



Military Despatches

Vol 12 June 2018

Ten dangerous military roles

Ten military roles in history you did not want

Miracle of the skies

Cut almost in half, a B-17 still makes it home

Noon Day Gun

The Centenary of the Two -Minute Silence

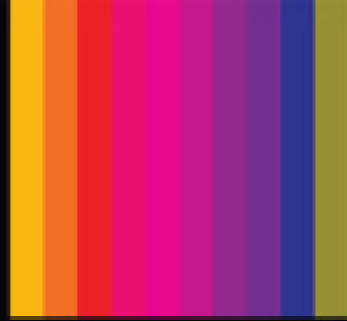
Battlefield

The Battles of Muizenberg and Blaauwberg

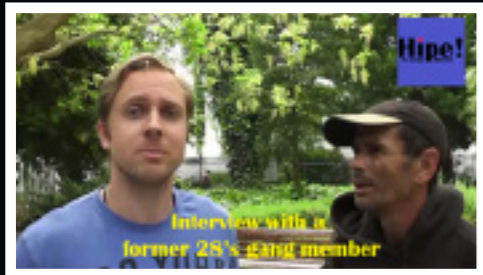
Master Bomber

Edwin Swales, DFC, VC

For the military enthusiast



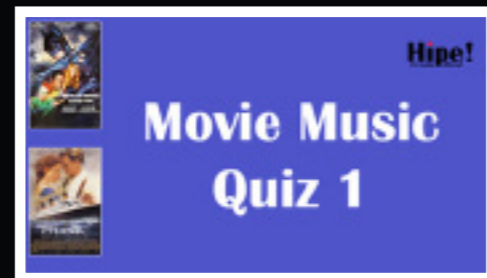
Click on any video below to view



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



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



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



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



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

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

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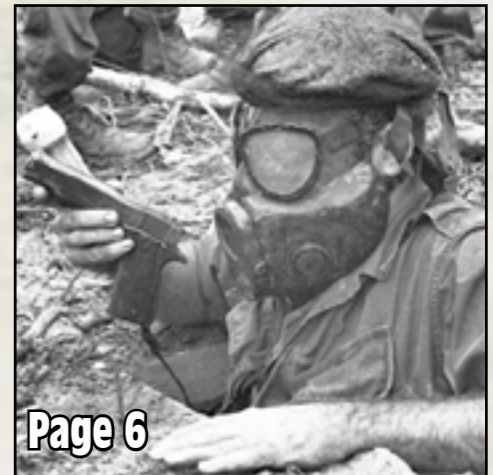
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Cover Photograph

The British nuclear submarine HMS Sceptre berthed in Simon's Town. From there she returned to England to be decommissioned.



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Editor's Sitrep

So this is Issue 12 of Military Despatches. Officially that makes us a year old.

So far we've written 182 articles and produced 722 pages of copy. Not bad going for our first year. And we've got some interesting stuff planned for the next year.

First of all, a big thank you for those of you that take the time to read the magazine every month. And another big thank you for those of you that send it on to other people. This has been the main reason for the magazine's growth over the past year.

An even bigger thank you to those of you that have contributed articles to the magazine.

First of all, it makes my job a lot easier, and it also provides our readers with different ideas and viewpoints.

This month there are quite a few articles on heavy bombers. It wasn't planned that way, but the article "Miracle of the Skies" was an inspiration.

Head-to-head takes a look at iconic bombers of World War II. Our Famous Figure in Military History is Edwin Swales. He was a member of the South

African Air Force in World War II and a master bomber with the RAF.

In Forged in Battle we look at the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress.

There's an interesting article on the firing of Cape Town's Noon Day Gun and the two minute silence. This year marked the 100th anniversary of the two-minute silence.

The article was written by Regine Lord and she also took the accompanying photographs. I've known Reggie for a number of years and I think she is one of the better photographers around. She has an amazing eye for detail. And, as you'll see by the article on page 28, she can write as well.

I'm trying to get everything done before Wednesday 30 May because I am going in for eye surgery. All this peeping through keyholes is obviously not good for the eyes. Enjoy this issue.

Until next month.

Matt

Hipe! media

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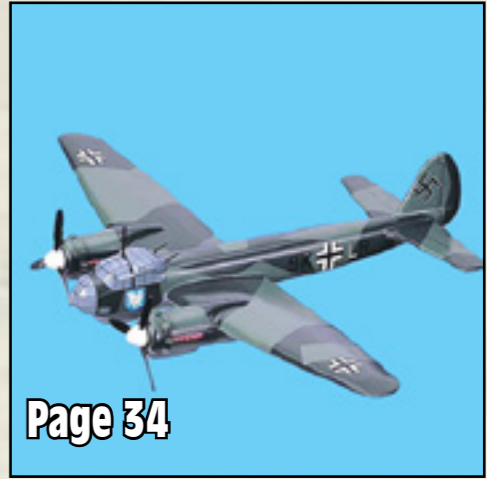
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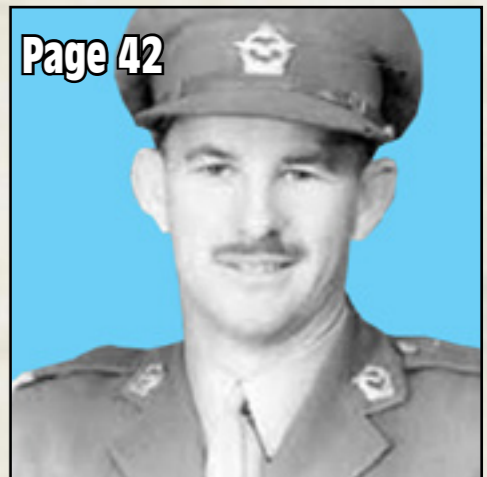
The Lighter Side

You've got the call

Some former national servicemen recall their first week in the military.



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10 Most dangerous military roles

These are ten military roles in history that you did not want.

Often the mere fact that you're in the military is dangerous enough. This is especially true during times of war.

People serve in the military for a variety of reasons. Many will do so because of patriotism and a sense of duty towards their country. Others see it as an adventure and a test of manhood.

Many serve because they don't have a choice in the matter and are conscripted or drafted into service. And there are others that consider it a career.

Those that serve in a combat role often face greater dangers than those that do not. Yet there are some combat roles that are more dangerous than others.

The strange thing with some of these roles is that people actually volunteered for them.

Here are ten dangerous combat roles in history, in no particular order.

Galley Rower

Before the invention of the steam engine, ships had two means of propulsion.

They would either rely on the free, but unreliable, wind, or on human sheer brute force.

Although sails could harness the power of the wind, a calm day could leave you drifting at

the mercy of the sea. Human power, in the form of galley rowers, could always be relied on.

Contrary to popular belief, ancient galley rowers tended not to be slaves, but were instead free men who were well respected for their profession.

The work of the galley rower was skilled and required high levels of training and coordination between each rower.

In battle the lives of all on board were reliant on the talents of the men rowing the galley. So it made sense that ancient navies would be reluctant to place their lives in the hands of unskilled and unreliable slaves.

This would, however, change dramatically between the ancient world and the middle ages.

By the 1600s the size of galleys and galley fleets was becoming much larger. This meant that a greater number of rowers were needed. The supplies of skilled oarsmen could not keep up with the demand.

The era of the galley slave was born as navies manned their fleets with whichever unfortunate that they could seize.

This practice became especially common in France when the king ordered judges to sentence men to the galleys for

their crimes instead of issuing the death penalty.

Criminals were usually given a ten year sentence to the galleys. Many regarded this as a death sentence because few would survive the battles to come, or the harsh conditions.

Chained to the benches where they worked, most spent their entire short existence confined to the rowing deck.

They were unable to wash or even go to the toilet. It was often said that with the right wind direction you could smell a galley long before you would see it.

Unable to move, the rowers would often develop sores on their body, caused by the friction of the chains as they rowed. These wounds would often become infected in the unsanitary conditions, resulting in even more deaths.

Even if the men survived these terrible conditions, they still had to contend with the greatest danger - battle on the open seas.

If a ship was sunk, the rowers, chained to their benches, would be dragged down to a watery grave.

Capture by the enemy may have seemed a good option, but it was not. They would either be



CLAUSTROPHOBIA: A tunnel rat prepares to enter a Viet Cong tunnel complex.

put to death, or used as galley slaves by the enemy.

Tunnel Rats

From the 1940s during the Indochina War against the French colonial forces, the Viet Minh created an extensive network of underground tunnels and complexes.

These were later expanded by the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. By the 1960s there were underground hospitals, training grounds, storage facilities, headquarters and even stages for political theatre. The Viet Cong, who were skilled at guerrilla warfare, might stay underground for several months at a time.

The Viet Cong would often emerge from the tunnels, launch a quick raid or ambush, then escape back into the tunnels before the might of the American war machine could be turned against them.

The tunnel complexes could stretch for hundred of kilometres, often linking villages

and even provinces. This meant that the Viet Cong could move forces and equipment unseen and protected.

To combat this problem the US military tried flooding the tunnels, or using gas to kill or flush out those within. Yet the sheer size of the tunnels and the use of simple, but highly effective water traps, meant that these attempts met with little success.

The tunnels were spread over several levels, with each level sealed by a watertight trap door. There were U-bends in tunnels on the same level and these would often be filled with water, preventing gas from spreading.

The Americans even tried sending dogs down into the tunnels, but they were quickly killed by the numerous traps lining the tight passageways.

