). It has an effective firing range of between 500 and 3,500 metres.

Air Power

Russia has a total aircraft strength of 4,144. Of these, 789 are fighter/interceptors and 742 are dedicated fighter aircraft.

Russian fighter/interceptors included the Mikoyan MiG-29 (Flanker), Mikoyan MiG-31 (Foxhound), Sukhoi Su-30M (Flanker C), and Sukhoi Su-35S (Flanker E).

The Sukhoi Su-57 (Felon) went into service in December 2020. It's a single-seat, twin-engine stealth multi-role fighter. It has a maximum speed of 2,135 km/h and a range of 3,500 km. It is armed with a 30 mm Gryazev-Shipunov GSh-30-1 auto-cannon and can carry air-to-air missiles, air-to-ground missiles, anti-ship missiles and anti-radiation missiles.

The Sukhoi Su-25 Grach (Frogfoot) was designed to provide ground support.

Russia has 429 transport aircraft and a tanker fleet of 19. It also has 130 special-mission aircraft which include those in the airborne early warning and control (AWAC) role and those in the electronic warfare and reconnaissance roles.

Finally, Russia has 1,540 helicopter of which 538 are attack helicopters. The two main attack helicopters are the Kamov Ka-50 "Black Shark" (Hokum A) and the Mil Mi-28 (Havoc).

The Kamov Ka-50 is a Russian single-seat attack helicopter introduced into service in August 1995. It has a maximum speed of 315 km/h and a range of 545 kilometres.

The Kamov Ka-50 is armed with a mobile semi-rigid 30 mm Shipunov 2A42 cannon. It also has six under-wing hard-points, plus two on wingtips for countermeasures or air-to-air

missiles. These hardpoints can be loaded with 80 × 80 mm S-8 rockets and 20 × 122 mm S-13 rockets; or 2 × APU-6 Missile racks, able to accommodate a total of 12 × 9K121 Vikhr anti-tank missiles, Vypel R-73 air-to-air missiles, Kh-25 semi-active laser guided tactical air-to-ground missiles; or 4 × 250 kg bombs or 2 × 500 kg bombs.



Ukraine

The Ukraine is ranked 25 out of 140 countries. It has an annual defence budget of \$9,600,000,000.

Manpower

The Ukraine has a total of 1,245,000 military personnel with 255,000 of them being active military personnel. They also boast a reserve force of 900,000 as well as 90,000 strong paramilitary force.

Ground Forces

The standard assault rifle of the Ukrainian Ground Forces is the AK-74 in either 5.45×39mm or the 7.62×39mm calibre.

Armour crews normally use the 5.45×39mm AKS-74U carbine, while Ukraine Special Forces use the 5,56×45 mm Fort-221 assault rifle. This is basically the Israeli TAR-21 built under license.

Ukraine has a total of 2,430 tanks. Their Main Battle Tank is the T-84, a development of the Soviet T-80 main battle tank. They have 155 at their disposal, as well as 10 x T-84 Oplot - an advanced version incorporating an armoured ammunition com-



MAIN BATTLE TANK: The T-90MS is Russia's most modern and powerful tank.

partment in a new turret bustle.

Other tanks in service with Ukraine include the T-80, T-72 and T-64.

The Ukraine's main infantry fighting vehicle is the BMP-2 armed with a turret with 30 mm auto-cannon 2A42 and 9M113 Konkurs ATGM. It has an operational range of 600 km. They currently have 1,400 of them.

They also have 900 BMP-1 and 115 BRM-1K IFV.

The APC of choice is the BTR-70 of which they have 480. Ukraine airborne forces use the BTR-4E "Butsefal" of which they have 203.

Interestingly they also have 350 American Humvee M1114 which were given to them as part of US aid packages.

In total they have 11,435 armoured vehicles.

The Ukraine has 785 Self-Propelled Artillery vehicles, with 600+ of them being 2S1 Gvozdika.

The 2S1 is fully amphibious with very little preparation, and once afloat is propelled by its

tracks. It is NBC protected and has infrared night-vision capability.

The 2S1 uses a 122 mm howitzer based on the towed D-30 howitzer. The gun is equipped with a power rammer, a double-baffle muzzle brake and a fume extractor. It is capable of firing HE (high explosive), leaflet, HE/RAP, armour-piercing HE, flechette and chemical rounds.

Ukraine has 2,040 towed artillery pieces with more than 400 of them being the 122mm D-30.

The D-30 first entered service with the Soviet Union in 1960. It has an effective range of 15.4 kilometres.

Finally, Ukraine has 550 rocket launchers. Currently they have 302 BM-21B 'Grad' MRL. The Grad first entered service with the Soviet Union in 1963 and it has seen combat in many wars, including the South African Border War.

Ukraine also has 90 OTR-21 Tochka ballistic missile launch-

ers capable of launching Chemical, 100 kt nuclear, EMP, or fragmentation filling warheads.

Air Power

Ukraine has a total aircraft strength of 285. Of these, 42 are fighter/interceptors and 25 are dedicated fighter aircraft.

The Mikoyan MiG-29 (Fulcrum) is the standard Ukraine Air Force fighter and they have 51 of them. The MiG-29 entered service with the Soviet Air Forces in 1982.

It can reach a maximum speed of 2,400 km/h and has a range of 1,430 kilometres. It carries a single 30 mm Gryazev-Shipunov GSh-30-1 auto-cannon and has seven hardpoints. These hardpoints can carry rockets, air-to-air missiles or bombs.

Ukraine has 111 helicopters of which 34 are attack helicopters. They currently have 14 Mil Mi-8 helicopters. The Mil Mi-8 first went into service with the Soviet Union back in 1967.

They have six hardpoints that can be armed with 57 mm S-5 rockets, bombs, or 9M17 Phalanga ATGMs and one or two side-mounted PK machine guns.

Conclusion

On paper the Russians would seem to be obvious victors. They have overwhelming superiority in manpower, armour, aircraft and helicopters. Their equipment is also far more modern than that of the Ukraine.

The Russian air power should easily see them achieving air superiority early in the war, thus putting Ukraine at a severe disadvantage.

Do not for one minute un-

derestimate the Ukraine forces. They will make the Russians pay for every inch of ground and victory for the Russians could prove very costly.

Another huge factor is whether any of the NATO nations will step in with military aid to the Ukraine. The United States, Germany and even Poland may side with the Ukraine.

This has the potential to influence the outcome of any military action by the Russians. Would they be willing to go up against NATO. And how far would any of them be willing to go?

SOUTH CHINA SEA



Background

Trying to explain the current situation and background to this potential conflict is kind of like playing hopscotch in a mine field - it's tricky.

To begin with you have to go back 1895. Up until then the island of Taiwan had been part of the Chinese Empire.

Following the defeat of China in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), Taiwan, its associated islands, and the Penghu archipelago were ceded to the Empire of Japan by the Treaty of Shimonoseki, along with other concessions.

In 1945, after the Japanese surrender brought an end to World War II, Chiang Kai-shek became the leader of China. Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong, however, had

other ideas. He wanted China to become a communist country.

He launched a costly full-scale civil war between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT), which broke out immediately following World War II and had been preceded by on and off conflict between the two sides since the 1920's.

By mid 1949 the civil war was all but over, with the Communist Party as the victors. On 1 October 1949 Mao Zedong declared the creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist Party retreated to the island of Taiwan and declared themselves an independent country - The Republic of China (ROC).

Currently only 13 nations and the Vatican recognise the ROC as a country. There are, however, many nations that support the ROC while not giving them official status as a country.

Since 1949 the PRC has always claimed that Taiwan is still a province of mainland China - and they want it back.

The People's Republic of China has always danced to their own tune. Their human rights record is deplorable, they have no respect for international copyright laws, and they tend to do whatever they want.

Democracy is not a word that appears in the PRC vocabulary and the country is a one-party state. There is no media freedom and citizens are severely censored as to what they can read, hear or watch. Even access to the Internet is restricted.

On 15 November 2012 Xi

Jinping became the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC). In 2013 he became the President of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Xi has been the paramount leader of China, the most prominent political leader in China, since 2012. He is often ranked among the most powerful people in the world.

Xi has made no secret of the fact that he wants China to become the largest and most powerful superpower in the world. Many of them believe that they already are.

He is also adamant that Taiwan is part of mainland China and that he is going to take control of Taiwan. Even if this means taking back the island by force.

Another source of contention is the South China Sea and, in particular, the Taiwan Strait. It is a 180 kilometre wide strait separating the island of Taiwan and the Chinese mainland.

The strait is part of the South China Sea and connects to the East China Sea to the north. The narrowest part is 130 km wide.

The Taiwan Strait is considered to be international waters and is a main conduit between the South China Sea and northern waters used by China, Japan, South Korea and others. Just over 40% of the world's shipping passes through the South China Sea.

Xi Jinping, however, claims that the Taiwan Strait, and most of the South China Sea, is Chinese territorial waters, as is the airspace above it.



ARTIFICIAL ISLAND: One of the artificial islands that has been built by China. This one is at Mischief Reef (Panganiban Reef). It has a 3,1 kilometre runway, control tower, weather radar and huge hangars. Ships are also able to dock at the island.

Yet Xi has gone ever further. Since 2014 the Chinese have been creating artificial islands in the South China Sea. Mainly in the disputed Spratly Islands area.

They have dug up more than 2,000 acres of coral reef that has then been dumped on top of existing coral reef to create the islands. These have then been transformed into military bases. Currently there are seven of them. Three of the islands have runways.

China now claims that these islands are Chinese sovereign territory and that the waters and airspace around them belong to the PRC. Countries from around the world have insisted that China's expansion into the South China Sea is illegal and that the water and airspace around them is international waters and airspace.

The United States Navy, Australian Navy, Royal Navy, and

the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force often sail through the Taiwan Strait as a show of force. Recently the German Navy did the same thing. China is not very happy about it.

Any aircraft, military or civilian, that get too close to any of these artificial islands will get one of the following radio warning in both Chinese and English.

"This is Chinese Navy, this is Chinese sky. Foreign military airplane you are approaching my military secure area. Please go away quickly in order to avoid wrong judgement," or "Foreign military aircraft this is Chinese Navy. You are threatening the security of our station. In order to avoid miscalculations please stay away this area and leave immediately."

Over the past few months Xi Jinping has threatened Taiwan with invasion on numerous occasions. There have also been

multiple incidents where Chinese fighter-jets have violated Taiwanese airspace.

Is there a possibility that Xi may carry out his threats to invade Taiwan. Or what if Taiwan retaliates to Chinese incursions into their airspace? Or how long will it be before some over-eager Chinese commander on one of the artificial islands decides to take down a passing aircraft?

Any major conflict between China and Taiwan could we see the United States, Australia, or Japan getting involved. Perhaps even all three of them.

Let's take a look at the potential countries that could be involved in a conflict in the South China Sea.



People's Republic of China

Currently China is ranked as the third most powerful military force in the world. Its current annual defence budget is \$178,200,000,000.

Manpower

China has a total of 3,355,000 military personnel - far more than any other country. This is made up of 2,185,000 active military personnel, a reserve force of 510,000 and a paramilitary force of 660,000.

Naval Forces

Any conflict in the South China Sea will initially involve both naval and air forces.

The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has a total of 777 assets. This includes two aircraft carriers.

They also have 50 destroyers, 46 frigates, 72 corvettes,

123 patrol vessels, and 36 mine warfare vessels.

Their submarine fleet consists of 79 submarines and includes ballistic missile submarines (SSBN), nuclear attack submarines (SSN), conventional attack submarines (SS/SSK), and conventional ballistic missile submarines (SSB).

Air Power

The People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) has a total aircraft strength of 3,260.

Of these, 1,200 are fighter/interceptors with 371 dedicated attack aircraft.

There are 264 transport aircraft with a tanker fleet of three aircraft.

They have a total of 902 helicopters with 327 of these being attack helicopters.

The most modern aircraft in the PLAAF arsenal is the Chengdu J-20 single-seat, twin-jet, all-weather, stealth fighter. It was introduced into service in March 2017.

It has a maximum speed of Mach 2.0 and a range of 5,500 km with two external fuel tanks. It can carry short range, medium range and long range anti-air missiles (AAM).

While they Chengdu J-20 is a capable aircraft, the PLAAF only has 24 of them.

The main PLAAF fighters are the Chengdu J-7 (a licensed variant of the MiG-21) and the Shenyang J-11 (a licensed variant of the Su-27). They have 340 Chengdu J-7 and 150 Shenyang J-11 fighters.

The PLAAF use Russian-designed Mil Mi-8 as their main attack helicopter.



Republic of China (Taiwan)

The Republic of China (Taiwan) is ranked 21st of 140 countries as far as military power goes. Its current annual defence budget is 16,800,000,000.

Manpower

Taiwan has a total of 1,681,500 military personnel. This is made up of 170,000 active military personnel, a reserve force of 1,500,000 and a paramilitary force of 11,500.

Naval Forces

The Republic of China Navy (ROCN) is fairly small, with only 117 assets in total.

This number is made up of four destroyers, 22 frigates, two corvettes, four submarines, 43 patrol vessels, and 14 mine warfare vessels.

Two of the submarines are of the Chien Lung class, modified versions of the Dutch Navy's Zwaardvis class. Both are diesel-electric craft. A new class of submarines being built by Taiwan's Indigenous Defence Submarine program, will eventually replace them.

The other two submarines are of the Hai Shih-class. They are used for training and are actually Tench-class submarines built for the United States Navy (USN) between 1944 and 1951. There are only three of these class of submarine still surviving.

Air Power

The Republic of China Air Force, commonly referred to as the Taiwanese Air Force, has a total of 741 assets.

They have 288 fighter/interceptors, with no dedicated attack aircraft.

They have only 19 transport aircraft with no tanker fleet. They have 208 helicopters with 91 attack helicopters.

The main Taiwanese fighter aircraft are the AIDC F-CK-1 Ching-Kuo multi-role combat aircraft designed and built in Taiwan. The Ching-Kuo entered service in 1997 and they have 103 of them currently in service.

It has a speed of Mach 1.8 and a range of 1,100 kilometres. It can be armed with air-to-air missiles, air-to-surface missiles, anti-ship missiles, and air-to-ground cruise missiles.

The other fighter is the American-built F-16 Fighting Falcon of which they have 114.

 **United States of America**

As of 2022, America is ranked as the most powerful military force in the world. Its current annual defence budget is \$770,000,000,000.

Manpower

The USA has a total of 1,832,000 military personnel. This is made up of 1,390,000 active military personnel and a reserve force of 442,000. They have no paramilitary force.

Naval Forces

The United States Navy is rated as the largest and most powerful navy in the world.

The USN has a total of 484 assets. They currently have 11 aircraft carriers, which they regard as their most powerful as-



A PRETTY PENNY: The US Navy aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78). It is the most technologically advanced warship ever built and cost a cool \$13 billion.

set. All US aircraft carriers are nuclear-powered.

The US Navy also has nine helicopter carriers, 92 destroyers, 22 corvettes, 10 patrol vessels and eight mine warfare vessels.

Of their 68 submarines, all are nuclear-powered. The US Navy operates three types: ballistic missile submarines, guided missile submarines, and attack submarines.

Air Power

The United States boasts the largest and most powerful air fleet in the world.

The US Army (United States Army Air Corps), US Air Force, US Navy, and US Marine Corps (United States Marine Corps Aviation) all have their own air assets. The US Air Force is the largest with 5,217 aircraft.

In total, America has 13,247 air assets which consists of 1,937 fighter/interceptors, 783 dedicated attack aircraft, 982 transport aircraft, a tanker fleet of 627 aircraft, and 774 special

mission aircraft.

Finally, they have 5,463 helicopters, which includes 910 attack helicopters.

America boasts two modern jet fighters in the Lockheed Martin F-22 Raptor and the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II.

The F-22 Raptor is a single-seat, twin engine, all-weather stealth tactical fighter aircraft. It is used by the US Air Force.

Introduced into service in December 2005, it has a speed of Mach 2.25 and a range of 3,000 kilometres. It is armed with a 20 mm M61A2 Vulcan rotary cannon and can carry air-to-air loads or air-to-ground loads.

The F-35 Lightning II is a single-seat, single-engine, all-weather stealth multi-role combat aircraft. It is used by the US Air Force, US Marine Corps, and US Navy.

It was introduced into service with the Marine Corps in July 2015. It has a speed of Mach 1.6 at altitude and a range of 2,800

kilometres. It is armed with a 25 mm GAU-22/A 4-barrel rotary cannon and can carry air-to-air missiles, air-to-surface missiles, anti-ship missiles and bombs, including the B61 mod 12 nuclear bomb.

Although it is already 32 years old, the Northrop Grumman B-2 Spirit is still the most advanced stealth bomber in the world.

The bomber is subsonic and can deploy both conventional and thermonuclear weapons, such as up to eighty 230 kg Mk 82 JDAM GPS-guided bombs, or sixteen 1,100 kg B83 nuclear bombs. The B-2 is the only acknowledged aircraft that can carry large air-to-surface stand-off weapons in a stealth configuration.

It has a speed of 1,010 km/h and a range of 11,000 kilometres. Twenty B-2s are in service with the United States Air Force.

 **Australia**

Australia is ranked 17 out of 140 countries. It has an annual defence budget of \$44,618,000,000.

Manpower

Australia has a total of 79,000 military personnel with 59,000 of them being active military personnel. They also boast a reserve force of 20,000.