It was decided that the only way to clear the tunnels was by sending in specialised soldiers to clear the tunnels of enemy, gather intelligence, and blow the tunnels up one by one.

Infantrymen, primarily from Australia, New Zealand and America, volunteered for the job and became known as 'tunnel rats'. Their motto was the Latin phrase "*Non Gratus Rodentum*" - "not worth a rat".

The men had to be small and thin to stand any chance of making their way through the tight passageways.

Whenever troops discovered a tunnel entrance the area would first be checked for booby traps before a tunnel rat was sent in.

Armed with only a pistol, a bayonet and a flashlight, the tunnel rat would be lowered into the tunnel.

Many of them chose not to arm themselves with the standard issue .45 caliber pistol. Due to the confined space, they disliked the intense muzzle blast of the .45, which would often leave them temporarily deaf. The preferred pistols were 9x19 mm calibre, often with an improvised suppressor.

The tunnels were filled with dangers. Defending soldiers often manned holes on the sides of the tunnels through which spears could be thrust, impaling a crawling intruder.

There were dangerous creatures such as snakes, rats, spiders, scorpions and ants. Venomous snakes were placed inside a hollow bamboo tube that was attached to a tripwire. When tripped, the snake would fall onto the intruder.

Often the tunnel rats would operate in the dark so that they light of their torch did not give them away.

It was a job filled with stress as every centimetre of a tunnel could prove deadly. They would

strain their senses, listening for the slightest sound such as a man breathing or try to smell the sweat of a person close by.

Clearing a section of tunnel and setting up the explosives could take anywhere from a few minutes to several hours.

Many of the tunnel rats in Vietnam did not survive the war.

Later, similar teams were used by the Soviet Army during the Soviet war in Afghanistan, and the Israel Defense Forces.

Afghanistan has an extensive series of historic tunnels used for transporting water, the *kariz*, and during the 1979–1989 Soviet war in Afghanistan, such tunnels were used by Mujahideen fighters. The Soviet 40th Army had their own tunnel rats, who were tasked with flushing people out of the tunnels, then going through the tunnels to disarm booby traps and kill those who remained.

A similar Israeli team called SAMOOR (“Weasel”) is part of the *Yahalom* elite combat engineering unit.

World War I pilot

World War I was the first war where aircraft were used in combat. While many pilots would go on to survive the war, casualties among pilots were still very high.

There were numerous factors that contributed to the high attrition rate of pilots.

First of all, early aircraft were beset with technical problems. Engines would stall in a steep climb or tight turn. In a steep dive the wings could tear off. Machine guns would often jam during combat. There was no radio communication between

planes or to the ground.

Pilots would often have as little as ten hours flying time before being sent into combat. Some of them found it difficult enough to manage straight and level flight, let alone the twists and turns of a dogfight.

Many pilots, on both sides, were killed in aircraft accidents. In fact the life expectancy of a pilot during World War I was a mere 11 days.

One of the greatest dangers they faced was that of their aircraft catching fire. Most of the planes were made from wood and canvas and would often catch fire when hit.

While parachutes were available (they were issued to balloon observers) they were not issued to pilots.

If a pilot’s aircraft caught on fire they had three options. First of all they could ‘bail out’ of the burning aircraft and fall to their death. Secondly, they could remain with the aircraft and burn to death.

Or thirdly, as most pilots would carry a pistol with them, he would shoot himself in the head. Most opted for the last choice.

Ball turret gunner

From early 1943 until the end of World War II, the skies over Germany were not the safest place to be.

The US Army Air Forces and the Royal Air Force Bomber Command began the strategic bombing campaign of German cities. This was also known as area bombardment.

According to a British Air Staff paper, “The ultimate aim of an attack on a town area is to

break the morale of the population which occupies it. To ensure this, we must achieve two things: first, we must make the town physically uninhabitable and, secondly, we must make the people conscious of constant personal danger. The immediate aim, is therefore, twofold, namely, to produce destruction and fear of death.”

The US Army Air Force carried out daylight raids over Germany, while the RAF bombed at night.

Besides facing heavy anti-aircraft fire, bomber crews also faced the danger of German Luftwaffe fighters. And many of these bombing missions were carried out without fighter escort.

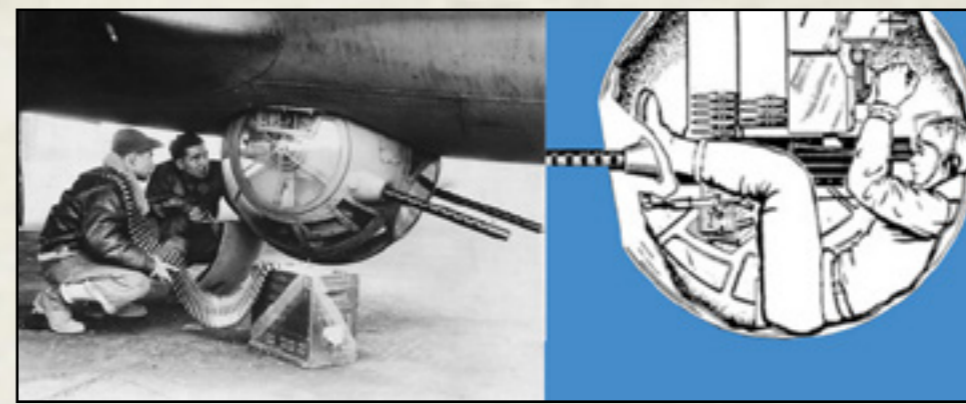
It was only in 1944 that the introduction of the Lockheed P-38 Lightning, Republic P-47 Thunderbolt and the North American P-51 Mustang allowed Allied fighters to escort bombers all the way to their target.

Even bomber crews that managed to bail out after being shot down over Germany were not safe. There was the very real danger that, upon parachuting to the ground, they could be seized by angry German civilians and lynched from the nearest lamp-post.

German civilians referred to the bombers crews as *terrorflieger* (terror flyers).

The bombers used by the US Army Air Force were the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress and the Consolidated B-24 Liberator.

The B-17 was armed with 13 12.7 mm M2 Browning machine guns, while the B-24 had 10. One thing they both had in common was a Sperry ball tur-



CRAMPED CONDITIONS: Space inside the Sperry ball Turret was limited.

ret in the belly of the aircraft.

The Sperry ball turret was very small in order to reduce drag, and was typically operated by the smallest man of the crew. To enter the turret, the turret was moved until the guns were pointed straight down. The gunner placed his feet in the heel rests and occupied his cramped station.

He would put on a safety strap and close and lock the turret door. There was no room inside for a parachute, which was left in the cabin above the turret.

A common tactic of the German fighters was to come up under the bomber and take out the belly gunner first.

It was not uncommon for the turret door to jam shut in a damaged bomber, leaving the belly gunner unable to bail out.

Tail gunner

During the strategic bombing campaign against Germany, being a tail gunner in a Vickers Wellington bomber or a Avro Lancaster bomber was not the most desirable job.

The RAF carried out their bombing missions at night. The tail gunner would spend many hours a night flying backwards in cramped, freezing and solitary conditions.

The life expectancy of a rear gunner, also known as ‘tail-end Charlie’, was desperately short; estimates vary but suggest that they could expect to be shot down, or killed, within two weeks, or up to five operations. According to Yorkshire Air Museum, 20,000 rear gunners lost their lives during World War II.

The primary role of the tail gunner was to defend his aircraft from enemy fighter attack from the rear, and to warn the pilot when to take evasive manoeuvres.

This meant flying in this confined, see-through turret, enveloped by the pitch-black sky and constantly revolving the turret to scan the eerie darkness for a shadow that could be an attacking night fighter.

German night fighter favoured the tactic of attack a British bomber from behind, and the tail gunner was usually their first target.

Flamethrower operator

The idea of setting your enemy on fire is nothing new and man has done his best to turn flame into a weapon for thousands of years.

From as early as the first century ‘Greek Fire’ was deployed in a flamethrower-type weapon

on board naval ships in order to give the Byzantines a combat advantage.

In 900 AD the Chinese developed a piston-type flamethrower that used a substance similar to gasoline.

The modern flamethrower as we know it was first put to deadly use during the First and Second World Wars.

Able to produce a long stream of accurate flame, the weapon seemed an ideal solution to break the stalemate of trench warfare.

It could incinerate enemy soldiers sheltering in bunkers or trenches, or cause them to flee for their lives. The problem was that they could be gunned down before they were close enough to use the flamethrower.

During World War II the flamethrower was used to assault heavily defended enemy positions such as bunkers and pillboxes were the enemy sheltering inside could be burnt to death or flushed out by the intense flames.

Yet the flamethrower operators didn’t have things all their own way. There were a variety of deadly risks of using flamethrowers in combat.

The equipment was heavy and made moving around a combat zone slower and therefore more dangerous.

The flamethrower also had a very short burn time and would use up fuel very quickly. If you missed your target you would now be faced by an enemy who would probably not be amused that you just tried to set him on fire.

The weapon was also very visible, making its operator a

prime target for enemy fire, especially from snipers. Even if the bullet missed you, it could puncture the flamethrower tank, causing you and nearby soldiers to be engulfed in flames.

Another major problem was that the range of the flamethrower was far less than that of a rifle. In order to be used effectively, the operator would have to get close to their target. This gave the enemy time to pick them off.

It could also have a heavy psychological effect on the operator. The sight of men on fire, screaming in pain. The constant stream of charred bodies and the smell of burnt flesh, and knowing that you were the cause, could have a strong psychological effect on the operator.

That, combined with the constant danger, would often be enough to tip even a balanced individual over the edge.

At Iwo Jima flamethrower operators suffered a massive 92% casualty rate with the average life expectancy to be just four minutes.

U-boat crewman

During World War I and World War II the Germans made excellent use of their U-boats (submarines).

In fact during World War II they came close to turning the entire tide of the war by denying Britain vital supplies during the Battle of the Atlantic.

To counter the threat of the U-boats, merchant ships began travelling in armed convoys.

An Escort Group consisted of several small warships organized and trained to operate together providing protection for



SAFE THIS TIME: A U-boat crew poses for the camera after returning from a patrol. Yet 75% of U-boat crew would not survive the war.

trade convoys.

Escort groups were a World War II tactical innovation in anti-submarine warfare by the Royal Navy to combat the threat of the *Kriegsmarine's* "wolf-pack" tactics.

Early escort groups often contained destroyers, sloops, naval trawlers and, later, corvettes of differing specifications lacking the ability to manoeuvre together as a flotilla of similar warships, but rigorously trained in anti-submarine tactics to use teamwork emphasizing the unique sensors, weapons, speed and turning radius of each ship.

The development of these 'escort groups' proved an effective means of defending shipping convoys through the Battle of the Atlantic.

The advancement of ASDIC, known as SONAR by the Americans, meant that escorts could detect submarines under water.

The men that commanded

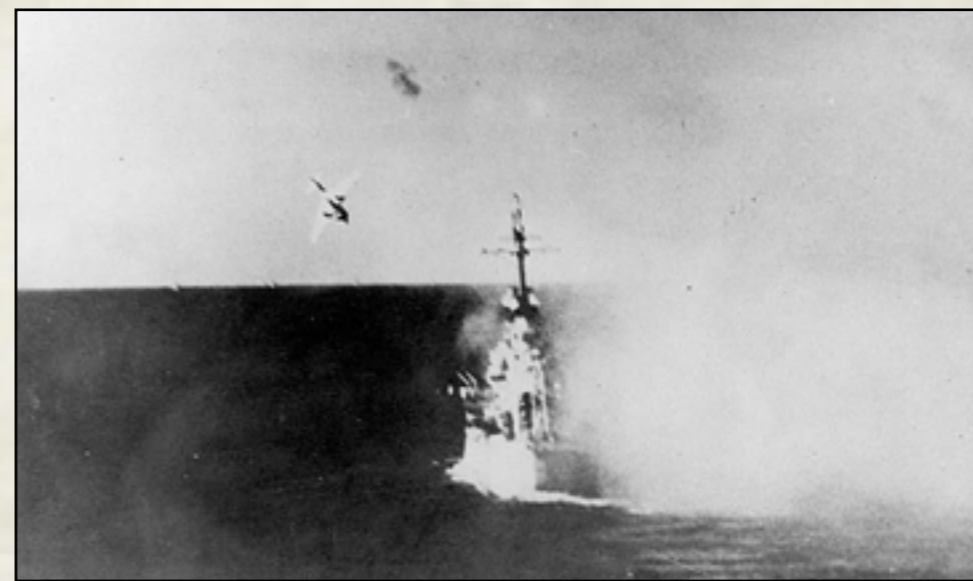
and crewed U-boats were volunteers and the selection process was rigorous. They were a breed apart and wore their uniform with pride.

Yet the conditions they had to work and live under were harsh. They would often be at sea for months at a time, living and working in cramped conditions.

Fresh rations were consumed very quickly and for the remainder of the trip they would eat canned food. They could not shower and often were unable to wash clothes due to the limited amount of fresh water on board.

While they travelled on the surface as much as possible, when they were forced to dive the air would become stale very quickly.

The day was divided up into three eight-hour shifts. One shift was for sleeping, one for normal duties, and one for miscellaneous tasks. It was a routine that could quickly become



BANZAI: A Japanese Kamikaze dives towards a US Navy ship, aiming to crash his aircraft into it.

monotonous.

Yet these conditions were nothing compared to coming under attack.

If they were detected by an escort ship they could expect to come under depth charge attack.

A depth charge attack could go on for hours until either the U-boat managed to escape, or they were sunk or forced to the surface.

If a depth charge exploded close enough to the U-boat it could damage the hull. The water pressure would then cause the hull to implode. Death would be quick as those inside were crushed.

The ballast tanks could also be damaged, forcing the U-boat to surface, where they would be at the mercy of the guns of the escort ships.

If the dive controls were damaged it could also cause the U-boat to sink to the bottom. If the water was deep enough the U-boat's hull would be crushed. If, however, the water was not deep enough to crush the hull, the U-boat could lie on the seabed, unable to surface.

Eventually they would run out of breathable air and the crew would die a slow death.

Statistics show that U-boat crew suffered a 75% casualty rate during World War II. In other words, three out of four of them did not survive the war.

SOE/OSS Operative

Early during World War II the British had been forced out of Europe. It was vital that they establish some sort of a presence, especially in France.

To this end the British established the Special Operations Executive (SOE). These men and women would be given training and then sent into occupied Europe, and sometimes even Germany.

Their tasks could include anything from spying on the enemy and gathering intelligence, to recruiting and training local resistance groups. They would also carry out acts of sabotage.

The work was both demanding and dangerous. The slightest slip-up could result in capture and execution.

If, for example, you were op-

erating in France, it would not be enough to be merely able to speak French. You would have to be fluent and it would have to sound as if French was your first language.

Most of your identity documents, travel permits, and so on would be forgeries. If they were not up to date and spot on, you could easily be caught out.

Your cover story as to who you were and what you were doing there had to be perfect and stand up to any scrutiny. You would also have to know if there were any curfews enforced in the area and any local regulations.

You needed to know the lay of the land and who the local contacts were.

Unfortunately most operatives dropped into occupied Europe were quickly captured by the ruthless but highly efficient German Gestapo.

Operatives captured were often tortured in the most horrific ways, interrogated, and usually executed. Because they were not wearing a uniform they were not entitled to be treated as prisoners of war, but as spies.

When the Americans entered the war they formed the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and they worked closely with the SOE.

The SOE would later go on to become Britain's MI6 and the OSS would become the CIA.

Kamikaze pilot

This was one of those jobs where your survival rate was rated at around about zero percent. Not exactly a great recruitment slogan. Yet most Kamikaze pi-

lots were volunteers.

Towards the end of World War II, things were not going well for the Japanese. The Americans were closing in and were about to launch an invasion of Okinawa, one of the homeland islands.

In desperation, the Japanese Imperial Army came up with a solution - Kamikaze (Divine Wind) attacks.

What this meant was that a pilot would climb into his plane, fly out over the American fleet, put his plane into a steep dive, and deliberately crash it into a ship.

The planes were often loaded with explosives to make them more effective.

While these attacks were not always that successful (pilots would often miss the ships due to a lack of flight training) they did shock the Americans. In fact the Americans gave them the nickname of "Baka Bombs". Baka is the Japanese term for idiot.

Penal Battalion

For as long as there have been wars, criminals and undesirable elements have been viewed as useful but disposable cannon fodder.

They were viewed as ideal for dangerous or suicidal missions or tasks that were beneath regular soldiers.

Arranged into penal battalions, they faced a short life of misery and suffering, followed by an almost certain death on the front lines.

The Romans used penal legions and Napoleon used penal battalions. But it was during the Second World War that penal

battalions were used extensively by both the German and Soviet armies.

Prior to the war the Germans had used soldiers that were considered disruptive to general morale but were otherwise worthy of service in specialised penal units.

However with the war turning against them all sorts of prisoners, convicted soldiers and even hardened criminals were conscripted into the ranks in a desperate bid to stave off defeat.

Used to carry out the most dangerous and back breaking tasks, the doomed men were kept in line by officers and military police units along with the promise that should they serve with bravery they might be allowed to return to regular army units.

In reality they had little choice in the matter, for refusal to carry out the often suicidal missions would result in summary execution for the original sentence. For those men on death row this would mean a bullet to the back of the head or an appointment with the hangman's noose.

Once the condemned men arrived at their designated units they would be given the most dangerous tasks which could involve clearing minefields, attacking heavily defended positions to soften up the enemy for the real soldiers waiting behind them, or used as cannon fodder to defend a specific location where they would sacrifice their lives, allowing regular army units they time needed to retreat.

Among the penal battalions these missions were often known as "*Reise in den Him-*

mel" (Journey to Heaven) missions.

One of the most infamous penal units was the 36th Grenadier Division of the Waffen SS. The unit was originally made up of convicted poachers and their skill was used to hunt and kill partisans on the Eastern Front.

Yet the unit grew and its ranks were swelled by some of Germany's worst criminals and most insane men. The unit soon gained a reputation for extreme brutality towards civilians.

The unit fell under the command of SS-Oberführer Oskar Direlwanger, a man with whom few could compete in cruelty. He was a convicted child molester and described as a psychopathic killer and an expert in extermination and a devotee of sadism and necrophilia.

The Soviets used about 430,000 men in penal battalions.

They were considered expendable and in an effort to install discipline and stop them from retreating in battle, Stalin issued the infamous Order 227 in July 1942. It was also known as the "Not one step back" order. No unit was allowed to retreat and anyone that did could face immediate execution or transfer to a penal battalion.

The NKVD Secret Police that commanded the battalions considered them cannon fodder. The units would be sent to where the fighting was the thickest. They were kept under armed guard. When they went into action they were followed by troops known as 'Barrier guards'. They would set up machine guns and mow down anyone trying to retreat.