Naval Forces

The Royal Australian Navy has a total of 43 assets. This is made up of two helicopter carriers, three destroyers, eight frigates, 12 patrol vessels and

four mine warfare vessels.

They also have a submarine fleet of six Collins class diesel-electric submarines.

Air Power

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) has a total aircraft strength of 430.

This consists of 72 fighter interceptors, 37 dedicated attack aircraft, 38 transport aircraft, and a tanker fleet of six. They also have 31 special mission aircraft.

Their helicopter fleet consists of 133 helicopters with 22 attack helicopters.

The main RAAF fighters are the American-built Boeing F/A-18, Boeing F/A-18E/F, and impressive Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II.

 **Japan**

Japan is ranked fifth out of 140 countries. It has an annual defence budget of \$47,482,740,000.

Manpower

Japan has a total of 309,000 military personnel. This is made up of 240,000 active military personnel, a reserve force of 55,000 and a paramilitary force of 14,000.

Naval Forces

The Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force has a total of 155 assets.

This includes four helicopter carriers, 36 destroyers, four frigates, six corvettes, six patrol vessels, and 22 mine warfare vessels.

They have a submarine fleet

of 21 attack submarines, all of which are diesel-electric.

Air Power

The Japan Air Self-Defence Force has a total aircraft strength of 1,449.

This includes 217 fighter/interceptors and 23 dedicated attack aircraft. They also have 59 transport aircraft, a tanker fleet of seven aircraft, and 164 special mission aircraft.

Finally, they have 554 helicopters, including 119 attack helicopters.

Their main fighter aircraft are the American F-15 Eagle, the Mitsubishi F-2, and the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II.

Conclusion

In a direct conflict between the PRC and Taiwan, the People's Republic of China should emerge as easy victors.

China should be able to quickly defeat the ROC Navy as well as gain air superiority. This would then allow China to launch a full-scale invasion with ground forces.

If, however, the United States steps in, it could be a very different scenario. It may very well end up with the USA controlling both the seas and the skies in the conflict zone.

While not large enough to take on China on their own, if either Australia or Japan - or both - enter the conflict, it could cause even more problems for the Chinese.

The biggest threat, however, is the fact that China does have nuclear weapons. A lot of them in fact. And Xi Jinping may just be tempted to use them if China is losing the conflict.

Paddy Mayne

Capped for Ireland and the British Lions at rugby union, a lawyer, amateur boxer and a founding member of the Special Air Service, Paddy Mayne was a legend.

Paddy Mayne was many things. An international rugby player, capped for Ireland and the British Lions at rugby union. An amateur boxer, a more than useful golfer, and a qualified lawyer.

During World War II he would rise to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, become a founding member of the Special Air Service, and would go on to command the unit.

He would also go on to become one of the British Army's most decorated soldiers, winning the Distinguished Service Order a remarkable four times. He was controversially denied a Victoria Cross.

Early life

Robert Blair "Paddy" Mayne was born in Newtownards, County Down, the sixth of seven children in a Protestant family.

The family was pretty well off. They were prominent landowners and owned several retail businesses in the town.

One of his paternal ancestors was Gordon Turnbull, who led the famous 'Scotland Forever Charge' at Waterloo.

He attended Regent House Grammar School where he soon displayed a talent for sports.

He played for the school 1st XV and, from the age of 16, for the local Ards RFC team. While at school he also played cricket and golf, and showed aptitude as a marksman in the rifle club.

On leaving school he studied law at Queen's University of Belfast, studying to become

a solicitor. While at university he took up boxing, becoming Irish Universities Heavyweight Champion in August 1936. He followed this by reaching the final of the British Universities Heavyweight Championship, but was beaten on points.

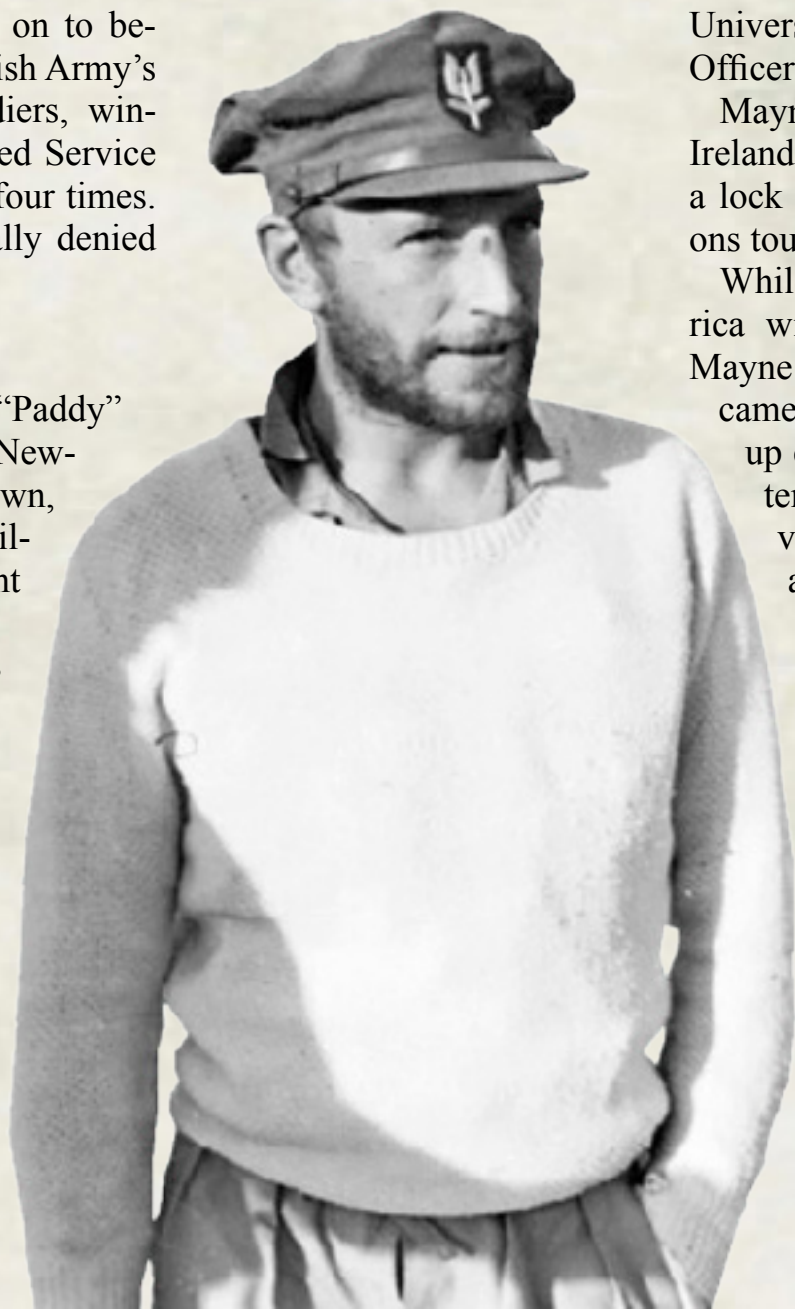
With a handicap of eight, he won the Scrabo Golf Club President's Cup the next year. While at university Mayne was an officer cadet with the Queen's University, Belfast Contingent, Officer Training Corps.

Mayne played five tests for Ireland before being selected as a lock for the 1938 British Lions tour of South Africa.

While on tour in South Africa with the Lions in 1938, Mayne's rather wild character came to the fore, smashing up colleagues' hotel rooms, temporarily freeing a convict he had befriended and who was working on the construction of the Ellis Park Stadium and also sneaking off from a formal dinner to go hunting.

In early 1939 he graduated from Queen's and joined George Maclaine & Co in Belfast, having been articled to TCG Mackintosh for the five previous years.

His legal and sporting careers were cut



short by the outbreak of World War II.

World War II

In March 1939, prior to the outbreak of World War II, Mayne had joined the Supplementary Reserve in Newtownards and received a commission in the Royal Artillery, being posted to 5 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, in 8th Anti-Aircraft Regiment, later 8th (Belfast) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment.

When the battery was assigned to 9th Anti-Aircraft Regiment (later 9th (London-derry) Heavy AA Regiment) for overseas service, Mayne was transferred out to 66th Light AA Regiment in Northern Ireland. Then, in April 1940, he was transferred again, this time to the Royal Ulster Rifles.

Following Churchill's call to form a "butcher and bolt" raiding force following the evacuation of Dunkirk, Mayne volunteered for the newly formed No. 11 (Scottish) Commando.

He first saw action in June 1941 as a second-lieutenant with 11 Commando during the Syria-Lebanon Campaign. Mayne successfully led a section of men during the Litani River operation in Lebanon against Vichy French Forces. The operation was commanded by Major Dick Pedder, Highland Light Infantry, who was killed in action. Mayne played a distinguished part in the raid, for which he was awarded a mention in dispatches.

Special Air Service

Lieutenant Eoin McGonigal was a friend of Mayne's and a fellow officer of No. 11 (Scottish) Commando. He was an early volunteer of the Special Air Service (SAS), and he recommended Mayne's name to Captain David Stirling.

Rumour has it that when Stirling interviewed Mayne, the latter was under arrest of hitting his commanding officer. This story, however, is untrue.

What is true is that Mayne was in trouble for assaulting Major Charles Napier, the second in command of his battalion.

Stirling obviously liked what he saw and Mayne was recruited into the SAS.

There is no proof that Mayne was under arrest or in prison when Stirling first met him, nor that Stirling obtained his release so that he could join the newly formed SAS.

From November 1941 through to the end of 1942, Mayne participated in many night raids deep behind enemy

lines in the deserts of Egypt and Libya, where the SAS wrought havoc by destroying many enemy aircraft on the ground.

Mayne pioneered the use of military jeeps to conduct surprise hit-and-run raids, particularly on Axis airfields. It was claimed that he had personally destroyed up to 100 aircraft.

The top scoring member of the Royal Air Force was James 'Johnnie' Johnson with 38 enemy kills. On one raid alone Mayne destroyed 47 enemy aircraft.

His first successful raid at Wadi Tamet on 14 December 1941, where aircraft and petrol dumps were destroyed, helped keep the SAS in existence, following the failure of the previous initial raid behind enemy lines.

For his part in the Tamet raid Mayne was awarded the DSO. He also received a mention in despatches on 24 February 1942.

Mayne took part in the most successful SAS raid of the Desert war when on the night of 26



PACKING A PUNCH: An SAS Jeep. Note the number of machine guns on it.

July 1942 with eighteen armed Jeeps, he along with Stirling raided the Sidi Haneish Airfield. They avoided detection, destroyed up to 40 German aircraft and escaped with the loss of only three Jeeps and two men killed. The regular Army wanted to disband the SAS but the success helped keep the critics at bay.

Following Stirling's capture in January 1943, 1st SAS Regiment was reorganised into two separate parts, the Special Raiding Squadron (SRS) and the Special Boat Section (the forerunner of the Special Boat Service). As a major, Mayne was appointed to command the Special Raiding Squadron and led the unit in Sicily and Italy until the end of 1943. In Sicily, Mayne was awarded a bar to his DSO.

In January 1944 he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and appointed commanding officer of the re-formed 1st SAS Regiment. He subsequently led the SAS with great distinction through the final campaigns of the war in France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Norway, often campaigning alongside local resistance fighters including the French Maquis.

In recognition of his leadership and personal disregard for danger while in France, in which he trained and worked closely with the French Resistance, Mayne received the second bar to his DSO.

During the course of the war he became one of the British



RUGBY INTERNATIONAL: In 1937 Paddy Mayne was selected to play for Ireland. He is in the back row, third from right.

Army's most highly decorated soldiers and received the Distinguished Service Order with three bars, one of only seven British servicemen to receive that award four times during World War II.

Additionally, the post-war French Government awarded him the *Legion d'honneur* and the *Croix de Guerre*.

Post war

After a period with the British Antarctic Survey in the Falkland Islands, cut short by a crippling back complaint that had begun during his army days, Mayne returned to Newtownards to work first as a solicitor and then as Secretary to the Law Society of Northern Ireland.

He suffered severe back pain which prevented him from even watching rugby as a spectator. He rarely talked about his war-time service.

On the night of Tuesday 13 December 1955, after attending a regular meeting of the Friendship Lodge, Mayne continued

drinking with a masonic friend in the nearby town of Bangor, before making his way home in the early hours.

At about 4am he was found dead in his Riley roadster in Mill Street, Newtownards, having reportedly collided with a farmer's vehicle.

At his funeral hundreds of mourners turned out to pay their respects and to see him interred in a family plot in the town's old Movilla Abbey graveyard.

After his death his masonic jewel was preserved for many years by an old school friend before it was presented to Newtownards Borough Council where it was displayed in the Mayoral Chamber of the Council Offices.

Reputation

To say that Paddy Mayne had a reputation would be putting it mildly. During the 1938 Lions tour it is said that Mayne relaxed by "wrecking hotels and fighting dockers".

During the war, his men ad-

mired him in battle but were very wary of him during quiet times once he had a few drinks under his belt.

Many urban legends of his post-war years exist in Belfast and Newtownards. These mostly tell of incidents in which, after drinking for several hours, Mayne would challenge every man in the bar to a fight, which he would invariably win. Other accounts describe him as a courageous leader of his men and a ferocious opponent.

Mayne is also described as growing increasingly withdrawn as the war progressed, preferring books to the company of friends.

After separating fact from myth, it is clear that Mayne was an extraordinary war hero, and some of the criticism comes from disbelief that one man could have achieved what Mayne achieved, without injury, although Mayne suffered from long-standing back pain sustained in the Western Desert.

Mayne was inclined to remonstrate with colleagues in the armed services who showed little or no understanding of the complex politics of Northern Ireland.

Controversy

The question of why Mayne was not awarded a Victoria Cross was raised by his contemporaries, and the matter came to a head when brought before British Parliament in January 2006 after a public campaign to re-open the case.

The British Government de-

clined to do so, though the Blair Mayne Association vowed to continue their campaign to have the Victoria Cross retroactively awarded. Mayne's actions were not in doubt and his citation for the VC, approved by Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, commander of the Allied 21st Army Group, noted that he led two armoured jeep squadrons through the front lines toward Oldenburg.

However, in a standard practice of the time, the award was downgraded to a lesser award, and Mayne received instead a third bar to the DSO (in other words, a fourth award of the DSO).

An Early Day Motion put before the House of Commons in June 2005 and supported by more than 100 MPs also stated that:

"This House recognises the grave injustice meted out to Lt Col Paddy Mayne, of 1st SAS, who won the Victoria Cross at Oldenburg in North West Germany on 9th April 1945; notes that this was subsequently downgraded, some six months later, to a third bar DSO, that the citation had been clearly altered and that David Stirling, founder of the SAS has confirmed that there was considerable prejudice towards Mayne and that King George VI enquired why the Victoria Cross had 'so strangely eluded him'; further notes that on 14th December it will be 50 years since Col Mayne's untimely death, in a car accident, and this will be followed on 29th January 2006

by the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Royal Warrant to institute the Victoria Cross; and therefore calls upon the Government to mark these anniversaries by instructing the appropriate authorities to act without delay to reinstate the Victoria Cross given for exceptional personal courage and leadership of the highest order and to acknowledge that Mayne's actions on that day saved the lives of many men and greatly helped the allied advance on Berlin."

Honours and Awards



From top to bottom, left to right:

- Companion of the Distinguished Service Order and Three bars.
- 1939–45 Star.
- Africa Star (With 8th Army clasp).
- Italy Star.
- France and Germany Star.
- Defence Medal.
- War Medal 1939–1945 with bronze oak leaf for Mentioned in Despatches.
- Officer of the Legion of Honour (France).
- Croix de guerre 1939–1945 (France).

Nimitz-class Aircraft Carrier

The city at sea

Each month "Forged in Battle" looks at weapons, equipment or units that have been tried and tested on the battlefield. This month we look at the US Navy Nimitz-class Aircraft Carriers.

Standing 20 stories above the water and stretching 333 metres from bow to stern, the sheer size of a Nimitz-class super aircraft carrier is impressive. What's really impressive, however, is watching the activity on the flight deck.

Currently the US Navy has ten nuclear-powered Nimitz-class aircraft carriers in service.

The lead ship of the class is named after World War II United States Pacific Fleet commander Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the U.S. Navy's last fleet admiral.

Then ten carriers in service are:

Nimitz subclass

- USS Nimitz.
- USS Dwight D. Eisenhower.
- USS Carl Vinson.

Theodore Roosevelt subclass

- USS Theodore Roosevelt.
- USS Abraham Lincoln.
- USS George Washington.
- USS John C. Stennis.
- USS Harry S. Truman.

Ronald Reagan subclass

- USS Ronald Reagan.
- USS George H.W. Bush.

Instead of the gas turbines or diesel-electric systems used

for propulsion on many modern warships, the carriers use two A4W pressurized water reactors which drive four propeller shafts. They are categorized as nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and are numbered with consecutive hull numbers between CVN-68 and CVN-77.

As a result of the use of nuclear power, the ships are capable of operating for over 20

years without refueling and are predicted to have a service life of over 50 years

The lead ship of the class, was commissioned on 3 May 1975, and USS George H.W. Bush, the tenth and last of the class, was commissioned on 10 January 2009. Since the 1970s, Nimitz-class carriers have participated in many conflicts and operations across the world, including Operation Eagle Claw in Iran, the Gulf War, and more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Let's begin by looking at the figures for a standard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier.

Crew

- 3,184 (including 203 officers)
- 2,800 aircrew (366 officers)

Length

- 317 m

Beam

- 40.8 m

Draught

- 11.9 m

Flight Deck

- 333 m x 77 m

Displacement

- 102,000 tons (full load)

Speed

- 30 knots



Surface-to-air-missile

- 3 x Raytheon GMLS Mk29 eight-cell launchers for Sea Sparrow

Guns

- 4 x Phalanx Mk15 CIWS (three in CVN 68 and CVN 6)

ESM

- AN/SLQ-32(V)4

Decoys

- 4 x SRBOC, SSTDS torpedo defence system
- AN/SLQ-25 Nixie torpedo decoy

Air Search

- ITT AN/SPS-48E E/F band
- Ratheon AN/SPS-49(V)5 C/D band
- Raytheon Mk23 TAS D-band

Surface Search

- Northrop Grumman AN/SPS-67V G-band

Navigation

- Raytheon AN/SPS-64(V)9 I/J-band

Combat Data System

- ACDS block 0 or block 1

Weapons Control

- 3 x Mk91 MOD 1 fire control system (for Sea Sparrow missile)

Engines

- 2 x GE PWR A4W/A1G - 194MW
- 4 x emergency diesels - 8MW

Fixed Wing Aircraft

- 12 x F/A-18E/F
- 36 x F/A-18
- 4 x E-2C Hawkeye
- 4 x AE-6B Prowler
- 6 x S-3B Viking
- 2 x ES-3A Shadow

Helicopters

- 4 x SH-60F
- 2 x HH-60H Seahawk

aircraft carrier is simply a ship outfitted with a flight deck - a runway area for launching and landing airplanes.

This concept dates back almost as far as airplanes themselves. Within 10 years of the Wright Brothers' historic 1903 flight, the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany were launching test flights from platforms attached to cruisers.

The experiments proved largely successful, and the various naval forces started adapting existing warships for this purpose. The new carriers allowed military forces to transport short-range aircraft all over the world.

One of the major obstacles of using air power in war is getting the planes to their destination. To maintain an air base in a foreign region, the United States (or any other nation) has to make special arrangements with a host country, and then has to abide by that country's rules, which may change over time.

Needless to say, this can be extremely difficult in some parts of the world and impossible if the nation is hostile.

Under international Freedom of Navigation laws, aircraft carriers and other warships are recognized as sovereign territories in almost all of the ocean. As long as a ship doesn't get too close to any nation's coast, the carrier can operate as if it is on American soil.

Composition

An aircraft carrier basically has to do four things. It needs to:

- Transport a variety of air-

craft to any destination.

- Launch and recover aircraft.
- Serve as a mobile command centre for military operations, and
- House all of the people needed to accomplish this.

To get everything done, an aircraft carrier has to be a ship, an air force base, and a small city at the same time.

Among other things it needs:

- **A flight deck** - a flat surface on top of the ship where aircraft can take off and land.
- **A hangar deck** - an area below deck to stow aircraft when not in use.
- **An island** - a building on top of the flight deck where officers can direct flights and ship operations.
- Room for the crew to live and work.
- A power plant and propulsion system to move the ship from point to point, as well as generate electricity for the entire ship.
- Various other systems to provide food and fresh water, and to handle other things that any small city has to deal with. This would include sewage, trash, mail and laundry. They would also need newspapers and radio and television stations.
- Medical facilities with doctors and dentists.
- **The hull** - the main body of the ship, which floats in water.

The Flight Deck

The system that is used by Nimitz-class carries to launch and recover aircraft is known as the CATOBAR (Catapult Assisted Take-Off Barrier Ar-



USS Nimitz



USS Dwight D. Eisenhower



USS Carl Vinson



USS Theodore Roosevelt



USS Abraham Lincoln

rested Recovery) system.

Steam-driven catapults are used to launch planes from the deck. The catapult officer carefully monitors the steam pressure level so it's just right for the particular plane and deck conditions.

If the pressure is too low, the plane won't get moving fast enough to take off, and the catapult will throw it into the ocean. If there's too much pressure, the sudden jerk could break the nose gear right off.

If taking off from an aircraft carrier is difficult, landing on one is even more so.

To land on a flight deck that only has about 150 metres of runway space the aircraft make use of a tailhook. The tailhook is exactly what it sounds like - an extended hook attached to the tail of the plane.

The pilot's goal is to snag the tailhook on one of four arresting wires, sturdy cables woven from high-tensile steel wire.

The arresting wires are

stretched across the deck and are attached on both ends to hydraulic cylinders below deck. If the tailhook snags an arresting wire, it pulls the wire out, and the hydraulic cylinder system absorbs the energy to bring the plane to a stop.

The arresting wire can stop a 24,500 kg plane travelling at 241 k/ph in only two seconds.

There are four parallel arresting wires, spaced about 5015 metres apart, to expand the target area for the pilot. Pilots are aiming for the third wire, as it's the safest and most effective target. They never shoot for the first wire because it's dangerously close to the edge of deck. To pull off a carrier landing, the pilot needs to approach the deck at exactly the right angle.

Landing Signals Officers (LSOs) help guide the plane in, through radio communication as well as a collection of lights on the deck.

If the plane is off course, the LSOs can use radio commands

or illuminate other lights to correct him or her or "wave him off" (send them around for another attempt).

In addition to the LSOs, pilots look to the Fresnel Lens Optical Landing System, commonly referred to as the lens, for landing guidance. The lens consists of a series of lights and Fresnel lenses mounted to a gyroscopically stabilized platform. The lenses focus the light into narrow beams that are directed into the sky at various angles.

The pilot will see different lights depending on the plane's angle of approach. If the plane is right on target, the pilot will see an amber light, dubbed the "meatball," in line with a row of green lights.

If the amber light appears above the green lights, the plane is coming in too high; if the amber light appears below the green lights, the plane is coming in too low. If the plane is coming in way too low, the pilot will see red lights. Pilots



USS George Washington



USS John C. Stennis



USS Harry S. Truman



USS Ronald Reagan



USS George H.W. Bush

will often be instructed over the radio, "Keep your eyes on the ball."

As soon as the plane hits the deck, the pilot will push the engines to full power, instead of slowing down, to bring the plane to a stop. This may seem counter-intuitive, but if the tail-hook doesn't catch any of the arresting wires, the plane needs to be moving fast enough to take off again and come around for another pass.

The landing runway is tilted at a 14-degree angle to the rest of the ship, so bolters like this can take off from the side of the ship instead of plowing into the planes on the other end of the deck.

As soon as an aircraft lands, it's pulled out of the landing strip and chained down on the side of the flight deck. Inactive aircraft are always tightly secured to keep them from sliding around as the deck rocks back and forth.

The Island

The island on an aircraft carrier is the command centre. It is from here that almost everything on the ship is run.

It stands about 46 metres tall, but it's only six metres wide at the base. This is so that it doesn't take up too much space on the flight deck.

The top of the island, however, is spread out to provide more room. It carries an array of radar and communication antennas that monitor surrounding ships and aircraft, intercept and jam enemy radar signals, target enemy aircraft and missiles, and pick up satellite phone and television signals.



FLOATING CITY: A single Nimitz-class carrier will often carry more aircraft than some countries have in their entire air force.

Below this is the Primary Flight Control, or Pri-Fly. In the Pri-Fly, the air officer and air officer assistant (known as the "Air Boss" and the "Mini Boss") direct all aircraft activity on the flight deck and within a eight kilometer radius.

One level below is the bridge. It is from here that the captain controls the ship from a comfortable leather chair, surrounded by computer screens.

The captain directs the helmsman, who actually steers the ship, who in turn directs the engine room to control the speed of the ship.

The captain also directs the Quartermaster of the Watch, who keeps track of navigation information, and a number of lookouts and support personnel. When the commanding officer is not on the bridge, he puts an Officer of the Deck in charge of operations.

The level below the bridge is the flag bridge, the command center for the admiral in charge of the entire carrier group.

Below that, there are various operational centers, including the flight deck control and launch operations room. In this tight, windowless space, the aircraft handling officer (also called the handler or mangler) and his or her crew keep track of all the aircraft on the flight deck and in the hangar.

The handler's primary tracking tool is the "Ouija Board," a two-level transparent plastic table with etched outlines of the flight deck and hangar deck. Each aircraft is represented by a scale aircraft cut-out on the table. When a real plane moves from point to point, the handler moves the model plane accordingly. When the plane is out of service, because it needs repair work, the handler turns it over.

There are a number of additional control centers below deck, including the carrier air traffic control center (CATCC), which takes up several rooms on the galley deck (immediately below the flight deck). Like a land-based air traffic control



GO! An F-14D Tomcat fighter jet prepares to launch from the deck of a Nimitz-class carrier.

center, the CATCC is filled with all sorts of radio and radar equipment, which the controllers use to keep track of aircraft in the area (in this case, mainly the aircraft outside the Air Boss's supervision).

The CATCC is next to the combat direction center (CDC), the ship's battle command center. The CDC's primary responsibility is to process incoming information on enemy threats in order to keep the commanding officer fully informed.

The Hangar

While a small number of aircraft can be kept on the flight deck, there is not nearly enough room for the 80 to 100 aircraft stationed on a typical carrier.

Aircraft not in use are secured in the hangar bay. Think of it as a carrier's 'parking garage'.

The hangar bay is located two decks below the flight deck, just below the galley deck. The bay itself is 34 metres wide, eight metres wide, and 209 metres long - more than two-thirds the

length of the entire ship. It can hold more than 60 aircraft, as well as spare jet engines, fuel tanks and other heavy equipment, in four zones divided by sliding doors (a safety precaution to stop a fire from spreading).

The hangar is three decks high, and it's flanked by various single-deck compartments on both sides. There are also four giant elevators surrounding the hangar, which move the aircraft from the hangar to the flight deck. The high-speed, aluminum hydraulic elevators are big enough and powerful enough to lift two 34,000 kg fighter jets.

Aft of the hangar bay, in the stern of the ship, you'll find the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Division (AIMD) shops. The men and women in these shops are constantly repairing and testing aircraft equipment to keep the flight squadron operating at maximum efficiency.

At the very end of the ship, the AIMD shops lead to an open-air engine testing area on the ship's

fantail. This is the only place on the ship where the maintenance crews can safely blast aircraft jet engines to make sure they're working properly.

Life below decks

The berthing compartments (sleeping quarters) are extremely tight. Enlisted personnel share a compartment with about 60 other people, all sleeping in single bunks, generally called racks, crammed together in stacks of three.

Each person gets a small stowage bin and upright locker for clothes and personal belongings, and everybody in the compartment shares a bathroom and a small common area with a television hooked up to one of the carrier's satellite dishes.

Officers enjoy more space and finer furnishings, but their space is limited, too. Everybody onboard has to get used to tight quarters.

The ship has everything its residents need to live, even if it's not as comfortably as they would like. There are multiple galleys (kitchens) and mess halls onboard, which collectively serve as many as 18,000 meals a day.

The ship also has a sizable laundry facility, dentist and doctor's offices, various stores and a bank of telephones where personnel can talk to their families via satellite.

Trivia

A few facts and figures:

- Number of compartments and spaces onboard - 4,000+
- Weight of each anchor - 27 metric tons.
- Weight of each link in the

- anchor chains -160 kg
- Weight of each propeller - 30,000 kg
- Weight of each rudder - 41 metric tons
- Storage capacity for aviation fuel - 12.5 million litres
- Number of telephones onboard - 2,500+
- Number of televisions onboard - 3,000+
- Total length of electrical cable onboard - 1,600+ km
- Air conditioning plant capacity - 2,040 metric tons, enough to cool more than 500 houses)
- Storage capacity for refrigerated and dried food: enough to feed 6,000 people for 70 days.
- The desalination plant makes 1,514,164 lt of fresh water from the sea ever day – enough for 2,000 homes
- Mail processed every year by onboard post office - 450,000 kg
- Each carrier has its own zip code (postal code)
- Number of dentists - five
- Number of medical doctors - six
- Beds in hospital ward - 53
- Number of chaplains in interdenominational chapel - three
- Number of haircuts every week - 1,500+
- Number of barbershops - one

Flight Deck Crew

The flight deck crews of a Carrier Air Wing wear coloured jerseys to distinguish their functions.

Yellow

Aircraft handling officers
 Catapult and arresting gear officers
 Plane directors – responsible for all movement of all aircraft on the flight/hangar deck

Blue

Plane handlers (Trainees)
 Chocks and chains – entry-level flight-deck workers under the yellowshirts
 Aircraft elevator operators
 Tractor drivers
 Messengers and phone talkers

Green

Catapult and arresting gear crews
 Visual Landing Aid electricians
 Air wing maintenance personnel
 Air wing quality control personnel
 Cargo-handling personnel
 Ground support equipment (GSE) troubleshooters
 Hook runners
 Photographer’s mates
 Helicopter landing signal enlisted personnel (LSE)

White

Quality Assurance (QA)
 Squadron plane inspectors
 Landing signal officer (LSO)
 Air transfer officers (ATO)
 Liquid oxygen (LOX) crews
 Safety observers
 Medical personnel (white with Red Cross emblem)

Purple

Aviation fuel handlers

Brown

Air wing plane captains: squadron personnel who prepare aircraft for flight
 Air wing line leading petty officers

White/Black

Final checker (inspector)
 The flight deck crews of a Carrier Air Wing wear colored jerseys to distinguish their functions.

Red

Ordnance men
 Crash and salvage crews
 Explosive ordnance disposal (EOD)
 Firefighter



The Americans called it 'The Mog' - Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. In October a raid planned to capture key members of Mohamed Farrah Aidid militia went horribly wrong. The subsequent battle become known as 'Black Hawk Down'.

The Battle of Mogadishu took place on 3 and 4 October 1993 in Mogadishu, Somalia. It was fought between forces of the United States - supported by UNOSOM II (United Nations Operation in Somalia II) - and Somali militiamen loyal to the self-proclaimed president-to-be Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who had support from armed fighters.

The battle was part of Operation Gothic Serpent and is also referred to as the First Battle of Mogadishu, to distinguish it amongst the nine major Battles of Mogadishu during the decades-long Somali Civil War.

The battle resulted in the loss of 21 US/UN troops, including 19 American, 82 wounded, and one captured. The Somali's lost between 2,000 and 4,000 militia and volunteers.

Background

Task Force Ranger was created in August 1993, and deployed to Somalia. It consisted of various elite special operations units from Army, Air Force and Navy special services: U.S. Army Rangers from Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion 75th Ranger Regiment; C Squadron, 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta (1st SFOD-D), better known as "Delta Force"; helicopters flown by 1st Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment; Air Force Combat Controllers; Air Force Pararescuemen; and Navy SEALs.

As a multi-disciplinary joint special forces operation, Task Force Ranger reported to Joint Special Operations Command, led by Major General William F. Garrison.

On 3 October 1993, Task Force Ranger began an operation that involved traveling from their compound on the city's outskirts to the center with the aim of capturing the leaders of the Habr Gidr clan, led by Mohamed Farrah Aidid. The assault force consisted of nineteen aircraft, twelve vehicles (including nine Humvees), and 160 men. The operation was intended to last no

longer than one hour.

The plan

On Sunday 3 October 1993, Task Force Ranger, U.S. special operations forces composed mainly of Bravo Company 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta (better known as "Delta Force") operators, and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) ("The Night Stalkers"), attempted to capture Aidid's foreign minister Omar Salad Elmi and his top political advisor, Mohamed Hassan Awale.

The plan was that Delta operators would assault the target building (using MH-6 Little Bird helicopters) and secure the targets inside the building while four Ranger chinks (sticks or sections) would fast rope down from hovering MH-60L Black Hawk helicopters.

The Rangers would then create a four-corner defensive perimeter around the target building to isolate it and ensure that no enemy could get in or out, while a column of nine HM-MWVs and three M939 five-ton trucks would arrive at the building to take the entire assault team and their prisoners back to base. The entire operation was estimated to take no longer than 30 minutes.

The ground-extraction convoy was supposed to reach the

captive targets a few minutes after the operation's beginning, but it ran into delays.

Somali citizens and local militia formed barricades along Mogadishu's streets with rocks, wreckage, rubbish and burning tires, blocking the convoy from reaching the Rangers and their captives.

Aidid militiamen with megaphones were shouting, "*Kasoo-baxa guryaha oo iska celsa cadowga!*" ("Come out and defend your homes!").

The raid

At 15:42, the MH-6 assault Little Birds carrying the Delta operators hit the target, the wave of dust becoming so bad that one was forced to go around again and land out of position.

Next, the two Black Hawks carrying the second Delta assault team led by DELTA officer Capt Austin "Scott" Miller came into position and dropped their teams as the four Ranger chinks prepared to rope onto the four corners surrounding the target building.

Chalk Four being carried by Black Hawk callsign Super 67, piloted by CW3 Jeff Niklaus, was accidentally put a block north of their intended point. Declining the pilot's offer to move them back down due to

the time it would take to do so, leaving the helicopter too exposed, Chalk Four intended to move down to the planned position, but intense ground fire prevented them from doing so.

The ground convoy arrived ten minutes later near the Olympic Hotel and waited for Delta and Rangers to complete their mission (target building).

During the operation's first moments, Ranger PFC Todd Blackburn, from Chalk Four, fell while fast-roping from his Black Hawk Super 67 while it was hovering 21 metres above the streets. Blackburn suffered an injury to his head and back of his neck and required evacuation by Sgt Jeff Struecker's column of three Humvees.

While taking PFC Todd Blackburn back to base, Sgt Dominick Pilla, assigned to Sgt Struecker's Humvee, was killed instantly when a bullet struck his head.