SA training ship hosts Zimbabwe Sea Cadets

By Lt Cdr Glenn von Zeil, SA Naval Reserves

Six Sea Cadets accompanied by an officer from TS Matabele, located in Bulawayo Zimbabwe, visited TS Tiburon in Durban to experience the Indian Ocean and enjoy joint exercises.

After checking in both teams visited the beach where the visitors, who had never seen the sea, played in the waves and experienced the power of the sea. This reminded their hosts that they often took their location and facilities for granted.

The camp followed ship's routine with Colours and Sunset, cleaning stations, daily inspections, periods of instruction and physical activity. Seamanship and rope work were enhanced and practical applications tested.

PO (SAN) Easton Terblanche with assistance from AB (SCC) Albert Gouws provided sailing instruction on Mirror and Halcatt dinghies. As these skills and resultant fun were realised, the visiting Zimbabwean Sea Cadets enthusiastically committed to restore their boat back home.

Lt (SCC) Bernard Murambiwa, TS Matabele, provided an excellent lecture in radio communication resulting in the hosts eager to start creating a division in the Unit focussing on this skill.

PO (SAN) Graham Smith lectured on the South African Navy and the maritime world. He also shared information on

correct parade and precision drill procedures. This instruction improved the quality of the Sea Cadets drill and parade capacities.

SLt (SCC) Denise Gouws managed the galley and trained all the Sea Cadets in culinary skills. By the end of the camp all Sea Cadets were proficient in laying out a dinner table, preparing 6 main meals from scratch for medium sized groups, this included calculating ingredients, and sharing how to utilise a galley as a source income.

All the Sea Cadets participated in team sports including soccer and volleyball at the end of a day's training. This provided

further opportunities for the two Units to interact and firm friendships were established.

The visiting Zimbabwean Sea Cadets were treated to a tour of the Durban Maritime Museum and experience more of ship-board life over time. This opportunity resulted in many questions which were answered by the staff.

The TS Tiburon staff can be proud of the opportunity created for both South African and Zimbabwean youth by hosting this event. Perhaps this will become an annual event to cement relationships between the two Units and countries.



Left to Right: PO (SCC) Patience Ngozo (Zimbabwe), Lt (SCC) Bernard Murambiwa (Zimbabwe), Sea Cadet Sakhumizi Mlawuzi (Zimbabwe), Sea Cadet Mbogeni Sibanda (Zimbabwe), Sea Cadet Christabel Sibanda (Zimbabwe), Sea Cadet Sheethel Zhou (Zimbabwe), Sea Cadet Wakhile Hadebe (Zimbabwe), Sea Cadet S Ndlovu (South Africa), Sea Cadet A Parus (South Africa), Sea Cadet T Willemse (South Africa), AB A Gouws (South Africa) PO (SAN) Graham Smith (South Africa).

When age means little

In South Africa, 16 June is celebrated as Youth Day. In this article we look at four notable military accomplishments by youngsters.

They say we're young and we don't know, we won't find out until we grow, or so said Cher in the hit song *I've Got You Babe*, which she sang with her late husband Sony Bono.

Let's face it, age sometimes does count against a person. In South Africa, for example, you can't legally vote, drive a car, or have a drink until you're 18. In fact you're not considered an adult until you turn 21.

But just because someone is young doesn't mean that they are incapable of doing great things. Just take a look at the list on the opposite page to get some idea of what I'm talking about.

Both Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder had number one hit records at the age of just 13. Our own Karen Muir broke a world record at the age of 12. And David was just 14 when he put Goliath down for the count.

Yet while these are great achievements and worthy of articles on their own, this magazine is more interested in military matters and, therefore, military achievements.

First of all, let's take a look at the United States' highest award for bravery, the Medal of Honor.

Medal of Honor (MOH)

Contrary to popular belief, the official title of the highest U.S. military distinction is simply the Medal of Honor, not the Congressional Medal of Honor.



Army Medal of Honor, Navy Medal of Honor, Air Force Medal of Honor.

The confusion may have arisen because the president presents the award "in the name of Congress."

The origin of the Medal of Honor dates back to 1861 and the early days of the Civil War. At the time, the Army and Navy had no formal decorations for heroism. It was hoped that a medal would encourage and reward bravery among the Union soldiers and sailors fighting the Confederates.

There are three different versions of the Medal of Honor: one for the Army, one for the Navy, and one for the Air Force.

A separate Coast Guard version has also been authorized, but it has yet to actually be awarded to anyone. In the meantime, personnel from the Coast Guard and Marine Corps receive the Navy version of the prestigious decoration.

A total of 3,492 different people have been awarded the Medal of Honor. Only 19 men have been awarded the honour twice. More than half of all Medals of Honor have been awarded post-

humously.

On 11 November 1865, President Andrew Johnson presented Mary Edwards Walker, a medical doctor who served as a volunteer with the Union Army, the Medal of Honor. This made her the first and only woman ever to be awarded the medal.

Only one US president has ever been awarded the Medal of Honor, and that was Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt.

Willie Johnston

The youngest recipient of the Medal of Honor was William H. Johnston.

In July 1862, at the age of 11 years and 11 months, he was a drummer boy in Company D of the 3rd Vermont Infantry during the Seven Days Retreat in the Peninsula Campaign in the US Civil War.

He was the only drummer in his division to come away with his instrument during a general rout. His superiors considered this a meritorious feat, when fellow soldiers had thrown away their guns.

Never too young

- Age 5 - Michael Jackson joins the Jackson 5, has his first hit single at the age of 11, and his first solo hit at the age of 13.
- Age 5 - Tori Amos is admitted to the famous Peabody Institute at the John Hopkins University. She is expelled at the age of 11.
- Age 10 - Tatum O'Neal wins a Best Supporting Actress Oscar.
- Age 11 - Stevie Wonder is signed by Motown Records. He has his first hit single at the age of 13.
- Age 12 - South African swimmer Karen Muir breaks the world record for the 110 yard backstroke.
- Age 13 - John wrote the first draft of the Gospel of John, one of the greatest written works of all time.
- Age 14 - David slays Goliath.
- Age 14 - Bobby Fischer became a Chess Grandmaster.
- Age 14 - Gymnast Nadia Comaneci becomes the first person to score a perfect 10 at the 1976 Olympic Games. She does it seven times.
- Age 19 - The average age of a soldier during the Vietnam War.
- Age 19 - Steve Jobs begins work on the personal computer.
- Age 19 - Bill Gates co-founds Microsoft.

During the retreat many men threw away all their equipment so they would have less weight to carry. Johnston, however, retained his drum and brought it safely to Harrison's Landing.

There, he had the honour of drumming for the division parade on 4 July, he being the only drummer to bring his instrument off the battlefields.

Neither General Smith, the division commander, nor General Brooks, the brigade commander, made any note of Willie's feat in their after-action reports.

President Lincoln arrived by gunboat and was present for the parade of the entire Army of the Potomac conducted on 8 July. It is suggested that Lincoln heard the story and wrote to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, suggesting the youth be given a medal, but no evidence exists.

In any case Stanton approved the award and Willie Johnston was presented his Medal of Honor on 16 September 1863, at the age of 13, for a deed performed when he was but 11 years and 11 months of age. This was the second Medal of Honor ever awarded.

Victoria Cross (VC)

Awarded for gallantry "in the presence of the enemy" to members of the British Armed forces, the Victoria Cross is the United Kingdom's highest award for bravery.

The Victoria Cross was introduced on 29 January 1856 by Queen Victoria to honour acts of bravery during the Crimean War. Since then the medal has been awarded 1,358 times to 1,355 individual recipients. Only three people have won the



medal twice.

Only 15 medals, 11 to members of the British Army, and four to the Australian Army, have been awarded since the Second World War.

Since the first awards were presented by Queen Victoria in 1857, two thirds of all awards have been personally presented by the British monarch. These investitures are usually held at Buckingham Palace.

The traditional explanation of the source of the metal from which the medals are struck is that it derives from Russian cannon captured at the Siege of Sevastopol.

Research has established that the metal for most of the medals made since December 1914 came from two Chinese cannons that were captured from the Russians in 1855.

Royal Navy officer Charles Lucas was the first recipient of the Victoria Cross, in recognition of an extraordinary act of bravery that took place two years before the medal existed. On 21 June 1854, Lucas was serving on the Hecla in the Baltic when a live shell landed on the deck. While every other sailor threw themselves to the floor for cover, Lucas ran forward, picked up the shell and hurled it into the water before the fuse burnt out.

No one on the Hecla was killed due to his courageous deed.

The Victoria Cross is inscribed with the words, 'For Valour'. The medal was originally going to read 'For the Brave' until Queen Victoria suggested it be changed - as it implied that not every soldier was brave.

In the aftermath of the Battle of Rorke's Drift in 1879, during the Anglo-Zulu War, 11 soldiers were deemed worthy of the Victoria Cross. Seven of these recipients were men of the 2nd/24th Foot, which is the most VCs awarded to a single regiment for one action.

The most VCs awarded in a single day was 16, awarded at the Battle of Inkerman on 5 November 1854. The most for a single campaign was 28 during the Second Relief of Lucknow from 14 to 22 November 1857.

The youngest person to be awarded a Victoria Cross is shared by Andrew Fitzgibbon and Thomas Flinn. Both were aged 15 years and three months when they were awarded the medal.

Andrew Fitzgibbon VC

Andrew Fitzgibbon was an Irish soldier who served as a Hospital Apprentice in the Indian Medical Establishment, Indian Army, attached to the 67th Regiment (later The Royal Hampshire Regiment) during the Third China War.

His citation for the Victoria Cross reads as follows:

On 21 August 1860 at the capture of the Northern of the Taku Forts, China, Hospital Apprentice Fitzgibbon accompanied a wing of the 67th Regiment when it took up a position with-

in 500 yards of the fort. He then proceeded, under heavy fire, to attend a dhoolie-bearer, whose wound he had been directed to bind up, and while the regiment was advancing under the enemy's fire, he ran across the open ground to attend to another wounded man. In doing so he was himself severely wounded.

Thomas Flinn VC

Thomas Flinn was another Irish recipient of the Victoria Cross.

At the age of 15 he became a drummer in the 64th Regiment of Foot (later The North Staffordshire Regiment - The Prince of Wales's), British Army during the Indian Mutiny.

He was awarded the Victoria Cross for a deed that took place at Cawnpore in India. His citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry, in the charge on the Enemy's guns on the 28th November, 1857, when, being himself wounded, he engaged in a hand to hand encounter two of the Rebel Artillerymen.

He was later discharged with a very bad character reference, having been entered in the defaulter-book 47 times, and tried by Court Martial 15 times.

Flinn was awarded a pension of £10 a year for his valorous conduct. Unfortunately he had a serious drinking problem and he would drink out his annuity as soon as he received it.

He fell on hard times and was sent to Athlone Workhouse.

Youngest US general

I'm not sure how many of you have heard of Galusha Pennypacker. He was a Union general

during the American Civil War.

What makes him unique is that he remains the only general too young to vote for the president who appointed him.

He was just 16 years old when he enlisted as a quartermaster sergeant in the 9th Pennsylvania Infantry from West Chester, Pennsylvania.

In August 1861, he helped recruit a company of men for the 97th Pennsylvania Infantry, and was appointed as their Captain, and was promoted to major the following October.

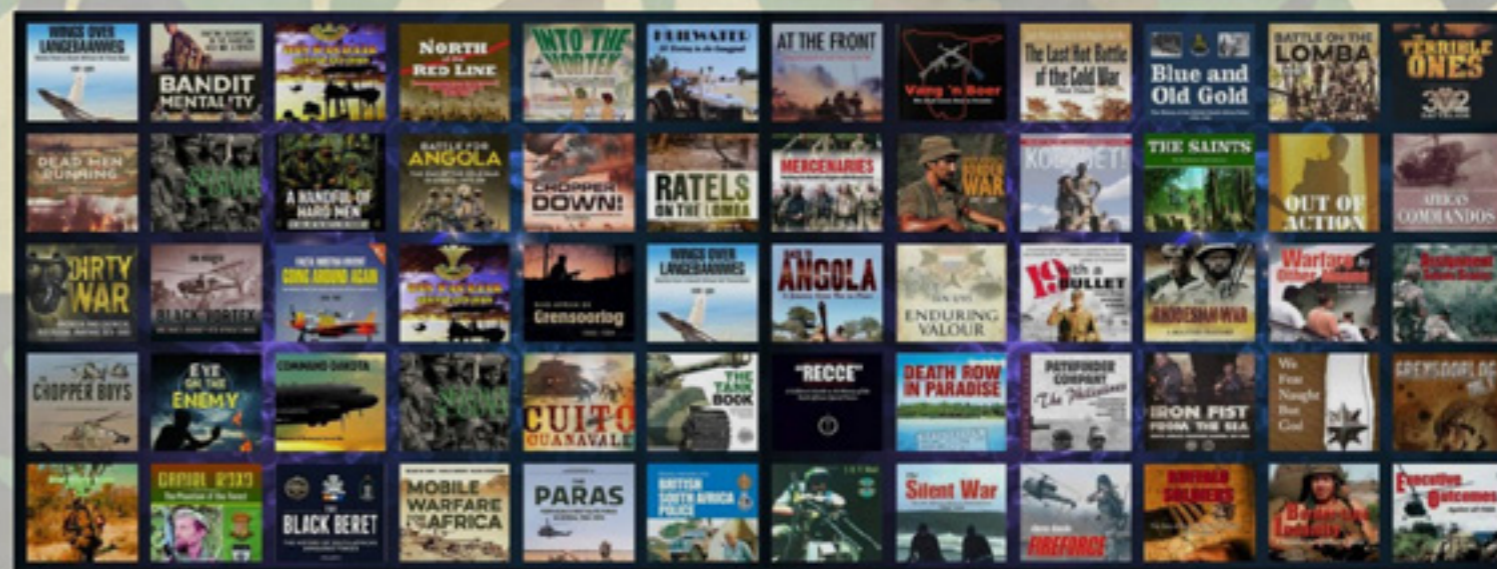
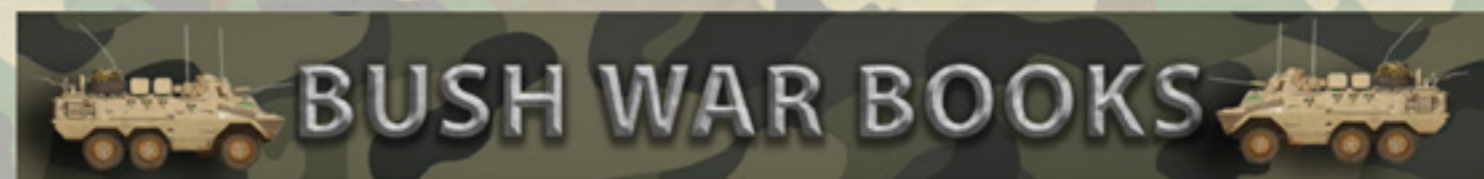
After the Battle of Cold Harbor and during the siege of Petersburg, he was appointed Colonel of his regiment, 15 August 1864. He assumed command of the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Division, X Corps of the Army of the James. He led his brigade into action at the Battle of New Market Heights and was wounded near Fort Gilmer.

At the Second Battle of Fort Fisher, 15 January 1865, he was severely wounded and the wound was considered fatal.

His commander, General Terry, promised the young officer that he would receive a brevet promotion for his conduct that day.

He received a brevet promotion to brigadier general dated 15 January 1865. He survived his wounds and on 28 April 1865, he received a full promotion to brigadier general of volunteers at age 20 (backdated to 18 February), making him the youngest officer to hold the rank of general to this day in the United States Army.

Pennypacker was much later awarded the Medal of Honor,



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

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

A matter of survival - survival pouch

Over the next few months we will be running a series of articles looking at survival, something that has always been important for those in the military. This month we look at how to put together a survival pouch and choosing a survival knife.

In our first article on survival we looked at putting together a survival tin. This month we're going to look at putting together a survival pouch.

If you're travelling in a car, boat or light aircraft, don't stow all your kit separately. Rather pack a survival pouch, something that you grab in a hurry and can attach to your belt.

Obviously you can pack far more stuff into a survival pouch than you can into your survival tin.

A set of dixies (mess tins) is ideal to carry because nearly everything can be packed inside them.

Remember to periodically check the contents of your survival pouch and replace any items that have been used or have expired.

These are the items recommended for your survival pouch.

1. Pouch

Make sure that your pouch is large enough to hold a set of mess tins.

It's also a good idea to find a pouch that is waterproof and one that can fasten securely.

Ensure that the tunnel loop is strong enough to hold the pouch to your belt. If it breaks you stand the chance of losing all of your kit.

2. Esbit stove and fuel

The Esbit stove is a handy

item to have in your pouch. It folds up to save space. It unfolds to form an adjustable pot stand.

Use Esbit solid fuel tablets when a wood fire is inconvenient. They are also very useful as firelighters and will burn for a considerable time.

Make sure that you keep your fuel tablets dry.

3. Mess tins

The good old SADF issue dixies are perfect for this. They can be used for heating water or as pots for cooking.

It will also protect any kit packed inside them.

4. Torch

Besides providing light, a torch is excellent for signalling at night.

You want something that is small enough to fit into your survival pouch, but not something that is flimsy.

I personally use an XML-T6 torch which you can buy from Verimark for about R180.

It takes three AAA batteries, is made from aluminum, has a zoomable lens, and a 1,000 lumens brightness.

It can also be used as a strobe light and will also flash out an SOS signal.

5. Pencil flares and launcher

Signal flares are the best way of attracting attention, especially in open country.

Carry red and green flares if

possible. Just remember that they are explosive, so pack carefully.

It can be difficult to obtain them (because they are classified as explosives) and often you will need to have a boat skippers licence to purchase them.

Use them with great care and don't waste them.

6. Marker panel

A strip or bar of fluorescent (Dayglo) material is used to attract attention in an emergency.

They are very visible from the air and a single panel is used to indicate that you need immediate evacuation.

They can be used to stop the other items in your mess tin from rattling around.

7. Matches

Take as many matches as you can in a waterproof container. You can never have enough.

8. Tea bags

There's nothing like a good cup of something hot to restore morale.

Personally, I enjoy coffee over tea any day of the week. Yet tea quenches the thirst while coffee aggravates it.

So in a survival situation tea is going to be better than coffee as a hot beverage.

9. Salt tablets

Salt is a must and salt tablets are a compact way to carry it.



Even better is an electrolyte power which contains vitamins, salt and other minerals that the body requires.

10. Sugar

Besides giving you energy, a cup of sweet tea is helpful in a survival situation because it can help a person with shock.

11. Stock cubes

Beef stock cubes are nourishing and sustaining. They can be used to make a gravy to go along with meat that you are preparing.

You can also dissolve a cube in boiling water for a rich, nourishing beverage.