When Sgt Struecker's Humvee column reached the base and safety, all three vehicles were riddled with bullet holes and were smoking.

Black Hawk down

At about 16:20, one of the Black Hawk helicopters, callsign Super 61 piloted by CW3

Cliff "Elvis" Wolcott and CW3 Donovan "Bull" Briley, was shot down by an RPG. Both pilots were killed in the resulting crash and two of the crew chiefs were severely wounded. S/Sgt Daniel Busch and Sgt Jim Smith, both Delta snipers, survived the crash and began defending the site.

An MH-6, callsign Star 41 and piloted by CW3 Karl Maier and CW5 Keith Jones, landed nearby and Jones left the helicopter and carried Busch to the safety of the helicopter while Maier provided cover fire from the Little Bird's cockpit, repeatedly denying orders to lift off while his co-pilot was not in the Bird. He nearly hit Chalk One's Lt DiTomaso arriving with Rangers and Delta operators to secure the site. Jones and Maier evacuated S/Sgt Busch and Sgt Smith, though SSG Busch later died of his injuries, having been shot four times while defending the crash site.

A Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) team, led by Delta Operator Capt Bill J. Coultrup and Air Force Pararescueman Master Sgt Scott C. Fales, were able to fast rope down to Super 61's crash site despite an RPG hit that crippled their helicopter, Super 68, piloted by CW3



Dan Jollota.

Despite the damage, Super 68 did make it back to base. The CSAR team found both the pilots dead and two wounded inside the crashed helicopter. Under intense fire, the team moved the wounded men to a nearby collection point, where they built a makeshift shelter using Kevlar armour plates salvaged from Super 61's wreckage.

There was confusion between the ground convoy and the assault team. The assault team and the ground convoy waited for 20 minutes to receive their orders to move out. Both units were under the mistaken impression that they were to be first contacted by the other.

Another Black Hawk down

During the wait, a second Black Hawk helicopter, callsign Super 64 and piloted by CW3 Michael Durant, was shot down by an RPG-7 at around 16:40.

Most of the assault team went to the first crash site for a rescue operation. Upon reaching the site, about 90 Rangers and Delta Force operators found themselves under heavy fire. Despite air support, the assault team was effectively trapped for the night. With a growing number of wounded needing shelter, they occupied several nearby houses and confined the occupants for the battle's duration. Outside, a stiff breeze stirred up blinding, brown clouds of dust.

At the second crash site, two Delta snipers, Master Sgt Gary Gordon and SFC Randy Shughart, were inserted by Black Hawk Super 62 - piloted by CW3 Mike Goffena.

Their first two requests to be



TECHNICAL: One of the challenges faced by the Americans in Mogadishu was the Somali 'Technical'. These are Toyota pickups armed with anything from a 106 recoilless rifle to 12,7 mm heavy machine guns.

inserted were denied, but they were finally granted permission upon their third request. They inflicted heavy casualties on the approaching Somali mob.

Super 62 had kept up their fire support for Master Sgt Gordon and SFC Shughart, but an RPG struck Super 62. Despite the damage, Super 62 managed to land at New Port safely. When Master Sgt Gordon was eventually killed, SFC Shughart picked up Gordon's CAR-15 and gave it to Super 64 pilot CW3 Michael Durant.

SFC Shughart went back around the helicopter's nose and held off the mob for about 10 more minutes before he was killed.

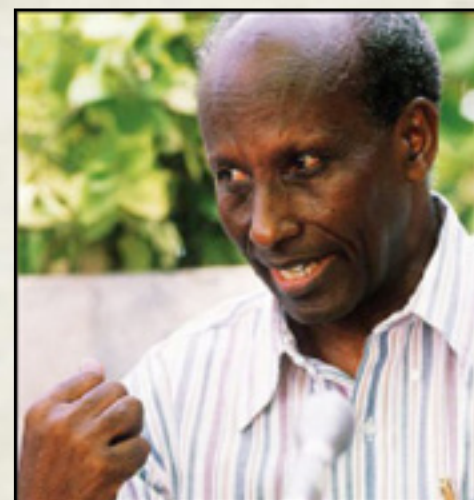
The Somalis then overran the crash site and killed all but Durant. He was nearly beaten to death, but was saved when members of Aidid's militia came to take him prisoner. For their actions, Master Sgt Gordon and SFC Shughart were posthu-

mously awarded the Medal of Honour, the first awarded since the Vietnam War.

Repeated attempts by the Somalis to mass forces and overrun the American positions in a series of firefights near the first crash site were neutralized by aggressive small arms fire and by strafing runs and rocket attacks from AH-6J Little Bird helicopter gunships of the Nightstalkers, the only air unit equipped and trained for night fighting.

Relief column

A relief convoy with elements from the Task Force 2-14 Infantry, 10th Mountain Division, accompanied by Malaysian and Pakistani U.N. forces, arrived at the first crash site at around 02:00. No contingency planning or coordination with U.N. forces had been arranged prior to the operation; consequently, the recovery of the surrounded American troops was signifi-



Mohamed Farrah Aidid

cantly complicated and delayed.

Determined to protect all of the rescue convoy's members, General Garrison made sure that the convoy would roll out in force. When the convoy finally pushed into the city, it consisted of more than 100 U.N. vehicles including Malaysian forces' German-made Condor APCs, four Pakistani tanks (M48s), American Humvees and several M939 five-ton flatbed trucks.

This two-mile-long column was supported by several other Black Hawks and Cobra assault helicopters stationed with the 10th Mountain Division. Meanwhile, Task Force Ranger's "Little Birds" continued their defense of Super 61's downed crew and rescuers.

The American assault force sustained heavy casualties, including several killed, and a Malaysian soldier died when an RPG hit his Condor vehicle. Seven Malaysians and two Pakistanis were wounded. The battle was over by 06:30 on Monday, 4 October. U.S. forces were finally evacuated to the U.N. base by the armored convoy.

While leaving the crash site, a group of Rangers and Delta operators led by S/Sgt John R.

Dycus realised that there was no room left in the vehicles for them and were forced to depart the city on foot to a rendezvous point on National Street. This has been commonly referred to as the "Mogadishu Mile".

In all, 19 U.S. soldiers were killed in action during the battle or shortly after, and another 73 were wounded in action. The Malaysian forces lost one soldier and had seven injured, while the Pakistanis also lost one soldier and suffered two injured. Somali casualties were heavy, with estimates of fatalities ranging from 315 to over 2,000 combatants. The Somali casualties were a mixture of militiamen and local civilians. Somali civilians suffered heavy casualties due to the dense urban character of that portion of Mogadishu.

On 6 October, a mortar round fell on the U.S. compound, making Delta Operator SFC Matthew L. Rierison the 19th U.S. soldier killed in the battle while injuring another twelve. That same day, a team on special mission to Durant's Super 64 helicopter had two wounded.

Two weeks after the battle, General Garrison officially accepted responsibility.

In a handwritten letter to President Clinton, Garrison took full responsibility for the battle's outcome. He wrote that Task Force Ranger had adequate intelligence for the mission and that their objective (capturing targets from the Olympic Hotel) was met.

Aftermath

After the battle, the bodies

of several of the conflict's US casualties (Black Hawk Super 64's crewmembers and their defenders, Delta Force soldiers Master Sgt Gordon and SFC Shughart) were dragged through Mogadishu's streets by crowds of local civilians and SNA forces.

Through negotiation and threats to the Habr Gidr clan leaders by Special Envoy for Somalia, Robert B. Oakley, all the bodies were eventually recovered. The bodies were returned in poor condition, one with a severed head.

Michael Durant was released after 11 days of captivity. On the beach near the base, a memorial was held for those who were killed in combat.

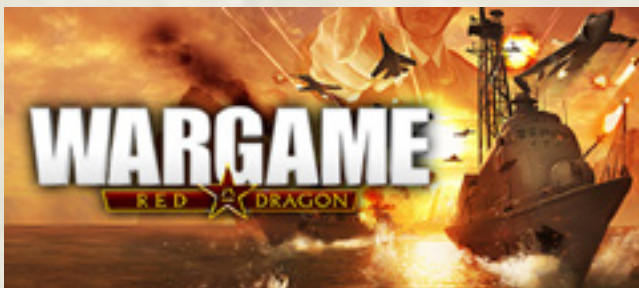
A total of two Medals of Honour, seven Silver Stars, and 11 Bronze Stars were awarded to those that took part in the battle.

At the time the battle was the bloodiest involving U.S. troops since the Vietnam War, and it remained so until the Second Battle of Fallujah in 2004.

On 25 March 1994 the United States withdrew all of their troops from Somalia. Just over a year later, on 28 March 1995, the United Nations also withdrew from Somalia.

On 24 July 1996, Mohamed Farrah Aidid was wounded during a firefight between his militia and forces loyal to former Aidid allies, Ali Mahdi Muhammad and Osman Ali Atto.

He suffered a fatal heart attack on 1 August 1996, either during or after surgery to treat his wounds. The following day, General Garrison retired.



Corporal MATT "GV" O'BRIEN climbs into his Ratel 20 and heads off into the thick of battle. And let's face it - they don't get much thicker than O'Brien.

Back in 2012 I first played a game called Wargame: European Escalation. That was 20 years ago.

Then in 2013, a follow up to the game was released. This was called Wargame: AirLand Battle and I spent many hours playing the game. Finally, in 2014, Wargame: Red Dragon was released.

This time the game was set in East Asia during an alternate history Cold War where the Soviet Union doesn't collapse.

The concept of the game is easy enough. You have a map that is divided up into various zones. You control one of these zones and the enemy controls another one of the zones.

There are two different game modes - Economy and Destruction. In Economy you need to capture and hold more zones than the enemy by the end of the game.

In Destruction mode you need to either destroy or capture all enemy units or have more points at the end of the game.

The game can be played either in single player or multi-player modes. Single player is divided into campaigns or skirmish mode.

The campaigns are divided into a number of scenarios. You begin with a certain allocation of assets and sometimes rein-

forcements. You have to win the scenario before you can move on to the next one.

The skirmish mode, my favourite mode of the game, is where you get to choose a map, choose your side, choose the enemy, and choose the mode.

There are five single player campaigns. Busan Pocket is set in 1987 and you play as the South Koreans.

Bear vs Dragon is set in 1979 and this time you get to play as the Chinese against the Russians.

Set in 1984, Pearl of the Orient sees you playing as the United Kingdom. Also set in 1984, Climb Mount Narodnaya gives you the chance to play as the USSR.

The final campaign, 2nd Korean War, is set in 1992 and you play as Blue Force - basically NATO.

Even on the easiest settings, the campaigns are no pushover. Especially at the start, where you can sometimes face overwhelming odds. You have to try and buy time by slowly retreating and making the enemy pay for every metre of ground captured.

As I mentioned earlier, skirmish mode is where I have the most fun. The first thing you need to decide in skirmish mode is which countries will

be taking part in the skirmish. There is a Blue Force and a Red Force.

In the original game, Blue Force countries consisted of the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand), Japan, South Korea, and the Netherlands.

The Red Force countries were East Germany, USSR, Poland, Finland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, China, and South Korea.

Later Israel was added to the Blue Force and last year, in 2021, the South African Defence Force was added.

You can choose which country you want to play as, then choose who your opponent will be. Select the map where the skirmish will take place, and you're almost good to go.

Before you can start, you need to assemble the forces you will be using. This is done by creating what the game calls a 'deck'.

You are given a certain number of points to create your deck and each asset costs a certain number of points.

A deck is made up of all, or any, of the following assets - logistic, infantry, support, tanks, reconnaissance, transport, helicopters, air, and naval.



Logistic units are vital because they are the only units that can capture and hold territory. Support vehicles are also important to supply fuel and ammunition to vehicles and ammunition to infantry.

Your reconnaissance units are useful to send up ahead to scout out an area and identify enemy forces, as well as for spotting for artillery or air strikes.

On some maps there is water and this is where you can deploy naval forces.

Putting the right deck together will often be the difference between success and failure.

Playing as the SADF the first thing I did was choose my logistics units. I had a choice of two helicopters - an Alouette III or an SA-321 Super Frelon. The advantages of using helicopters is that they are able to reach an area far quicker. The disadvantage is that they are very vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire, including portable Surface-to-Air

Missiles. Most infantry squads carry either anti-tank or SAM's.

Your other options are to go with an Oliphant tank or even a Ratel 20. At least they can defend themselves. You could also choose a Buffel or Casspir as a logistical vehicles.

It's great to see that all of the SADF units and equipment is there. From Oliphants, Elands, various Ratels, Casspurs, and even the Rooikat.

You will also find the big guns such as the G6, Valkiri and Bateleur, as well as air defences such as the Cactus and Ystervark.

Air assets include various Mi-rages and Cheetahs, and even the Buccaneer.

Infantry units includes just about anyone you could think of SA Infantry, Unita, 32 Battalion, Special Forces, 61 Mech, Parabats and more.

My only complaint is that there are no traditional opponents to fight against. Nor do

any of the maps remotely resemble terrain where the SADF saw combat. For that you need to look at Graviteam Tactics, a game we will review next month.

Still, Wargame Red Dragon is challenging and lots of fun to play.



Publisher - Eugen Systems

Genre - RTS

Score - 8/10

Price - R499.00 (on Steam)



TV Series Review

Ultimate Force

Released: 2002

Running time: 60 minutes each

Created by: Rob Heyland & Chris Ryan

Ultimate Force is not a movie, but rather a television series that deals with the activities of Red Troop of the SAS (Special Air Service).

There were four seasons and Seasons 1 and 2 each had six episodes. Season 3 had four episodes and Season 4 had five episodes.

The series was shown on ITV and would later be seen in 120 countries, including on DsTV. It received mixed reviews, with some describing it as realistic and action packed, while others did not think that highly of it. In fact one reviewer described it as 'Ultimate Farce'.

The series was co-created by Chris Ryan MM, a former British SAS soldier who was a member of the famous Bravo Two Zero patrol during the 1991 Gulf War.

The main character is Staff Sergeant Henry 'Henno' Garvie (Ross Kemp). He is the senior NCO of Red Troop and the only character to appear in every episode.

The remainder of Red Troop consists of Trooper Jamie Dow (Jamie Draven) and Trooper Alex Leonard (Sendhil Ramamurthy). They have just passed SAS selection and have been put into Red Team.

Corporal Pete Twamley (Tony Curran) is the team's demolition expert. Corporal Ricky Mann (Danny Sapani) has a wicked sense of humour.

Lance Corporal Jem Poynton (Elliot Cowan) is the team sniper. The remaining member is Trooper Sam Leonard (Anthony Howell). Alex Leonard is his adopted brother.

Captain Dennis "Dotsy" Doheny (Jamie Bamber) is the commander of Red Troop.

Other notable characters include Staff Sergeant Johnny Bell (Chris Ryan), head of Blue Troops.

Colonel Aidan Dempsey (Miles Anderson), Commanding Officer of 22 Regiment. Anderson was born and raised in Rhodesia and at one stage his father commanded the Rhodesian Army.

Captain Caroline Walshe (Alex Reid) is the intelligence officer and liaison with MI5, who are nicknamed 'Box 500' after their postal address in London.

Some of Red Troop's characters are killed off and replaced with others during the series.

Notable replacements include Corporal Louis Hoffman (Christopher Fox), Corporal Mick Sharp (Laurence Fox), and Trooper Becca Gallagher (Heather Peace).

Gallagher is the first woman to pass SAS selection, much to Colonel Dempsey's disgust. In real life current policy is that women are not allowed in the SAS.

All in all I found Ultimate

Force to be entertaining and well worth watching. Fair enough, it's not an accurate reflection of the real SAS, but it has a good balance of action and humour.

For example, when the two new recruits are introduced to Captain Doheny, Alex Leonard calls him 'sir'. After Doheny leaves, Garvie says to Leonard, "Never call a rupert sir, ever."

"They get ideas above their station," says Trooper Sam Leonard.

The good news is that you can find most of the episodes available in full on YouTube, A bit of fun viewing for when you have nothing else to watch.



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

The Battle in Bangui: The untold inside story

This publication is a "must read" for everyone in uniform.

Written by top South African defence analyst Helmoed Romer Heitman, "The Battle in Bangui: The Untold Inside Story" gives an insight into just how bravely the outnumbered contingent of South African soldiers performed in the long, high intensity fire-fight they found themselves in March 2013.

The book also gives background into what the soldiers were doing in the Central African Republic (CAR) in the first place and draws out a number of lessons learned during the incident. "The Battle in Bangui" raises interesting questions, like should a larger force have been sent, what choic-

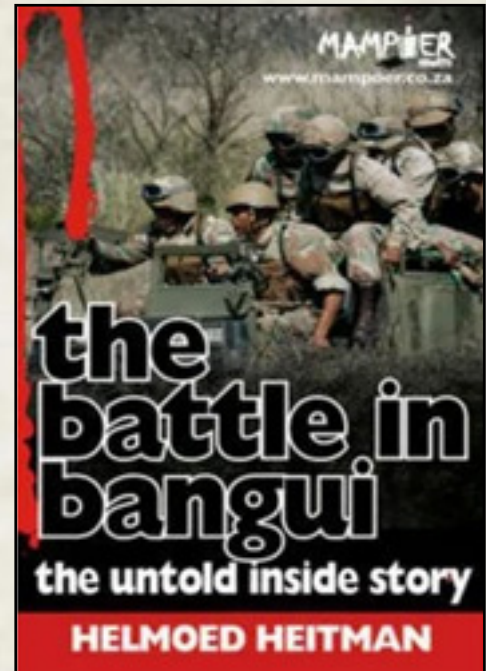
es did Commander-in-Chief President Jacob Zuma have, and importantly, what were the lessons learned.