12. Dark chocolate

Chocolate is a good food, but it does not keep very well. Check it regularly and replace when necessary.

13. Fat

When living off the land, fat is the hardest food to come by. Tubes of butter, lard or ghee will provide extra calories and earn a place in your survival pouch.

14. Condensed milk

Can be mixed with water to make milk or squeeze some into your tea for a good energy boost.

15. Survival bag

A heat-insulated bag of reflective material, also known as a Space Blanket, will keep you warm and dry.

You can even get some that act as a sleeping bag.



Choosing a knife

Choosing the right survival knife is very much a matter of choice.

A knife is an invaluable asset in a survival situation, so you will need one that can handle most situations.

Your knife should be kept in a sheath that is attached to your belt, and separate from your survival pouch.

When you are walking through rough terrain, get into the habit of regularly checking that your knife is still there.

A folding knife can be valuable, as long as it has a good locking position. The last thing you want is for your knife to close on your fingers while you are using it.

A straight blade is preferred for a survival knife. One with a serrated edge on one side can be

used for a variety of tasks from chopping wood to sawing bone, and from skinning animals to preparing vegetables.

When selecting a knife, make sure that the blade and the tang are made from one solid piece of steel (Figure a). The handle is then attached to the tang.

Avoid getting yourself a so-called 'survival knife' (Figure b) with a hollow handle. These contain items such as a few matches, a plaster, some fishing line and a fishing hook that is stored in the hollow handle. They will also normally have a compass set into the top of the handle.

While these may seem useful, the hollow handle means that the tang of the blade does not extend the entire length. When you try and chop something with it, the handle will normally snap off very quickly.

Remember to keep your blade sharp and ready for use. Keep it clean and if you don't intend using it for a while, keep it lightly oiled and in its sheath.

Never misuse your knife. Don't throw it into trees or into the ground.

And that's about it for this month. In the next article we will take a look at the steps you need to take when faced with a survival situation, as well as the basic needs.




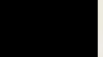






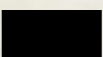
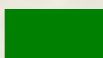

Rank Structure - WWII Soviet Union

Over the next few months we will be running a series of articles looking at the rank structure of various armed forces. This month we look at the Russian Military in World War II

The military ranks of the Soviet Union were those introduced after the October Revolution of 1917. At that time the Imperial Russian Table of Ranks was abolished, as were the privileges of the pre-Soviet Russian nobility.

Personal ranks were reintroduced in 1935, and general officer ranks were restored in May 1940.

The ranks were based on those of the Russian Empire, although they underwent some modifications. Modified Imperial-style rank insignia were reintroduced in 1943.

Colour	Corps or Service
 	Infantry, mechanized or motorised infantry
 	Cavalry
 	Artillery, armoured troops
 	Air force, airborne, air technical services
 	Technical services
 	Medical and veterinary services

The first colour was that of the shoulder board, while the second colour was that of the edges.

Red Army

Non-commissioned Officers (NCO) and Warrant Officer



Efreitor
(Corporal)



Junior Sergeant



Sergeant



Senior Sergeant



Starshina
(Sergeant Major)

Officers



Junior
Lieutenant



Lieutenant



Senior
Lieutenant



Captain



Major



Lieutenant Colonel



Colonel



Major General



Lieutenant General



Colonel General



General of the Army



Marshal of the Soviet Union

Soviet Air Force

Non-commissioned Officers (NCO) and Warrant Officer



Efreitor (Corporal)



Junior Sergeant



Sergeant



Senior Sergeant



Starshina (Sergeant Major)

Officers



Junior Lieutenant



Lieutenant



Senior Lieutenant



Captain



Major



Lieutenant Colonel



Colonel



Major General



Lieutenant General



Colonel General



General of the Air Force

Soviet Navy

Non-commissioned Officers (NCO) and Warrant Officer



Senior Matrose



Starshina, 2nd class



Starshina, 1st class



Chief Starshina



Chief Ship Starshina



Junior Lieutenant



Lieutenant



Senior Lieutenant



Captain Lieutenant



Captain, 3rd rank



Captain, 2nd rank



Captain, 1st rank



Counter Admiral



Vice Admiral



Admiral



Admiral of the Fleet



The rank of Generalissimus of the Soviet Union was created for Joseph Stalin on 27 June 1945. He refused to accept it.

The one and only

Sub Lieutenant Masego Mosupye is not just the first female chemical engineer in the South African Navy, she is the only one.

Sub Lieutenant Masego Mosupye is a 27 year old Tswana lady from Mafikeng in the North West province. She joined the SA Navy in December 2012 as a Reserve force student, whilst

studying at the University of Cape Town.

The work she did at the Naval Engineering Section motivated her to want to do more work for South African Navy once she was qualified. She then did her Basic Military Training at Saldanha Bay for six months in 2014, as well as wrote her final exam at UCT and then graduated in December 2014 with a BSc in Chemical Engineering.

S/Lt Mosupye went further into her Naval career by completing the nine month Military Training for Officers Part 1 course in December 2015. She then returned to the NES to assume post as a Chemical Engineer dealing with corrosion on the Naval vessels.

During her time at UCT, S/Lt Mosupye was elected into the Woolsack residence's executive committee and had the opportunity participate in a leadership training day at TS Woltemade, a sea cadet base where she volunteered as an instructor, teaching the first aid and engineering classes. From 2013 to 2017, she did rope work, boat work, parade work, basic first aid and basic engineering tasks with the cadets.

S/Lt Mosupye says that she loves working with the youth and helping out communities in need. This is evident in her membership to the Non-profit organisation called Bagaetsho, of which she is the general secretary. Bagaetsho NPO focuses on education, health, sports,

youth and children in disadvantaged communities in the North West province. She is also in the Bagaetsho Science Centre Project committee, which is in the process of developing a Science Centre at Mosikare Secondary School in Mantsa village in the North West.

S/Lt Mosupye has four younger siblings, three brothers and a sister who she says are her motivation. She says that she wants to set an example for them and encourage them to strive for the best at all times. She says that working with the youngsters at TS Woltemade taught her that one can use their situation to their advantage and that youngsters are always searching for role models who they can look up to and emulate.

In her own words: "The future South African youth is very, there is so much potential in our country and I plan to stay involved in youth development initiatives until we can make a visible difference." She also said that she loves the work she does at the NES and hopes that more chemical engineers will join her. She hopes to progress in her naval career and help keep the ships safe at sea.

S/Lt Mosupye says that she loves military parades and has participated in numerous, including the armed forces parades, medal and women commemoration parades. She says that she is fascinated by the level of discipline and com-

mitment that members put into parades and by the pride with which they march in their uniform.

The SA Navy has various sporting codes, one of which is the Defence Yacht Club (DYC). S/Lt Mosupye is an active member of the club and has participated in various regattas, including long distance ones such as the West Coast Offshore and the Mykonos Offshore regattas. She says that she loves being on the water and gets a sense of adventure every time she goes sailing.

S/Lt Mosupye's message to the youth is that there are no limits to one's imagination, that to make things happen you have to actually go out there, talk to people and make them see your vision. She says that the peo-



LEADER: S/Lt Mosupye as Parade Commander during a Prize giving parade at TS Woltemade.

PHOTO: Reggie Lord

ple who change the world are the ones who interact with everyone and tell their story. She wishes that more support can go into youth development activi-

ties in order to build up strong and confident youngsters who become great men and women of society. "Motho ke motho, ka batho ba bangwe".

A few famous female warriors

Women have been part of the military throughout history. Very often they have been used in combat roles.

Here are just a few women that made their mark in history.

Boudicca

She was a Queen of the people of Norfolk who lead an uprising against the occupying Roman Empire.

Her husband had left his kingdom jointly to his daughters and the Roman Emperor when he died, but the Romans did not acknowledge the joint rule. They simply claimed the whole lot.

Her army had great success in their battles – and in fact com-

pletely demolished the city of Camulodunum (Colchester).

Joan of Arc

At the age of just 17, Joan appeared before the Crown Prince of France and claimed that God had told her to lead the fight for the French to take back their country from the English.

He sent her to the siege of Orléans and she was able to lift the siege, which had been going on for a year, in just nine days.

She is the only person ever recorded to have commanded the entire army of a nation at the age of seventeen.

Anne Mae Hays

She was a US Army nurse who joined up in 1942 and saw

action during World War II.

She would later go on to see action in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

On 11 June 1970 she made history by becoming the first woman in the US military to be promoted to brigadier general.

Lyudmila Pavlichenko

Known as Lady Death, she was a sniper in the Red Army during World War II.

She is regarded as one of the top military snipers of all time, and the most successful female sniper in history.

She was one of 2,00 female snipers in the Red Army, of which only about 500 would survive the war. She was credited with 309 kills.

Miracle of the skies

A mid-air collision over Tunis left an American B-17 bomber almost torn in half. Yet by some miracle it completed its bombing mission and returned home to its base.

In 1943 a mid-air collision on February 1, 1943, between a B-17 Flying Fortress and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area, Became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of WW II.

An enemy single-engine Messerschmitt Bf 109G fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control, probably with a wounded pilot, then continued its crashing descent into the rear of the fuselage of a B-17 Flying Fortress named "All American", Piloted by Lt. Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron.

When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17. The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress and left elevator were completely torn away.

The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak. The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged, the fuselage had been cut almost completely through Connected only at two small parts of the frame, and the radios, electrical and oxygen systems were damaged.

There was also a hole in the top that was over five metres long and 1,2 metres wide at its widest; the split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner's turret.

Although the tail actually bounced and swayed in the wind And twisted when the

plane turned and all the control cables were severed, Except one single elevator cable still worked, and the aircraft miraculously still flew!

The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane. The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart.

While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the target.

When the bomb bay doors were opened, the wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and haul him back into the forward part of

the plane.

When they tried to do the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off. The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.

The turn back toward England had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off. They actually covered almost 113 kilometres to make the turn home. The bomber was so badly damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky. For a brief time, two more Me-109 German fighters attacked the All American.

Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters.

The two waist gunners stood up with their heads sticking out through the hole in the top of the fuselage to aim and fire



LUCKY TO BE ALIVE: A closer view of the extensive damage caused by the mid-air collision.



HOW IS IT STILL FLYING? The B-17 bomber, *All American*, limps back towards its base at Biskra Airfield, Algeria.. This photograph was taken by an escorting P-51 fighter.

their machine guns. The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the plane to turn.

Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the All American as it crossed over the water and took one of the pictures shown. They also radioed to the base describing that the appendage was waving like a fish tail and that the plane would not make it and to send out boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out.

The fighters stayed with the Fortress, taking hand signals from Lt. Bragg and relaying them to the base. Lt. Bragg signalled that five parachutes and the spare had been "used" So five of the crew could not bail out. He made the decision that if they could not bail out safely, then he would stay with the plane to land it.

Two and a half hours after

being hit, the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still over 64 kilometres away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear.

When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waved off because not a single member of the crew had been injured.

No one could believe that the aircraft could still fly in such a condition. The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited through the door in the fuselage and the tail gunner had climbed down a ladder, at which time the entire rear section of the aircraft collapsed.

This old bird had done its job and brought the entire crew home uninjured.

Boeing B-17F-5-BO Flying Fortress All American III Crew List

Pilot

Ken Bragg Jr.

Co-pilot

G Boyd Jr.

Navigator

Harry C. Nuessle

Bombardier

Ralph Burbridge

Engineer

Joe C. James

Radio Operator

Paul A. Galloway

Ball Turret Gunner

Elton Conda

Waist Gunner

Michael Zuk

Tail Gunner

Sam T. Sarpolus

Ground Crew Chief

Hank Hyland

Centenary of the Two-Minute Silence

On Monday 14 May 2018, the Noon Day Gun in Cape Town fired not once, but twice. And there was a very special reason for this. Article and photographs by Regine Lord.

On Monday, 14 May 2018, the Noon Gun of Cape Town fired not just once, but twice, with a brief pause between the two thunderous booms.

The reason for this unusual occurrence was that a special tradition was being commemorated that day: the Centenary of the Two-Minute Silence, which was first introduced right here in Cape Town on 14 May 1918.

In 1918, news of the terrible battles being fought on the Western Front in France, and of the many soldiers killed and wounded, had been reaching their families in Cape Town. When lists of casualties were read out during church services, parishioners were asked to participate in brief moments of silence in honour of the fallen.

Cape Town Mayor Sir Harry Hands was grief-stricken on receiving the news of the death of his eldest son, Captain Reginald Harry Myburgh Hands. After days of continued fighting and being repeatedly exposed to mustard gas, Captain Hands had died during a poison-gas bombardment on 20 April 1918, while off-duty and seemingly safe behind Allied lines.

After a special City Council meeting, at which those present

expressed their sympathy to the Mayor and his wife, one of the councillors, Mr Robert Rutherford Brydone, approached the Mayor in his office at the City Hall. On hearing the boom of the Noon Gun, and the Westminster Chimes coming from the clock tower, they stood up, united in their grief, to observe the traditional Angelus pause that was common practice in the Anglican Church they both attended.

Councillor Brydone then suggested that the observance of a brief period of silence be introduced in the city centre, in remembrance of all those who had fallen in World War I. Mayor Hands was taken by this idea, and after some discussion, it was implemented.

The daily public ritual was synchronised with the firing of the Noon Gun on Signal Hill, to remember the

fallen and acknowledge their ultimate sacrifice, and to give thanks for those who had returned alive, wounded and carrying the scars of the terrible fighting they had endured.

Thus, on 14 May 1918, as soon as the Noon Gun was fired, all residents of Cape Town stopped what they were doing, traffic and trams came to a halt, and all stood in silent prayer, heads bowed, thinking of their loved ones who had given their lives and those who were still fighting on the battlefields of WW1. A bugler on a balcony of the Fletcher and Cartwright building on the corner of Adderley and Darling Streets, played the Last Post and then the Reveille to signal the end of the silence.

In Cape Town, this midday pause continued daily until 17 January 1919; it was revived once more during the Second World War.

A year after the signing of the Armistice had ended the Great War on 11 November 1918, an annual Armistice Day service was being introduced by then King George V. It was to be held throughout the UK and the Commonwealth at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month every year, marking the time and day on which WW1 – ostensibly the War to end all Wars – finally ended.

South African author and



MOTH CREEDO: Dave Revell, Provincial Old Bill of the Cape Western Dugout, recites the MOTH Creed.

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



MC: Commander Leon Steyn of the South African Naval Museum in Simon's Town was the Master of Ceremonies for the day.



WAITING FOR NOON: Lion Battery, on Signal Hill, is where the Noon Day Gun is situated. It was also the scene for the Centenary Celebration of the Two-Minute Silence.

political figure Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, who had personally experienced the impact of the two-minute silence in Cape Town in 1918, wrote to King George V, suggesting that it be adopted for the Armistice Day service. The King was so taken by this proposal, that he immediately approved it and gave instructions for its adoption throughout the British Empire.

And thus, this simple yet profoundly stirring ritual spread throughout the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and beyond.

The special commemoration ceremony at the Noon Gun on 14 May 2018 brought together the SA Navy, the City of Cape Town, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sports, the MOTHs of the Western Cape and other key stakeholders.

Commander Leon Steyn of the SA Naval Museum, acting as the Master of Ceremonies, welcomed the invited guests, explained the historic significance of the event and introduced the various speakers.



RECALLING HISTORY: Councillor Dave Bryant addressing the gathering.

Navy Chaplain Smith said a prayer and spoke a few words that lent solemnity and gravity to the occasion.

Councillor Dave Bryant said that the Noon Gun had become an integral part of the history of the city, remarking that, when it was fired at 12h00 every day, many Capetonians could not help checking their watches, while the unexpected loud boom tended to startle visitors.

He added that, “We were not always aware of the sacrifice so many people made to help create the free and open society we have today.”

Before the new plaque to mark the occasion was unveiled by the Western Cape Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sports, Minister Anroux Marais, she declared:

“We raise awareness of our historical heritage and honour and remember those who have gone before us while shaping the world we live in today. Today, we pay respect to all those who lost their lives for a greater cause, regardless of culture or creed. ... Let us take this opportunity to be mindful of those who died in many conflicts and wars that have claimed a number of fellow South African lives. Let us reflect on their causes and legacies and how each one of us have and will continue to play an active role in the progress of Cape Town and its people.”

Dave Revell, Provincial Old Bill of the Cape Western Provincial Dugout, delivered the



THIS IS HOW IT'S DONE: Chief Petty Officer Dudley Malgas explains how the cannon is fired.

MOTH Credo and Prayer, as the MOTHs stood to attention, echoing the promise, “We will remember them.”

Thereafter, Chief Petty Officer Dudley Malgas took the microphone, and shared some of the history of the Noon Gun and his own experience of firing it every day for many years. There are in fact two guns, both of which are loaded, in case one fails. Designed by Captain Thomas Blomefield and cast by Walker and Co., London, these original 18-pounder smooth-bore muzzle-loading guns date back to 1794, making them 224 years old this year. They had arrived at the Cape of Good Hope in 1795, during the first British occupation. They weigh more than two tons each, and are loaded with 1.5 kg of black powder. They are the oldest working cannons in the world.

Originally located at the Imhoff Battery, on the seaward side of the Castle of Good Hope, the two large guns were temporarily moved to the Castle when the Imhoff Battery was demolished

in 1896 to make way for Strand Street and the railway line. A few years later, they were relocated to the newly constructed Lion Battery on Signal Hill on 4 August 1902, no doubt because they were so deafeningly loud.

The custom of firing the gun at noon actually only started in 1903, the year in which Standard Time was introduced in South Africa. The gun was originally fired as soon as the artilleryman on Signal Hill saw a signal

flare – and later the dropping of a time-ball – at the South African Astronomical Observatory at 12pm. As this manual method proved unreliable, the SA Navy apparently began to use the clock of the City Hall in Darling Street on the Grand Parade to trigger the firing. According to CPO Malgas, however, they soon realised that, while the Noon Gun was using the City Hall clock to determine the correct time, the City Hall clock was in turn using the Noon Gun to reset their clock!

Nowadays, the gun is fired remotely. The Astronomical Observatory (which has an extremely accurate atomic clock) sends an electrical signal down the wires a few milliseconds before noon, thus igniting the firing cap on the cannon and sparking the gunpowder. At the Centenary celebrations, though, the guns were fired manually. CPO Malgas demonstrated charging and loading the gun, inserting a small white bag of black powder into the barrel and pushing it down with a long



RAISING AWARENESS: Western Cape Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, Minister Anroux Marais.



CENTENARY: The new plaque to commemorate the centenary of the Two-Minute Silence.



FIRE: The Noon Day Gun fires, exactly 100 years after it was first fired to commemorate two minutes of silence during the Great War.

wooden ramrod.