Heitman has no problems with the manner in which the South African soldiers acquitted themselves in the fighting.

He also exonerates the generals for deploying small and/or under-armed forces.

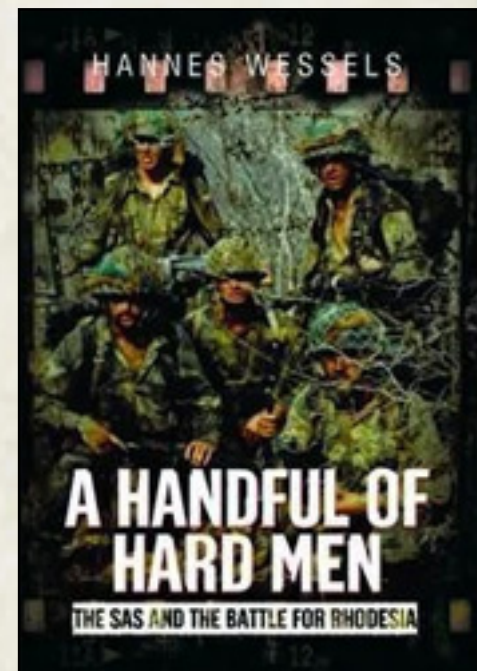
"If there is blame it must go to the politicians who starve the Defence Force financially and then expect it to work miracles," he writes.

The author ends with a warning to those in charge of the national purse strings: "There is no such thing as military operations on the cheap: what is saved in cash

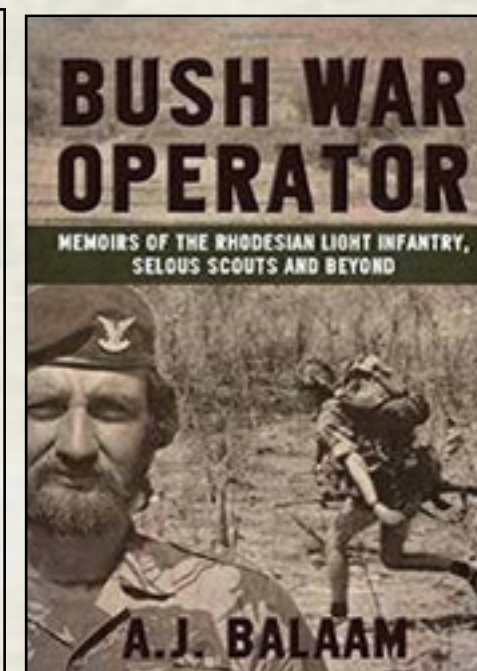


will be paid for in blood".

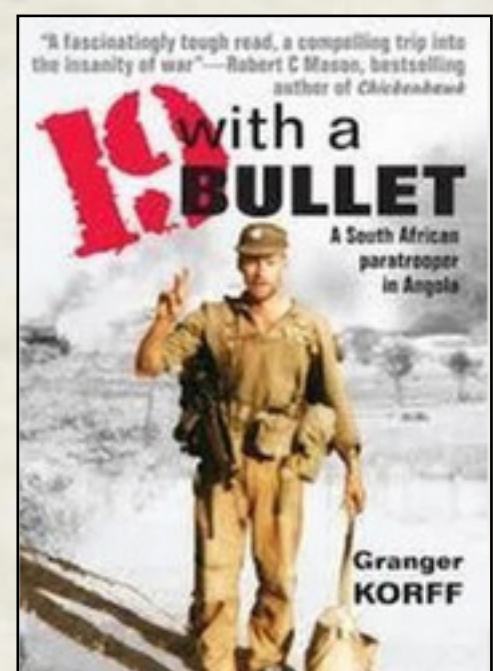
The great news is that this publication is available as a free download from Bush War Books.



A handful of hard men
R395



Bush War Operator
R550



19 with a bullet
R300

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

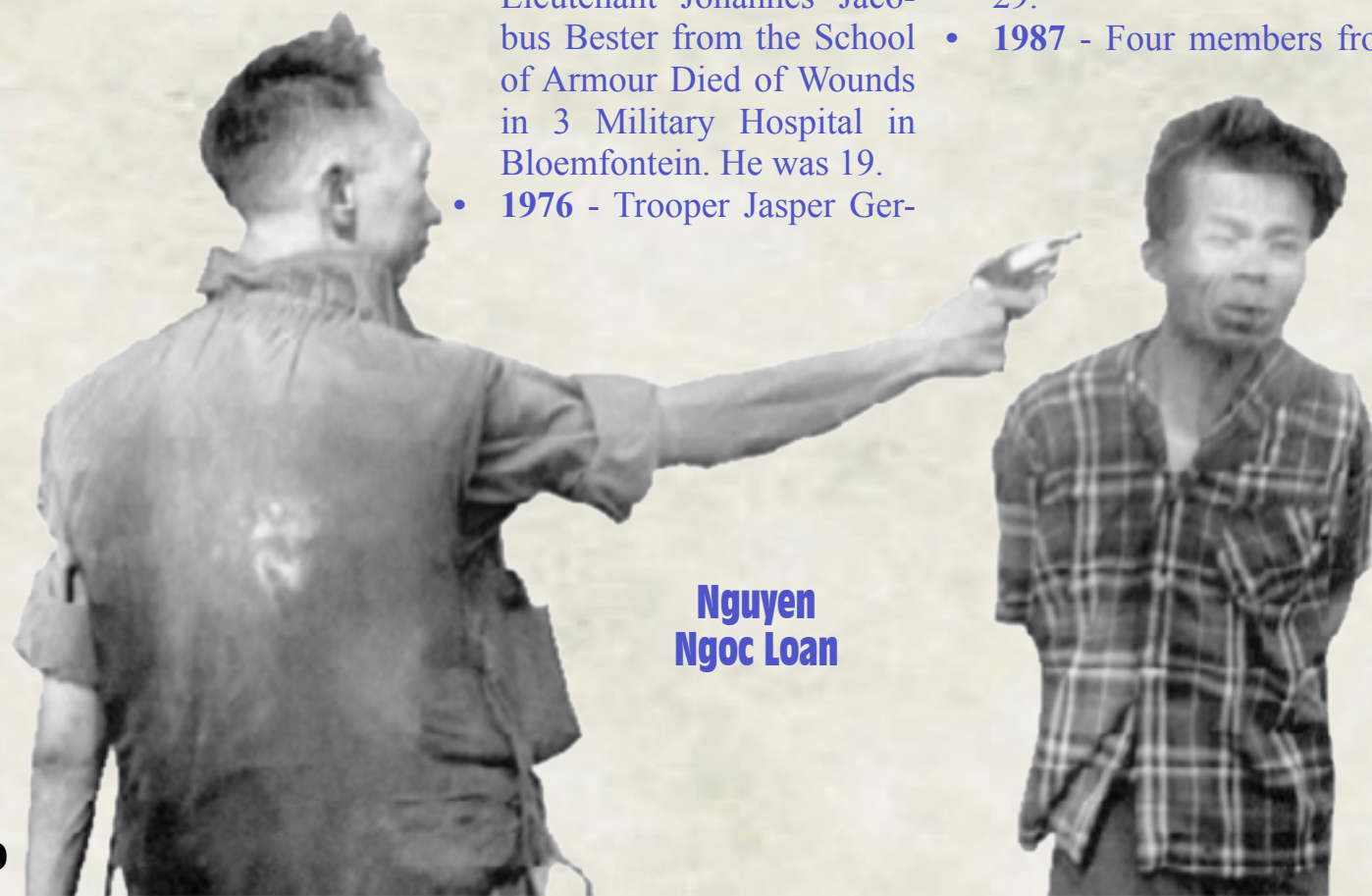
Some of the significant military events that happened in February. Highlighted in blue are the names of those members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that lost their lives during the month of February.

1 February

- **1862** - Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of Republic" is published.
- **1920** - The South African Air Force is established, the first of the Commonwealth air forces. Lt-Col. Pierre van Ryneveld is appointed as Director of Air Services.
- **1943** - Marshal Paulus surrenders the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad.
- **1944** - Japanese learn Australia has formed a war crimes commission.
- **1951** - Alfred Krupp & 28 other German war criminals are freed.
- **1957** - Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus, dies at the age of 66.
- **1960** - Extreme right-wing rebels in Algiers surrender.
- **1961** - Minuteman ICBM is successful in its first full scale test.
- **1968** - Saigon: Nguyen Ngoc Loan summarily executes a Viet Cong murderer.
- **1968** - The Canadian Forces are formed, through the merger of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, an "experiment" that is ended in 2011.
- **1971** - Two members from the Armoured Corps were accidentally Killed or Died of Wounds when a 90mm High Explosive Anti-Tank round exploded in the gun breech of their armoured car during live firing exercises at De Brug, Bloemfontein. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Johannes Jacobus Bester from the School of Armour Died of Wounds in 3 Military Hospital in Bloemfontein. He was 19.
- **1976** - Trooper Jasper Ger-

hardus Johannes Visser from 1 SSB was killed instantly in the explosion. He was 19.

- **1976** - Rifleman Nicolaas Pretorius from Regiment Springs was critically wounded by an accidental weapon discharge in Southern Angola on 31 Jan 1976. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he succumbed to his wounds the following day on 1 February 1976. He was 29.
- **1981** - France sells 60 Mirage fighters to Iraq.
- **1986** - Sergeant Gerhardus Frederick Nortje from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 29.
- **1987** - Four members from



Nguyen
Ngoc Loan

32 Battalion were Killed in Action during a first light attack on a PLAN camp in the Cassumbi area east of Cassinga during Operation Kakebeen. Lance Corporal Joao and Rifleman Tolosi the MAG Gunner were killed instantly when a Soviet 82mm Mortar Bomb landed and exploded between them while the other two suffered fatal gunshot wounds during the fire-fight. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Evaristo Joao (32). Rifleman Gonsalves Antonio (22). Rifleman Kambala Tolosi (22). Rifleman Domingoes Zua (31).

- **1988** - Gunner Stephanus Petrus Stoop of 14 Artillery Regiment, attached to "P" Battery, 32 Battalion accidentally drowned while swimming somewhere in the Operational Area. He was 20.
- **1991** - Rifleman Joao Andrade from 201 Battalion SWATF died of natural causes in Hospital. He was 42.

2 February

- **1848** - The war between the U.S. and Mexico ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.
- **1901** - The U.S. Army Nurse Corps was formed on this day.
- **1942** - US ceases production of private cars to convert to war production.
- **1945** - Mass escape attempt

at Mauthausen concentration camp.

- **1957** - The United Nations (UN) adopts a resolution calling for Israeli troops to leave Egypt.
- **1971** - Idi Amin assumes power in Uganda following a coup that ousted President Milton Obote.
- **1972** - Irate Dubliners torch the British Embassy to protest 'Bloody Sunday' in Derry.
- **1973** - Captain Leslie John Marshall from Flying Training School Langebaanweg was Killed when his Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I, Serial No 485 crashed near Darling while he was practicing low level aerobatics. He was 26.
- **1975** - Rebels begin an offensive in Eritrea, Ethiopia. Ethiopia's military government orders bombers, armoured units and troops into operations against them in Eritrea Province.
- **1978** - Chief Matanzima announces that all South Africans seconded to the Transkei Army will leave Transkei by 31 March 1978.
- **1980** - Rifleman Willem Johannes Gerhardus Uys Olivier from 7 SAI was killed when the Buffel Troop Carrier in which he was a passenger, overturned at Ondangwa. He was 19.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Johnny Atilla Nemith from 7 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident at Ha-

zyview. He was 19.

- **1984** - Rifleman Joshua Sitarara from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN Insurgents. He was 24.
- **1986** - Leading Seaman Cavan Rennie Boyd from SAS President Pretorius accidentally drowned whilst restrained in an overturned paddle ski off Bloubergstrand. He was 25.
- **1989** - Rifleman Christian Le Wack from Group 39 was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident, at Bloemfontein. He was 29.
- **1989** - Soviet troops leave Afghanistan, ending nine years of war.
- **1992** - Rifleman Benjamin Boorman from 3 SAI was accidentally shot and killed by a fellow Unit member during riot control operations at Mpophweni Township. He was 23.
- **2004** - Max Schmeling, former world heavyweight boxing champion and WW II Fallschirmjaeger, dies at the age of 99.

3 February

- **1838** - Piet Retief, seventy burghers and thirty mounted servants arrive at Dingaan's kraal Ungungundlovu (Home of the Elephant) for the signing of the Retief-Dingane treaty.
- **1903** - Britain conquers Kano from Nigerian rebel forces.

- **1915** - Battle of the Suez Canal: a Turkish attempt to cross the canal is defeated.
 - **1922** - General Christiaan Rudolph de Wet, well-known leader of Boer forces in the Second Anglo-Boer War, dies on his farm at the age of 67.
 - **1933** - Hitler informs his generals to prepare for war to secure *Lebensraum*.
 - **1943** - An extraordinary act of heroism occurred in the icy waters off Greenland after the U.S. Army transport ship *Dorchester* was hit by a German torpedo and began to sink rapidly. When it became apparent there were not enough life jackets, four U.S. Army chaplains on board removed theirs, handed them to frightened young soldiers, and chose to go down with the ship while praying.
 - **1943** - Troop transport 'Dorchester' torpedoed & sunk off Greenland with great loss of life.
 - **1977** - General Tafari Banti (Teferi Benti), Ethiopia's chief of state, is killed in gun battle that breaks out around Addis Ababa headquarters of the nation's feuding military leaders. Lieutenant-Colonel Haile Mariam Mengistu replaces him.
 - **1978** - Rifleman Afonso Da Silva from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with the enemy forces at Mamuandi during Operation Seiljag. He was 22.
 - **1983** - Lance Corporal Carl Leopold Albert Craemer from 8 SAI was Killed in Action when the Buffel Troop Carrier he was driving, detonated three boosted Yugoslavian TMA-3 Anti-Tank cheese mines that were triggered by a Soviet PMN "Black Widow" Anti-Personnel Mine on the road between Oshigambo and Ondangwa. He was 20.
 - **1988** - Lance Corporal Marius John Lecuona from 2 SSB attached to 61 Mech Battalion was killed during Operation Hooper in Southern Angola.
- #### 4 February
- **1861** - Apache Chief Cochise was arrested in Arizona by the U.S. Army for raiding a ranch. Cochise then escaped and declared war, beginning the period known as the Apache Wars, which lasted 25 years.
 - **1874** - British forces under Garnet Wolseley burn Kumasi, Ghana, ending Ashanti War.
 - **1899** - The Philippine-American War (Philippine Insurrection) begins with heavy fighting at Manila.
 - **1904** - Herero Revolt in German South West Africa: Omaruru is relieved after a fierce battle between Franke and the Ovaherero.
 - **1911** - Pieter Arnoldus Cronjé, Boer general during the Second Anglo-Boer War, dies in Potchefstroom.
 - **1938** - Hitler assumes direct control of the German Army.

- **1939** - The "Ossewabrandwag" (OB) is founded as an Afrikaans cultural and political organisation in Bloemfontein, under leadership of Col. J. Laas.
- **1944** - Japanese launch major offensive against British in the Arakan, Burma.
- **1961** - Civil war erupts in Angola.
- **1964** - The number of men required for military training in 1964 is to increase by 60%, i.e. from 10,368 to 16,537.
- **1967** - Crew of the US carrier *FDR* are refused leave in South Africa because of the apartheid laws.
- **1980** - Three members from 6 SAI were Killed in Action when their patrol was ambushed around mid-morning near Nkongo by PLAN Insurgents using heavy calibre weapons, mortars and RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rockets. The casualties were: Rifleman Michael Derek Loubser (20). Rifleman Jacobus Johannes Maritz (20). Rifleman Jacobus Johannes van der Star (20).
- **1980** - Rifleman Anthony Michael Scholtz from 41 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN Insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 17.
- **1981** - Corporal Daniel Johannes van Wyk from Sector 20 Headquarters was killed in a military vehicle accident near Rundu. He was 19.
- **1982** - 2nd Lieutenant Douglas Raymond Fincham from 82 Mechanised Brigade accidentally drowned in the Vaal River at Barkley West. He was 24.
- **1983** - Private Jan Gabriel Johannes van der Berg from 201 Battalion SWATF was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned during follow-up operations in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1986** - Private Ronnie Marx from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed instantly when he was struck by lightning during a thunderstorm. He was 18.
- **1987** - Sapper Shawn Engelbrecht from 25 Field Squadron was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a landmine in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1988** - Two members of 101 Battalion Romeo Mike were Killed in Action near Mupa in Southern Angola when their Casspir drove into an ambush and was struck by a Czechoslovakian RPG-75 Anti-Tank Rocket. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant Michael Sean McCann (21). Sapper Michael Colin Suter (20) from 25 Field Engineer Squadron attached to 101 Battalion Romeo Mike.
- **1988** - Two members of the South West Africa Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K (Koevoet) were Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They

- **1989** - The Citizen reveals that Miss Olivia Forsyth who arrived at the British Embassy in Luanda, Angola, seeking sanctuary from the ANC, which, she alleged, has kept her in confinement for months and severely tortured her, was indeed a South African spy. Her claim to be a SA agent was formerly rejected by SA authorities.
 - **1990** - Nine Israeli tourists and two Egyptian guards are killed and twenty tourists wounded when masked assailants open fire on a bus en route to Cairo.
- #### 5 February
- **1840** - Hiram Stevens Maxim, inventor of the first practical machine gun, is born on this day.
 - **1900** - General Redvers Buller conquers Vaalkrans at the Tugela river, but shelling from both sides continues and the British forces have to evacuate their positions two days later.
 - **1915** - General Louis Botha leaves for South West Africa to take control of the Union troops who would conquer the area from Germany.
 - **1918** - Stephen W Thompson becomes the first US pilot to down an enemy airplane.
 - **1935** - Johannes Jacobus Geldenhuys (Jannie), former Chief of the South African Defence Force, is born in Kroonstad.
 - **1943** - Germans deport 12,000 Jews from Bialystok to death camps.
 - **1958** - A B-47 & F-86 collide at 36,000 feet off the Georgia coast, causing the loss of an H-Bomb, which is still missing.
 - **1970** - Captain Johannes Jacobus Lombard from 4 SAI was deliberately shot dead by a disgruntled soldier in the mess at Katima Mulilo. He was 29.
 - **1973** - Funeral for Lt Col William Nolde, last US soldier killed in Vietnam.
 - **1976** - The Defence Amendment Bill, making provision for the employment of South African conscripted troops anywhere outside South Africa, is approved.
 - **1976** - Sapper Jonathan Aschman from 21 Field Engineer Squadron, South African Engineer Corps was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Central Angola during Operation Savannah. He was 19.
 - **1976** - Trooper Willem Johannes Cronje from Regiment Oranje Rivier was Killed in Action in Central Angola during Operation Savannah. He was 26.
 - **1980** - Two members from 6 SAI were Killed in Action when their Temporary Base at Nkongo was attacked by PLAN insurgents. The casualties were: Rifleman Chris-

- **1989** - The Citizen reveals that Miss Olivia Forsyth who arrived at the British Embassy in Luanda, Angola, seeking sanctuary from the ANC, which, she alleged, has kept her in confinement for months and severely tortured her, was indeed a South African spy. Her claim to be a SA agent was formerly rejected by SA authorities.
- **1990** - Nine Israeli tourists and two Egyptian guards are killed and twenty tourists wounded when masked assailants open fire on a bus en route to Cairo.

- to Swanepoel (19). Rifleman Bruce Edward Schultz (20).
- **1981** - Police announce the arrest of a number of Whites in connection with sabotage acts for which the Wit Kommando has claimed responsibility on 15 August 1980 and on 12 December 1980.
- **1981** - Rifleman Bernard Jacobus Leach from 1 SAI was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents while on patrol near the Cut-line. He was 21.
- **1982** - Two members from 4 SAI were killed at their Base at Ohiki, 18km North of Omauni when they tried to make a skyrocket by using a tent pole. They were: Rifleman Evert Phillipus Du Toit (20). Rifleman Robert Glenn Dunn (19).
- **1983** - Former Gestapo official Klaus Barbie brought to trial in Lyon, France.
- **1985** - Rifleman Paul Ismael from 101 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces. He was 24.
- **1987** - Rifleman Peter Benz Reynolds from 5 Recce Regiment was killed when the Kwêvoel vehicle he was driving, overturned when he tried to avoid cattle in the road between Ondangwa and Tsumeb. He was 22.
- **1991** - Lieutenant Johannes Francois Neuhoff from 85 Combat Flying School was killed when his Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I, Serial No. 604 crashed near Pietersburg. He was 25.
- **1992** - Rifleman Daniel Stephanus Hendrik Du Toit from the Regiment Botha was killed when he accidentally slipped at a waterfall and fell 30 metres to his death, while on Patrol at the Table Mountain in Natal. He was 33.
- **1993** - Up to 200 Somali youths hurl rocks at US forces and set tyre barricades ablaze in the belief that American troops shot to death a Somali man.

6 February

- **1838** - At the farewell function following the signing of Retief's treaty, Piet Retief, seventy of his men and thirty mounted servants are killed on the orders of Zulu King Dingane at Ungungundlovu. The Trekkers are bound and taken from the enclosure to a spot where they are spiked and clubbed to death.
- **1899** - Spanish-American War officially ends.
- **1901** - The battle of Chrissiesmeer (Lake Chrissie) takes place during the Second Anglo-Boer War.
- **1941** - Battle of Beda Fomm: British complete destruction of Italian Tenth Army.
- **1941** - British troops capture Bengazi, Libya.
- **1945** - Battle for Manila begins.
- **1945** - Over 4,000 American POWs are freed from prison camps on Luzon.
- **1970** - Israelis sink a 700-ton Egyptian minelayer in the Gulf of Suez in reprisal

for the sinking of two Israeli ships at Elath.

- **1977** - Rhodesian security forces launch a full-scale search for a gang, which massacred seven White Roman Catholic missionaries three Jesuits and four Dominican nuns at St Paul's Mission at Musami, near Mrewa.
- **1978** - Chad breaks links to Libya in protest to their support of Muslim guerrillas currently fighting in northern Chad.
- **1981** - Rifleman L Kavari from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1982** - Rifleman Hirite Vilho from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1982** - Rifleman Ningileymo Kondjeni Meulemo from 101 Battalion SWATF was killed during operations in Southern Angola. He was 22.
- **1984** - Rifleman Xavier Arico from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1984** - Special Constable M. Kaibotya from Koevoet was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in North-

- ern Owamboland. He was 34.
- **1985** - Rifleman Immanuel Gabriel from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 28.
- **1985** - Trooper Hermanus Christoffel Helm from 2 Special Service Battalion collapsed and died after suffering a fatal heart attack during a physical training session at Walvis Bay. He was 18.
- **1985** - Corporal Noel Mbumba Marcel from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 30.

- **1994** - National Peacekeeping Force (NPKF), Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana, says that the NPKF will probably not be ready to keep the peace during the elections in April.
- **2004** - Chechen terrorists bomb the Moscow subway, 49 die, scores injured.

7 February

- **1900** - British forces, under Buller, are defeated by the Boers under Botha at the end of the three-day battle of Vaalkrans.
- **1900** - The British fail for the third time to relieve the Boer siege of Ladysmith.
- **1901** - Britain sends 30 000 additional troops to South Africa.
- **1942** - The 2nd SA Division moves into Tobruk.

- **1943** - Guadalcanal: U.S. troops advance on both coasts, as the Japanese complete the evacuation of their troops from the island.
- **1944** - Germans launch counteroffensive at Anzio.
- **1945** - General Douglas MacArthur returns to Manila.
- **1948** - Omar Bradley succeeds Dwight Eisenhower as Army Chief of Staff.
- **1964** - Somali troops invade Ethiopia to assert claim to Ogaden desert area.
- **1965** - US begins sustained air operations against North Vietnam.
- **1968** - Air Mechanic Philip Johannes Joubert from 24 Squadron was shot dead while on guard duty when he was struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 19.



Douglas MacArthur

- **1969** - Nigerian planes bomb and strafe a crowded market in a village in rebellious Biafra, killing more than 200 people.
 - **1973** - Two members from the Infantry School Instructor Staff were killed instantly in Oudtshoorn when a stockpile of old unstable explosives that they were preparing for demolition, accidentally detonated. The casualties were: WO Lukas Petrus Jacobus Steenkamp (45). Staff Sergeant Pieter Paul van Jaarsveld (30).
 - **1978** - Gunner Abraham Hattingh from 4 Artillery Regiment was killed instantly at Potchefstroom during a violent storm when the electric floor polisher he was using to polish the barracks floor, was struck by lightning. He was 17.
 - **1979** - Nazi war criminal Josef Mengele drowns in Brazil at the age of 67.
 - **1987** - Trooper Johann Labuschagne from 61 Mechanised Battalion died during a two week Infantry training exercise at Oshivello.
 - **1989** - Sapper Ian Steward Hanslo from the School of Engineers was killed while on guard duty at the Unit's main gate when he was accidentally run over by a 10-ton truck. He was 19.
- Heights, near Schuinshoogte (also called the Battle of Skuinshoogte) is fought in the Anglo-Transvaal War. Eight Boer and 100 British soldiers are killed. In this battle the Boer force of 100 men defeats the English force of 600 who are assisted by cavalry and four cannons.
- **1943** - Burma: Orde Wingate's Chindits begin raid against the Japanese.
 - **1943** - Red Army liberates Kursk.
 - **1978** - Three members of 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during in a fierce fire fight with superior enemy force at Mamuandi in Southern Angola during Operation Seiljag. They were: Rifleman Lucindo Laurindo (20). Rifleman Rodrigues Augusto (19). Rifleman Antonio Mussungu (20).
 - **1978** - Rifleman N. Bernade from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during in a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola between Onhunda and Oshipala during Operation Seiljag. He was 19.
 - **1979** - Gunner Pieter Du Toit from 10 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment received serious burns on 7 February while escorting a patient in an ambulance to 2 Military Hospital at Wynberg. He passed away on 8 February. He was 20.
 - **1981** - Rifleman Morgan John Williams from 5 SAI was Killed when he was

8 February

- **1865** - Martin Delany becomes first black major in the US Army.
- **1881** - The Battle of Ingogo

struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.

- **1984** - Captain Sarel Jacobus Kruger from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was killed in a parachute training accident at Hoedspruit. He was 26.
- **1984** - Rifleman Hendrik Francois Taljaard from the Equestrian Centre was killed instantly when he was accidentally run over by a Samil 100 truck near Potchefstroom while on his way to stand guard at the North West Command Ammunition Dump. He was 19.
- **1984** - 2nd Lieutenant Johannes Petrus Verhoef from 8 SAI died from gunshot wounds accidentally sustained near AFB Ondangwa in Northern Owamboland. He was 21.
- **1988** - Rifleman Thomas Andries Dreyer from 5 SAI accidentally drowned while swimming in the Klip River. He was 24.

9 February

- **1900** - George Frederick Labram, mechanical engineer who built 'Long Cecil' for the defence of Kimberley during the siege by the Boers, is killed by a shell from a Boer 'Long Tom' only a few days before the siege was raised.
- **1904** - A predawn Japanese torpedo boat attack on the Russian Fleet outside Port

Arthur, initiates the Russo-Japanese War.

- **1916** - General Jan Christian Smuts is appointed commander of UK and South African troops in the East African campaign of World War I.
- **1916** - Britain adopts conscription for World War I.
- **1916** - The Cape Corps, consisting of thirty-two officers and 1022 soldiers, leaves for East Africa during the First World War.
- **1918** - U.S. Army Chaplains' School is established on this day.
- **1941** - The German troops of General Erwin Rommel move from Italy to North Africa.
- **1943** - During World War II in the Pacific, U.S. troops captured Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands after six months of battle, with 9,000 Japanese and 2,000 Americans killed.
- **1945** - Germans blow up dams on the Ruhr.
- **1977** - Rifleman Frederick Francois Oosthuizen from Meyerton Commando died from a gunshot wound resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle while his patrol was busy preparing an ambush position north of Oshakati. He was 20.
- **1978** - South Africa is to make its own missiles. Kentron (Pty) Ltd, a newly formed subsidiary of ARMSCOR (the South African Armaments Corporation)

will produce these.

- **1987** - Corporal Marius Viljoen from 2 Special Service Battalion was killed at the Rooisloot Training Terrain at Zeerust when his Eland armoured car overturned during training exercises. He was 19.
- **1990** - Rifleman Gerhard Paul Heine from 5 SAI was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Umhlanga Rocks. He was 19.
- **1991** - Oupa Gqozo, head of the Ciskei, claims to have put down the second coup attempt in the space of two weeks, with the assistance of South African forces.
- **1992** - After two days of fighting between Islamic fundamentalists and security forces in Algeria, a state of emergency is declared.
- **1996** - WW II Luftwaffe ace Adolf Galland dies at the age of 83. He was the youngest man in Europe to become a general since Napoleon.
- **1999** - An Ethiopian plane bombs an Eritrean village full of homeless people, killing at least five civilians and escalating a border dispute.

Adolf Galland

10 February

- **1840** - Commandant-General M.W. Pretorius installs Mpande as King of the Zulus after the power of Mpande's brother, Dingane, is broken at a final battle at Magongo on the Umkuzi River.
- **1901** - General Christiaan de Wet invades the Cape Colony for the second time at Zanddrif, near Philippolis.
- **1906** - HMS 'Dreadnought' is launched, initiating a naval arms race.
- **1916** - Geneneral Jan Smuts is appointed commander of the Allied forces in East Africa.
- **1942** - The first Medal of Honor during World War II was awarded to 2nd Lt. Al-



exander Nininger (posthumously) for heroism during the Battle of Bataan.

- **1943** - Britain's Eighth Army reaches Tunisian border.
- **1943** - Battle of Krasny Bor: The Soviets attempt to break the siege of Leningrad, but defending German and Spanish troops hold.
- **1962** - USSR swaps U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers for spy Rudolph Abel.
- **1964** - Australian carrier 'Melbourne' collides with the destroyer 'Voyager', which sinks, 82 die.
- **1972** - Lance Corporal James Charles Warren from 2 Squadron was killed in a aircraft ground mishap at the Squadron. He was in the process of removing an aircraft ejection seat when the drogue gun on the seat accidentally fired and he was fa-

tally injured. He was 23.

- **1983** - Rifleman Adao Salvador from 32 Battalion was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident, at Mosese. He was 22.
- **1988** - South Africa sends troops to Bophuthatswana to reinstate Lucas Mangope who was ousted by local defence force members on charge of corruption.
- **1989** - The Citizen reports that an alleged member of the SADF, Isaiah Moyo, was convicted in Lusaka, Zambia, on three counts of espionage and sentenced to fifty years' hard labour. The SADF denied any knowledge of Mr Moyo. The sentence was later reduced to thirty years.
- **1994** - Lieutenant Garth Harold Esterhuizen from 42 Squadron was killed when his Cessna 185A, Serial No. 720 crashed at Carletonville after flying into power lines during a low level cross country training flight. He was 23.

- **2017** - Lt. General Harold Gregory "Hal" Moore, Jr, hero of the Ia Drang Valley in Vietnam, dies at the age of 84.

11 February

- **1900** - The second British offensive begins with a British invasion of the Orange Free State when almost 50,000 men and 170 guns cross the border from Modder River and Graspan to a water-rich farm at Ramdam.
- **1935** - League of Nations debates the border dispute between Italy and Ethiopia, whilst Mussolini prepares to ship out 35,000 troops to East Africa.
- **1941** - Erwin Rommel lands in Tripoli to assume command of the Afrika Korps.
- **1963** - The defence minister, J.J. Fouché, announces in the House of Assembly that he intends to increase the strength of the permanent army by fifty per cent.
- **1971** - US, UK, USSR, others sign a treaty banning nuclear weapons on the seabed.
- **1975** - A Rhodesian government spokesman announces that elements of the South African police are withdrawing from certain forward positions on the Zambezi River, after undertakings from the Zambian government about guerrilla infiltrations there.
- **1978** - Lieutenant Johannes Hendrik Du Toit from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces during an ambush while operating in Zambia. He was 23.
- **1980** - Private Gert Petrus

Gerber from Central Flying School Dunnottar attached to 95 Tactical Airfield Unit, suffered critical head injuries when his fuel tanker vehicle overturned near Oluno in Northern Owamboland on 5 February 1980. He succumbed to his injuries in 1 Military Hospital on 11 February 1980. He was 19.

- **1981** - Rifleman Archie Ronnie Williams from the South African Cape Corps died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while on patrol in Northern Owamboland. He was 26.
- **1982** - Sapper Phillipus Johannes De Bruin from 5 Engineer Regiment was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.
- **1985** - Eight members of 32 Battalion were Killed in Action and five more Died of Wounds when Charlie Company Patrol was operating in the vicinity of the Bale River in Southern Angola during Ops Forte. The eight casualties that were killed in the initial contact were: Lieutenant David Gordon Light (26). Rifleman Jakob Eduardo Jamba (31). Lance Corporal Jose Alfredo Sachilombo (27). Rifleman Petrus Kalitoko Kahete (31). Rifleman Alberto de Almeida (19). Rifleman Paulo Jose (27). Rifleman Kausanga Galonga (27). Rifleman Jose Chihamba (30). After sunset while the casualties were being evacuated

to a temporary emergency base, another four of the wounded men, all suffering from massive chest wounds as a result of Rifle Grenades and RPG-7 Rockets, succumbed to their injuries. They were: Riflemen Joao Fernando (29). Rifleman Mateus Joaquim (26). Rifleman Zeferino Chipoya (22). Rifleman, Mateus Antonio Kinguelele (32). Rifleman Musose Muema (32) succumbed to his injuries the following day.

- **1990** - The South African Defence Force (SADF) admits the existence of a secret unit called the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB), which was also allegedly involved in hit-squad actions against activists. President De Klerk said in March 1990 that he had been informed about the CCB only in January 1990.

12 February

- **1942** - The "Channel Dash": German battleships 'Scharnhorst' & 'Gneisenau', & heavy cruiser 'Prinz Eugen' escape from Brest to Germany.
- **1955** - Pres Eisenhower sends US advisors to South Vietnam.
- **1976** - Rifleman Johannes Jacobus Bruwer from 6 SAI Died in 1 Military Hospital from gunshot wounds accidentally sustained while in Northern Owamboland. He was 21.
- **1979** - The State Security Council (SSC) approves

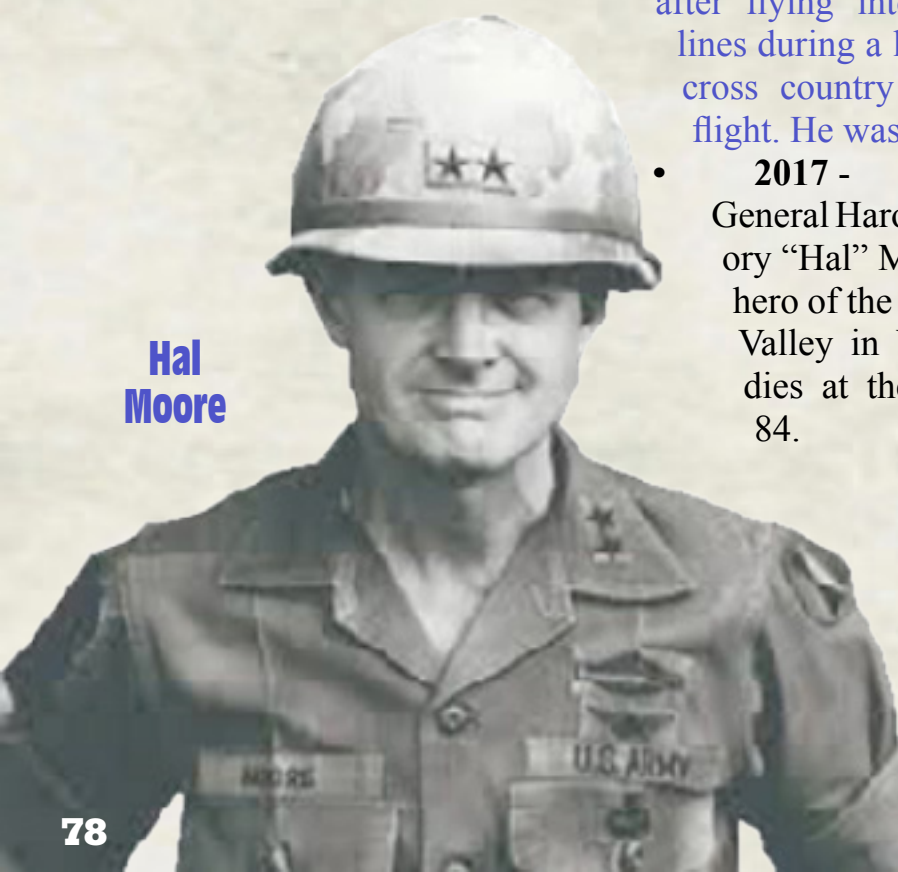
guidelines for the conducting of military operations against liberation movements in foreign countries.

- **1979** - Nationalist guerrillas in Rhodesia shoot down an Air Rhodesia airliner with a missile, killing fifty-nine people.
- **1985** - Captain Robert Raymond Rodel from 4 Squadron was Killed in Action in Northern Owamboland in Atlas MB326KC Impala Mk II, Serial No.1096. He was 26.
- **1985** - Five members from 102 Battalion SWATF and 1 SWA Engineer Regiment SWATF (attached) were Killed in Action in Western Koakoland when their Buffel Troop Carrier convoy was ambushed by a numerically superior force of approximately 40 heavily armed SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. The casualties were: Corporal Mannie Maheue (22). Sapper Willem Vallien (18). Sapper Gerhard van Wyk (19). Sapper Bartholomeus Kapindi (22). Sapper Niklaas Johannes Ferris (24).

13 February

- **1901** - Lord Kitchener meets with Gen. Louis Botha in an effort to end the Anglo-Boer War, but Botha finds the British conditions unacceptable. The battle of Wolwekuil is fought the same day.
- **1924** - Japanese Admiral Kenji Ide and his aide, Capt. Isoroku Yamamoto, visit the

Hal Moore



- U.S. Naval War College
 - **1941** - WW2: The 12th African Division, with 1st SA Infantry Brigade in command, captures Kismayu in Somaliland.
 - **1942** - Hitler finally cancels "Operation Seelöwe", the invasion of Britain.
 - **1945** - During World War II in Europe, British and American planes began massive bombing raids on Dresden, Germany. A four-day firestorm erupted that was visible for 200 miles and engulfed the historic old city, killing an estimated 135,000 German civilians.
 - **1960** - The first French atom bomb is tested in the Sahara desert.
 - **1961** - UN security council urges use of force to prevent civil war in the Congo.
 - **1972** - Patrol Officer Michael Fenton Hill, a South African National serving in the British South Africa Police stationed at Wedza, was killed in a motor vehicle accident while travelling on the Salisbury to Umtali Road. He was 20.
 - **1976** - General Murtula Ramat Muhammed, Nigerian head of state since a bloodless coup in 1975, is assassinated during a failed military coup.
 - **1980** - 2nd Lieutenant Ignatius Petrus Du Preez from 201 Battalion SWATF Died of Wounds during an operation in Southern Zambia when he accidentally triggered a booby trap while clearing a SWAPO/PLAN base. He was 21.
 - **1981** - Rifleman Jaco Marais from the South African Army was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Pretoria. He was 18.
 - **1993** - Angolan government troops break into Unita rebel-held highlands in an attempt to open a supply corridor to the embattled city of Huambo.
 - **1994** - Rifleman Mbhonono Johnson Myeni from 111 Infantry Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Alexandra. He was 27.
 - **1994** - Somali gunmen kidnap two Italian aid workers and an Egyptian UN peacekeeper is killed.
 - **1997** - Rebels under Laurent Kabila take Zairian town of Faradje while advancing on country's third largest city, Kisangani.
 - **1999** - Osama bin Laden, the Saudi millionaire suspected of being behind the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, is reported to have disappeared from his base in Afghanistan.
- 14 February**
- **1900** - General Buller starts his fourth attempt to relieve Ladysmith, Natal. The British withdraw from their positions around Colesberg and regroup at Arundel Sid-ing nearby.
 - **1940** - British merchant ships are armed against Ger-

- man submarines and raiders.
- **1941** - German 5th Light Division, Rommel's Afrika Corps, arrive at Tripoli.
- **1943** - The Soviets liberate Rostov from the Germans.
- **1973** - An Israeli fighter pilot shoots down a Libyan aircraft over the Sinai Desert. Seventy-four passengers and crew members die.
- **1981** - Eight Army officers are paraded by President Samora Machel at a mass rally in Maputo and are accused of treason and complicity with South Africa in the raid on the military base at Matola, where two of them were in command.
- **1987** - Three members from 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: Lieutenant Colonel G.L. Steyn (48). Sergeant Christoffel Lodewikus Fourie (28). Constable Ryk Ludolph Erasmus (20).
- **1988** - Four Members from B Company 1 SAI including two Cousins acting as the MAG Light Machine Gunner team, were Killed in Action in South Eastern Angola during a contact with elements of the 59th FAP-LA Brigade during Operation Hooper. The casualties were: Corporal Jan Hendrik Kleynhans (19). Rifleman Andre Schalk Groenewald (18). Rifleman Pieter Hen-

- rich Groenewald (19). Rifleman Vincent Vernon Nieuwenhuizen (19).
- **1990** - Corporal Pieter Gabriel Jacobus Haasbroek from 4 Reconnaissance Regiment was accidentally killed when his parachute failed during a practice jump at the Saldanha Airfield near Vredenburg. He was 21.
- **1991** - Lance Corporal Deon Schutte from Group 33 shot dead in a shooting incident near the Mozambique border. He was 20.

15 February

- **1898** - In Havana, the U.S. Battleship Maine was blown up while at anchor and quickly sank with 260 crew members lost. The incident inflamed public opinion in the U.S., resulting in a declaration of war against Spain on April 25, 1898, amid cries of "Remember the Maine!"
- **1900** - General French relieves Kimberley after a siege of 123 days. The town has suffered only 134 casualties among armed defenders and twenty-one civilians, but some 1,500 people, mostly Coloureds and Blacks, have died of famine and disease. The British lost at least 2,237 men of the relieving force.
- **1900** - The British threaten to use natives in the Boer War fight.
- **1915** - "Sepoy Mutiny" at Singapore: About 800 Indian troops run amok until subdued by loyal troops and police.
- **1942** - Singapore surrenders to the Japanese; greatest disaster in British military history.
- **1944** - The Allies commence bombing & shelling the Monastery of Monte Cassino.
- **1970** - Air Chief Marshal Hugh Caswall Tremenheere Dowding, who led "The Few" during the Battle of Britain, dies at the age of 87.
- **1970** - Corporal Stephanus Abraham Johannes Latsky from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Old Pretoria / JHB Road, near Valhalla when his Kombi skidded on the wet road and overturned. He was 19.
- **1979** - Major Frederick Wilhelm Christiaan Brits from 3 Squadron was killed when his Mirage F1CZ Serial No.200, crashed near Cullinan during a training flight. He was 32.
- **1989** - Soviet Russia completed its military withdrawal from Afghanistan after nine years of unsuccessful involvement in the civil war between Muslim rebel groups and the Russian-backed Afghan government. Over 15,000 Russian soldiers had been killed in the fighting.
- **1990** - Captain Cecil de Jong from 17 Squadron was killed when his Alouette III, Serial 637 crashed at Murrayhill near Hammanskraal during a confined space landing/

take-off. He was 29.

- **1992** - Two members from the School of Armour were killed when the military vehicle in which they were traveling as passengers, burst a rear tyre near Verkeerdevlei and overturned. They were: Trooper Grant James Koekemoer (18). Trooper Gert Johannes Grobler (18).

16 February

- **1940** - 'Altmark' Incident: HMS 'Cossack' violates Norwegian territoriality to free British prisoners held aboard a German tanker.
- **1941** - Remaining Italian forces are expelled from the Sudan.
- **1945** - Venezuela declares war on Nazi Germany.
- **1959** - Fidel Castro becomes premier of Cuba after the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista. Cuban intervention in the Angolan war started during his office.
- **1982** - Rifleman Daniel Cloete from 911 Battalion SWATF accidentally drowned in a flooded shona/river bed. He was 18.
- **1983** - Rifleman L.K. Kam-bathi from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 21.
- **1986** - Two members from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike SWATF were Killed in Action when their Casspir was hit by an RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket during a contact with

enemy forces in Southern Angola. They were: Corporal Nandago Thomas (22). Rifleman R. Boas (19).

- **1986** - Special Constable Abel Uteuwa 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.
- **1986** - French warplanes bomb Libyan airfield in northern Chad used as support centre for rebels in their offensive against President Hissene Habre's government.
- **1988** - An attempted coup by the Bophuthatswana Defence Force is crushed by the S.A. Defence Force.

17 February

- **1900** - General Piet Cronje is trapped against the Modder River on the farm Wolwekraal in the Paardeberg vicinity, and the next day the battle of Paardeberg, which was to last ten days, starts.
- **1909** - Apache Chief Geronimo died while in captivity at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He had led a small group of warriors on raids throughout Arizona and New Mexico. Caught once, he escaped. The U.S. Army then sent 5,000 men to recapture him.
- **1916** - British and French forces complete capture of Germany's African colony of Cameroon during World

War I.

- **1980** - Staff Sergeant Michael Johannes van der Linde from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 39.
- **1981** - Signaler Walter James Griffin from 2 Signal Regiment attached to 237 Troop (BRUSH) in Grootfontein, was accidentally killed while returning to Grootfontein when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Otjovasandu in Sector 30. He was 19.
- **1984** - Rifleman Hendrik Jacobus Smith from 1 Parachute Battalion was Reported Missing near the Epupa Falls in Kaokoland. The Cunene River was flowing strongly and making whirlpools between the rocks. One of his boots fell into the river and he jumped in to retrieve it. He never re-surfaced and despite an intensive search by the members of the patrol, he was never located and remains unaccounted for. He was 20.
- **1987** - Two members from 202 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action when their Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a landmine in Southern Angola. The casualties were: Lance Corporal L. Aukhumb (22). Rifleman G.H. Edwards (19).
- **1987** - Rifleman K.S. Kambonde from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with

SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 23.

- **1988** - Staff Sergeant Aubrey Nelson Borchers from 101 Battalion SWATF died in 1 Military Hospital after suffering a fatal heart attack. He was 49.
- **1988** - Lance Corporal William Arthur Frederick Price from 1 SAI, attached to 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was Killed in Action in Southern Angola during Operation Hooper. He was 19.
- **2017** - Three members of the South African Navy died while trying to rescue three members from the Department of Public Works who were working in a sewage pit repairing the valve. The casualties were: Leading Seaman Amrithlall Tothara Ramdin (41). Able Seaman Francois William Mundell (26). Seaman Henro Ter Borg from the Maritime Reaction Squadron (21).

18 February

- **1884** - British forces under General Charles Gordon reach Khartoum in Sudan.
- **1900** - The Battle of Paardeberg, which was to last up to 27 February, starts with an attack by the British under Maj General Lord Kitchener on the Boers under General Cronje.
- **1915** - Germany proclaims a blockade of England.
- **1941** - Mega, the Italian headquarters in southern

Abyssinia, falls to SA forces.

- **1977** - Rifleman Willem Andries Haarhoff from 3 SAI was accidentally killed when a pole fell on him. He was 18.
- **1980** - Gunner Samuel Deon van Aswegen from the Potchefstroom University Regiment was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier was hit by an RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rocket during an enemy night ambush at Omindamba in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1982** - Rifleman Mark Mason from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a friendly fire incident when their patrol was engaged by SWATF forces near the Cut-Line. He was 18.
- **1982** - Tragedy struck the South African Navy when the Frigate SAS President Kruger was involved in a collision with the fleet replenishment ship SAS Tafelberg during exercises in the South Atlantic Ocean. The force of the collision buckled the plates and crushed Mess 12 on the President Kruger where the Petty Officers sleeping quarters were located, killing or trapping those inside. After the order to abandon ship was given, the following 16 ratings were Reported Missing and remain unaccounted for: Chief Petty Officer Johannes Petrus Booysen. Chief Petty Officer Hartmut Wilfried Smit. Chief Pet-

ty Officer Willem Marthinus Gerhardus Van Tonder. Chief Petty Officer Donald Webb. Petty Officer Stephanus Petrus Bothma. Petty Officer Graham Alexander Frank Brind. Petty Officer Robin Centlivre Bulterman. Petty Officer Granville Williams De Villiers. Petty Officer Evert Koen. Petty Officer Hjalmar Lotter. Petty Officer Roy Anthony McMaster. Petty Officer Roy Frederick Skeates. Petty Officer William Russel Smith. Petty Officer Michael Richard Bruce Whiteley. Petty Officer Coenraad Johannes Wium. Able Seaman Gilbert Timothy Benjamin.

- **1982** - Private Daniel Johannes Jakobus Rossouw from 1 Maintenance Unit was killed in a military vehicle accident at Asab. He was 19.
- **1983** - Constable Anton Delpont from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was mortally wounded during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1983** - Sergeant Paul Petrus van Zyl from Western Air Command, Windhoek, was killed in a private motor vehicle accident at Olifantshoek while travelling back to Pretoria to take up his new posting at Air Force Headquarters. He was 23.
- **1983** - Sergeant Tema Kanheto from 201 Battalion

SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents at Elundu in Northern Owamboland. He was 23.

- **1984** - Rifleman Kim Inglis from Hotel Company, Infantry School was accidentally killed after being struck in the heart by a small piece of mortar bomb shrapnel during a live ammunition fire and movement attack training exercise at Omutiya. He was 19.
- **1985** - Corporal Leon van Buisbergen from 6 SAI was accidentally killed in Southern Angola by friendly fire from another South African Infantry Unit. He was 20.
- **1987** - Rifleman C.V. Kavita from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.

19 February

- **1937** - Italian troops commence with raids into Addis Abeba, capital of Ethiopia.
- **1942** - Japanese Vice-Adm Nagumo's aircraft raid Darwin, NW Australia, inflicting heavy casualties.
- **1945** - US Marines land on Iwo Jima.
- **1963** - The minister of defence announces the re-establishment, as of 1 April 1963, of the 'Cape Corps' of Coloured to be employed in non-combatant roles.
- **1976** - The MPLA government in Angola is recognised

by most countries of the world. Foreign intervention is condemned, and the withdrawal of Cuban and South African troops demanded.

- **1978** - Two members from the South African Air Force and one civilian passenger were Killed in Action while returning from Katima Mulilo to Air Force Base M'pacha after attending a Sunday Church Service. The casualties were: Commandant Liam Myles Poole (44). Major Andries Petrus Els (54). Mr David Jacobus De Lange (47).
- **1978** - Rifleman Raymond O'Brien Hunter from 2 SAI was Killed in Action at Elundu. He was 20.
- **1978** - Rifleman Johan Lemmer Caparus Ferreira from 2 SAI was captured along with Sapper Johan Van der Mescht just before sunrise on 19 February 1978 during a surprise attack by a group of approximately 47 SWAPO/PLAN insurgents on their TB at Elundu. Unlike Van der Mescht, Ferreira refused to go along with his captors and was subsequently murdered. He was 20.
- **1979** - Sapper Rudolf Francois van Heerden from 52 Battalion was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion at Mahanene in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1980** - The South African Defence Force has taken over from the police the security of Northern Natal since the area is becoming a

third front in Security Force action against guerrilla infiltration.

- **1981** - Rifleman Shaun Reginald Jessop from 1 SAI was killed when his Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicle overturned during military exercises at Kimberley. He was 21.
- **1985** - Rifleman Jan Petrus van Niekerk from Infantry School died from an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head while in Sunnyside, Pretoria. He was 22.
- **1987** - Rifleman Nicholas Andrew Stubbs from the Equestrian Centre was killed in a military vehicle accident at the Reitz Show Grounds. He was 19.
- **1987** - Detective Sergeant Pieter Johannes Collen from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 29.
- **1988** - Rifleman Lambert Hendrik Fick from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor cycle accident while on his way to Potchefstroom. He was 22.

20 February

- **1902** - Colonel C.W. Park, commanding three columns and accompanied by about 300 National Scouts and a commando of armed Blacks, surprise General Chris H. Muller in the Bothasberg,

about 60 km north-east of Middelburg and captures 153 burghers of Colonel Trichardt's commando while two burghers are killed.

- **1942** - Combined Japanese amphibious and airborne attack on Timor.
- **1943** - German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel broke through American lines at Kasserine Pass in North Africa as inexperienced U.S. Troops lost their first major battle of World War II in Europe, with 1,000 Americans killed.
- **1944** - Allied bombers begin five days of intensive air attacks on German aircraft production facilities and air bases, while their fighter escorts devastate defending Luftwaffe squadrons.
- 1966 - American Fleet Admiral Chester W Nimitz, at 80.
- **1977** - Rifleman H.M. Dos Santos from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 31.
- **1981** - Rifleman Sarel Philippus Piek from 2 Field Engineer Regiment died in the Sick Bay at M'pacha after contracting cerebral meningitis. He was 21.
- **1983** - Special Constable Johannes Joseph 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 North-

ern Owamboland. He was 23.

- **1986** - Rifleman I Tjisemo from 102 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 24.
- **1988** - Major Edward Richard Every from 1 Squadron was Reported Missing during an Operational sortie over Southern Angola after his Mirage F1AZ 245 was shot down by a Soviet SA-13 Gopher Surface-to-Air Missile at Cuatir near Menongue. He was 31.

21 February

- **1916** - Battle of Verdun in France begins with a massive German artillery bombardment. It is the longest and bloodiest battle of World War 1, with more than one million killed.
- **1917** - The troopship SS Mendi collides with the Darro near the Isle of Wright. It sinks with a contingent of Black SA troops, on their way to France to fight on the British side. "Be quiet and calm, my countrymen. What is happening now is what you came to do ... you are going to die, but that is what you came to do. Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers ... Swazis, Pondos, Basotho ... so let us die like brothers. We are the sons of Africa. Raise your war-cries, brothers, for though they made us leave

our assegais in the kraal, our voices are left with our bodies" reputed to be the last words of Rev Wauchope Dyobha on the sinking ship SS Mendi.

- **1918** - Australians capture Jericho from the Turks.
- 1919 - Mary Edwards Walker, feminist and physician, Civil War Army contract surgeon, the only woman ever awarded a Medal of Honor, dies at the age of 86.
- **1944** - Prime Minister Tojo takes over direct control of the Japanese Army as Chief of Staff.
- **1978** - Lieutenant Phillip Joseph Castle from Regiment Windhoek, SWATF was Killed in Action in Northern Owamboland during a close-quarter battle with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents at Olusjandja Dam after his Patrol was ambushed just before sunrise. He was 20.
- **1979** - Rifleman Francis William John Snyman from 7 SAI was Killed in Action when the Bedford he was driving, detonated a land mine outside Oshakati. He was 19.
- **1980** - South Africa warns Mozambique it will not hesitate to strike back if Mozambique continues to shelter guerrillas conducting murderous operations and acts of sabotage against South Africa.
- **1981** - Commandant Pieter Gouws from 1 SWA Squadron SWATF was Reported Missing when his Civilian

aircraft, a Cherokee 6 PA32-300, Registration ZS-EXG, disappeared without trace while flying an aerial reconnaissance sortie up the South West African Coastline. He was 49.

- **1983** - Corporal Kallie Vermeulen from the Northern Logistical Command was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 21.
- **1984** - Rifleman Rinho Jepau from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 27.
- **1985** - Special Constable Johannes Tobias 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.
- 1988 - Two members from 5 Signals Regiment and one member from Infantry School were Killed in Action in Southern Angola during Operation Hooper when their position was attacked by Angolan Air Force MiG Fighter Bombers. The casualties were: Sergeant Gerhardus Marthinus Maritz (25). Corporal Van Zyl Venter (20). Signaler Jacques de Lange (19).

22 February

- **1915** - Germany begins "restricted" submarine warfare.
- **1940** - A Stuka of Kamp-

ffgeschwader 30 sinks two destroyers in a single attack in the North Sea off Bor-kum. Unfortunately for him the two ships, the 'Lebrecht Maas' and 'Max Schultz', are both German.

- **1967** - The Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, discloses that South Africa's northern borders are protected by a radar complex constituting an early warning system and that her coasts will be covered by the Decca navigational system costing R6m.
- **1975** - The Military government of Ethiopia announces that 2,300 guerrillas have been killed in fighting in Eritrea.
- **1977** - Lieutenant Neil Bradley Liddell from 17 Squadron was Killed in Action when his Alouette III, Serial No. 76 was shot down by concentrated small arms fire during anti-insurgent operations in Southern Zambia. He was 28.
- **1978** - Rifleman Andre Bosch from 2 SAI Died of Wounds in 1 Military Hospital after being shot while standing guard at Elundu when their position was overrun by SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 18.
- **1980** - Sapper Phillipus Jurie Wynand Swane-

poel from 25 Field Squadron, South African Engineer Corps was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.

- **1984** - Special Constable Patisiu Tobias 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.
- **1985** - Private Philip Nat Gould from 61 Base Workshops was critically injured when he accidentally fell off a moving vehicle. He was admitted to 1 Military Hospital where he later succumbed to his injuries. He was 18.
- **1988** - Sapper Steven Eric Lelong from 1 Parachute Battalion Combat Engineering Unit was accidentally shot dead when his team of Combat Engineers were mistakenly ambushed by a 102 Battalion SWATF Reac-

tion Force Unit in Southern Angola. He was 19.

- **1988** - Corporal Petrus Jacobus Louw from 102 Battalion SWATF accidentally drowned in the Officers/NCO's swimming pool at the Headquarters. He was 19.
- **1991** - Major Richard John Miller from 85 Combat Flying School was killed when his Atlas MB326KM Impala Mk II, Serial No. 1008 crashed while carrying out an aerobatics display at Air Force Base Pietersburg. He was 33.

23 February

- **1917** - Caporale Benito Mussolini, 11th Bersaglieri, is seriously wounded in a mortar accident.
- **1942** - During World War II, the first attack on the U.S. mainland occurred as a Japanese submarine shelled an oil refinery near Santa Barbara, California, causing minor damage.
- **1945** - Iwo Jima: the 28th Marines raise the flag on Mount Suribachi.
- **1978** - Captain Andries Johannes van Ellewee from 41 Battalion was critically wounded at Narubis near Keetmanshoop during a live fire exercise. He was 26.
- **1980** - Staff Sergeant Am-

Iwo
Jima

erindo Maurao Da Costa PMM from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action when he detonated a booby trap after his team had walked into an enemy ambush. He was 35.

- **1981** - The Prime Minister declares that Soviet threats will not prevent South Africa from attacking ANC bases in Mozambique.
- **1983** - Private Ronald Richard Erasmus from 5 Maintenance Unit died in hospital from natural causes. He was 19.
- **1983** - Rifleman Simon Hamutenya from 101 Battalion SWATF Killed in Action during a contact with insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 23.
- **1983** - Lance Corporal William Francis Moag from 7 SAI died from gunshot wounds accidentally sustained in the Operational Area. He was 20.
- **1984** - Special Warrant Officer Lukus Likuis from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 31.
- **1986** - Special Sergeant Abel Matiasta from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 36.

• **1987** - Three members from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike Team SWATF were Killed in Action close to Vinticet in Southern Angola after their Casspir was hit by Soviet RPG-7 Anti-Tank Rockets when they drove into a SWAPO/PLAN Battalion ambush. They were: Corporal Hector Lucas Strydom (24). Rifleman Tom Job (23). Rifleman Esau Simon (24).

- **1987** - Two members from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in Action and one wounded during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Special Sergeant Mwainbange Mwanyengange (23). Special Sergeant Johannes Naffral (35). Sergeant Christiaan Petrus Momberg. (Wounded and evacuated but died in 1 Military Hospital on 25 February 1987).
- **1989** - Rifleman Mhluteki Absalon Makatini from 111 Battalion died from gunshot wounds sustained in a shooting incident in Swaziland. He was 20.
- **1991** - In Desert Storm, the Allied ground offensive began after a devastating month-long air campaign targeting Iraqi troops in both Iraq and Kuwait.

24 February

- **1966** - A military coup in Ghana deposes President

Kwame Nkrumah while he is out of the country on his way to China.

- **1984** - Special Warrant Officer Herman Hosea 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.
- **1987** - Airman Nicolaas Wilhelmus Jacobus van Rheede van Oudtshoorn from Air Force Base Grootfontein died from a gunshot wound accidentally sustained while serving at the Base. He was 19.

25 February

- **1885** - Germany annexes Tanganyika and Zanzibar.
- **1902** - At least fifty-three British soldiers die, 130 are wounded and 500 captured in a surprise attack by Boer troops at Ysterspruit in the Klerksdorp vicinity.
- **1916** - Verdun: The Germans capture Fort Douaumont.
- **1954** - Military coup ousts Pres Adib el-Shishakli of Syria.
- **1981** - Hansard reports that on this date 289 servicemen of the SADF are in detention, of which 137 are being punished for reasons of conscientious objection.
- **1981** - Private Cornelius Tobias van Schalkwyk from the Dog Training Centre died in hospital at Oshakati after contracting Malaria in

Southern Angola while attached to an Infantry Unit as a dog handler. He was 19.

- **1986** - Captain Brian Du Preez from 116 Battalion was killed in a military motorcycle accident at Messina. He was 27.
- **1987** - Sergeant Christiaan Petrus Momberg from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was wounded in the head during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland on 23 February 1987. He was evacuated to Eenhana where he later lapsed into a coma prior to being evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria. He remained on life support until declared brain dead on 25 February 1987. He was 23.
- **1988** - Bombardier Clinton Hendricks from 10 Anti-Aircraft Regiment, was Killed in Action in Southern Angola near Cuito during Operation Hooper while operating with a 61 Mechanised Battalion Group SAM-7 Anti-Aircraft team. He was 19.
- **1988** - Lance Corporal Leon Francis van Wyk from Regiment Molopo was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola when his Olifant Tank was knocked out by a Soviet 130mm field gun. He was 30.
- **1993** - US marines and Nigerian soldiers blast at snipers in central Mogadishu,

Somalia, in a five-hour battle that kills one Somali.

- **2005** - Militiamen kill nine United Nations Bangladeshi peacekeepers in Ituri, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, in the worst attack against the UN force in the country. Ituri is one of the DRC's worst trouble spots, where ethnic militias have killed 50 000 civilians since 1999.

26 February

- 1852 - An English troop carrier, the Birkenhead with Robert Salmond as captain, carrying reinforcements for the 8th Frontier War, runs aground at Danger Point. Of the 638 passengers, only 184 could be rescued, as there were insufficient lifeboats. The women and children were sent ashore first, while the men remained standing on deck until they perished under the waves.
- **1916** - German U-Boat sinks the French liner 'Provence', 930 die.
- **1935** - Germany announces the existence of the Luftwaffe under Herman Göring.
- **1942** - German battleship 'Gneisenau' disabled by a British bomb.
- **1952** - Winston Churchill announces that Britain has produced its own atomic bomb.
- **1974** - Ethiopian army units seize Asmara, second largest city in Ethiopia, and demand better pay and living conditions.

- **1976** - Corporal Jan Andries Swanepoel from 8 Signal Regiment was Killed when the Unimog vehicle he was a passenger overturned at Chitado, Southern Angola. He was 25.
- **1980** - Rifleman Jakobus Andries Petrus Bosman from Witwatersrand Rifles was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.
- **1982** - Lieutenant Commander Robert Desmond Kohne from SAS Drakensberg was killed when he accidentally fell into lift shaft on the SAS Drakensberg during construction and maintenance work on the Ship at the Shipyards in Durban.. He was 29.
- **1984** - Scout Adrian Bruce Berend from the Intelligence School in Kimberley was killed in a civilian motor vehicle accident while on weekend pass. He was 19.
- **1990** - Defence Minister General Magnus Malan says all activities of the clandestine Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) have been suspended pending the outcome of a judicial investigation.
- **1990** - Moscow begins pulling 73,000 troops out of Czechoslovakia.
- **1999** - Ethiopian troops breach Eritrean lines in a disputed border area, and Eritrea soon says it will accept an African peace plan for the ten-month war.

27 February

- **1881** - Boers defeat the British force at Majuba Hill, in the Anglo-Transvaal War. More than 200 British soldiers and two Boers are killed.
- **1900** - British troops under Gen. Redvers Buller break through the Boer lines during the Battle of Pietersburg.
- **1900** - The Boer general Piet Cronje surrenders with 3 919 men (nearly 10% of the total republican fighting strength) to the British at Paardeberg on the 10th day of the battle.
- **1902** - On the same day both the oldest and the youngest prisoners of war to be deported, are captured at Dwaalspruit. They are Gideon J. van Zyl of Vrede seventy-eight years old, and Johannes van Heerden of Heidelberg, only seven years old.
- **1973** - Candidate Officer Cornelis Ferreira Oosthuysen from 1 SSB was killed in a military vehicle accident in Bloemfontein. He was 19.
- **1974** - Ethiopia's cabinet resigns as military mutiny spreads from the captured city of Asmara.
- **1980** - Rifleman Leon Grobler from 2 Parachute Battalion died from wounds sustained on 20 February. He was 19.
- **1982** - Rifleman Peter Williams Hayfeni Naikaku from 32 Battalion was killed in action. He was 29.

- **1984** - Lance Corporal George Diederick Vorster from North West Command Provost Unit was killed on the Klerksdorp-Potchefstroom Road while carrying out convoy escort duty. He was 19
- **1986** - Special Constable Thomas Amunyongi from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1987** - Sapper Norman Cecil van der Leeuw from 5 Military Works Unit, M'pacha, was accidentally killed after falling off the back of a moving truck at Katima. He was 20.
- **1988** - Rifleman Antonio Luis Cambinda from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Rundu. He was 22.
- **1988** - Special Warrant Officer Felix Creneus from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 29.
- **1991** - In Desert Storm, the 100-hour ground war ended as Allied troops entered Kuwait just four days after launching their offensive against Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces.

28 February

- **1844** - During a demonstration of naval fire power, one of the guns aboard the USS Princeton exploded, killing several top U.S. government officials on the steamer ship, and narrowly missed killing President John Tyler.
- **1900** - The British relieves Ladysmith after a siege of four months when reinforcements under Buller arrive.
- **1944** - Marshal of the Soviet Union Nikolai Fyodorovich Vatutin, is mortally wounded in an ambush by Ukrainian partisans and dies 15 April.
- **1977** - Private Craig Murray Irvine from 32 Field Workshop Squadron was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Bagani-Rundu Road. He was 22.
- **1979** - Sergeant Bernhard Fritz Wilhelm Kirchner from 41 Battalion was Killed in Action during a Contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 21.
- **1988** - South African commandos raid Gaborone, Botswana, in search of ANC members.
- 1994 - NATO conducted its first combat action in its 45 year history as four Bosnian Serb jets were shot down by American fighters in a no-fly zone.



Modern submachine guns

1. Vityaz-SN (2008 - Russia)
2. Uzi (1954 - Israel)
3. FN P90 (1990 - Belgium)
4. CZ Scorpion Evo 3 (2009 - Czech Republic)
5. A-M20 (2020 - USA)
6. B&T APC9 Pro-K (2011 - Switzerland)
7. Beretta PMX (2018 - Italy)
8. HK MP5 (1966 - Germany)
9. Interdynamic MP-9 (1983 - Sweden)
10. PP-2000 (2004 - Russia)
11. QCW-05 (2001 - China)
12. Steyr AUG PARA (1988 - Austria)
13. KRISS Vector (2006 - USA)
14. Pindad PM2 (2006 - Indonesia)
15. KGP-9 (1988 - Hungary)



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

For the past few months we have had a problem updating the website. For some reason the changes are not being uploaded to the website.

We have spent hours and hours, working with our website hosting company and their technical staff trying to resolve the issue. The eventual conclusion - eish.

What we now have to do is de-register our URL www.militarydespatches.co.za and take down the website. Then we have to pay to re-register the URL and rebuild the website from scratch.

As you can imagine, this is not only time consuming but frustrating to say the least. We will inform our readers when the site is up and running again.

In the meantime you can still find the magazine at www.hipe.co.za and you will also find all back issues of Military Despatches there.

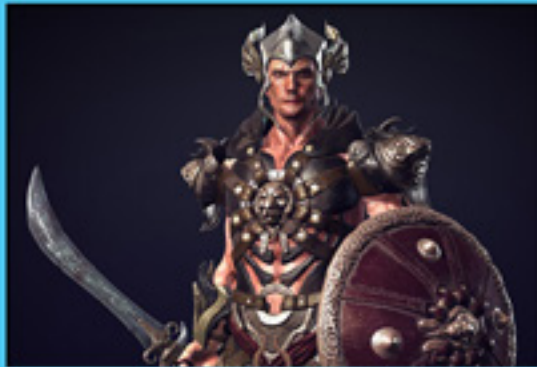
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