As he took his place next to a nearby box housing the remote triggering mechanism, the sentries at the memorial stood ready to lower the SA national flag, and the MOTHs banners nearby were called to attention by Sgt Major Leon Robertson.

The Last Post was stirringly performed by young bugler Zubair Abader, smartly attired in his school's Marching Band uniform. He is a learner from the South African Colleges Schools (SACS), which is the oldest school in South Africa, having been founded in 1829. To this day, SACS continues the tradition of sounding the Last Post at the end of each school day, in front of the honours boards that list the names of past pupils who died on military service during the 20th century. As the last notes died away, the first gun fired a thunderous report, setting off car alarms nearby. Everyone, military and civilian alike, stood quietly and solemn-

ly, as the noise of the alarms died down and the clouds of smoke billowed and dissipated. All that could be heard was the flags and banners fluttering in the gentle breeze and the distant sound of traffic in the city below.

Suddenly, the second gun fired – BOOM! As the smoke drifted away into the blue sky, the Bugler began to play the Reveille, signalling the end of the two-minute silence.

The spectators' attention then shifted to the Cannon Association of South Africa, whose members had set up three quarter-pounder saluting guns on the hillside overlooking the harbour. Under the instruction of Master Gunner Martin Venter Snr, they fired a ten-gun salute, at precise one-minute intervals – each shot representing 10 years. These small yet surprisingly loud guns are locally cast replicas of original saluting guns, which would have been placed on the gunwales of ships, dating back to pre-1400.

The commemoration concluded with the playing of the SA National Anthem by the SA Navy Band, conducted by Bandmaster WO2 Llewellyn Arnold.

Among the guests at the commemoration service were: Mr Ken Hands, who is one of Mayor Harry Hands' great-grandsons, British Consul General Edward Roman, Gunner Kevin Ashton of the Gunners Association, Mr WP van Zyl of the Bishops Old Diocesan Union, and representatives of the City of Cape Town, of the SA Museum and the SA Naval Museum, as well as military veterans and visitors. Royal Navy Captain Matt Syrett and a group of fellow officers from the HMS Protector, the Royal Navy's ice patrol ship, which is currently in Cape Town harbour for maintenance after a long deployment in the South Atlantic, also attended the ceremony.

And a special visitor had travelled all the way from Bloemfontein to attend: Mrs Joan C. Abrahams, affectionately



SALUTE: Members of the Cannon Association of South Africa firing three quarter-pounder saluting guns.

known as "Tannie Mossie" (Ma Sparrow). A long-time supporter of the military, she has developed a very close bond with, in particular, the South African paratroopers.

Although the Two-Minute Silence is no longer a daily ritual, as it was for some time during World War I and World War II, it is still regularly used at military parades, annual commemoration services, and other public events, with a bugler first playing the Last Post and then signalling the end of the two-minute silence by playing the Reveille.

For Capetonians, the firing of the Noon Gun at 12h00, serves as a daily reminder of this hauntingly beautiful ceremony of giving thanks to those who survived the horrors of war and honouring those who had given their lives and never returned home to their families.

We will remember them.

P.S. I would like to thank Mrs Joan Abrahams (Tannie Mossie) for the information she pro-

vided in her draft manuscript, "The Silent Pause of Remembrance". In it, she clears up the confusion around the origins of the silent pause. Most online sources suggest that the Councillor Robert Rutherford Brydon (without an 'e') had lost his son Major Walter Brydon in World War I, and that this prompted him to propose the introduction of the Two-Minute Silence of Remembrance. The Councillor's surname was in

fact spelt with an 'e' – Brydone, and his son's name was Robert Gilray Brydone; he served as a medic and survived World War I. Maj Walter Brydon (who was not the Councillor's son), was a South African, whose parents were Jenny Hay Brydon of London and the late William Walter Brydon of Belfast. Maj Walter Brydon served as gunner on the Western Front, in both the 71st and the 73rd Siege Batteries, until he was appointed as the Commanding Officer of the 73rd Siege Battery South African Heavy Artillery. He was wounded three times and then gassed, before being killed in action on 12 April 1918. Coincidentally, both Captain Reginald Hands and Major Nugent Fitzpatrick (the son of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick) served in 'Brydon's Battery' when they were killed. No doubt adding to the confusion of Brydon/Brydone is the fact that the plaque, which was unveiled at the Noon Gun in 2008, spells the Councillor's name as 'Brydon'.



TANNIE MOSSIE: Mrs J.C. Abrahams (Tannie Mossie) with paratroopers Jim Harwood and Pat Loftus.

Bombers of World War II

This month we look at some of the iconic bombers of World War II.

Bombers played a vital role during World War II. They could strike at targets deep in enemy territory.

Bombers fell into three broad categories - light, medium and heavy.

Single-engined bombers, such as dive bombers, could be used as mobile artillery platforms, delivering pinpoint strikes at enemy targets. They

often worked in close support of ground forces.

Single and twin-engined torpedo bombers, many of which could launch from aircraft carriers, were used against ships.

Heavy bombers were used against military, industrial, and even civilian populations.

Strategic bombing during World War II was the sustained aerial attack on railways, har-

bours, cities, workers' housing, and industrial districts in enemy territory.

The American Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber had a combat radius of more than 5,000 kilometres.

Bombers faced the threat of ground fire (anti-aircraft guns) and fighters.



British Bombers

Avro Lancaster



Avro Lancaster I

Crew: 7 (pilot, flight engineer, navigator, bomb aimer/nose gunner, wireless operator, mid-upper and rear gunners)

Length: 21.11 metres

Wingspan: 31.09 metres

Height: 6.25 metres

Empty weight: 16,738 kg

Loaded weight: 34,948 kg

Engine: 4 × Rolls-Royce Merlin XX liquid-

cooled V12 engines, 1,280 hp (954 kW) each

Performance

Maximum speed: 454 km/h at 29,000 kg and 4,000 m

Cruise speed: 322 km/h

Range: 4,073 km

Service ceiling: 6,500 m at 29,000 kg

Rate of climb: 3.7 m/s at 29,000 kg and 2,800 m altitude

The Avro Lancaster was a British four-engined strategic bomber that was used as the RAF's principal heavy bomber during the latter half of the Second World War.

The Lancaster possessed considerable strength and durability, which resulted in the Lancaster being capable of withstanding some levels of damage from attacks by hostile interceptor aircraft and ground-based anti-aircraft batteries.

Armament

Guns: Two 7.62 mm Browning Mark II machine guns in nose turret, two 7.62 mm Browning Mark II machine guns in upper turret, and four 7.62 mm Browning Mark II machine guns

in the rear turret.

Bombs: Maximum normal bomb load of 6,400 kg of bombs or single 10,000 kg Grand Slam (with modifications to bomb bay).

The Handley Page Halifax was a four-engined bomber that first went into service with the RAF in November 1939.

Various improved versions of the Halifax were introduced, which incorporated more powerful engines and a revised defensive turret layout and also made it capable of carrying increased payloads. It remained in service until the end of the war, performing a variety of duties in addition to bombing.

Handley Page Halifax



Handley Page Halifax

Crew: 7 (pilot, co-pilot/flight engineer, navigator, bomb aimer, radio operator/gunner, two gunners)

Length: 21.82 metres

Wingspan: 31.75 metres

Height: 6.32 metres

Empty weight: 17,178 kg

Loaded weight: 24,675 kg

Engine: 4 × Bristol Hercules XVI radial engine, 1,615 hp (1,205 kW) each

Performance

Maximum speed: 454 km/h at 4,115 m

Range: 3,000 km

Service ceiling: 7,315 m

Rate of climb: 3.8 m/s

Armament

Guns: 8 × 7.7 mm Browning machine guns, 1 × 7.7 mm Vickers K machine gun in nose

Bombs: 13,000 lb (5,897 kg) of bombs.

Vickers Wellington



The Vickers Wellington was a British twin-engined, long-range medium bomber.

The Wellington was used as a night bomber in the early years of the Second World War, performing as one of the principal bombers used by Bomber Command.

The Wellington continued to serve throughout the war in other duties, particularly as an anti-submarine aircraft.

Wellington Mark IC

Crew: Six
 Length: 19.69 metres
 Wingspan: 26.27 metres
 Height: 5.31 metres
 Empty weight: 8,435 kg
 Loaded weight: 12,955 kg
 Engine: 2 × Bristol Pegasus Mark XVIII radial engines, 1,050 hp (783 kW) each

Performance

Maximum speed: 378 km/h at 4,730 m
 Range: 4,106 km
 Service ceiling: 5,490 m
 Rate of climb: 5.7 m/s

Armament

Guns: 6–8 × .7.62 mm Browning machine guns
 Bombs: 2,041 kg.



German Bombers

The Stuka was easily recognisable by its inverted gull wings and fixed spatted undercarriage.

Upon the leading edges of its faired main gear legs were mounted the *Jericho-Trompete* (Jericho trumpet) wailing sirens.

The Stuka operated with considerable success in close air support and anti-shipping at the outbreak of the war, but was extremely vulnerable to fighter attack.

Junkers Ju 87 'Stuka'



Ju 87 B-2

Crew: Two
 Length: 11.00 metres
 Wingspan: 13.8 metres
 Height: 4.23 metres
 Empty weight: 3,205 kg
 Loaded weight: 4,320 kg
 Engine: 1 × Junkers Jumo 211D liquid-cooled inverted V12 engine, 1200 PS (1,184 hp (883 kW))

Performance

Maximum speed: 390 km/h
 Range: 500 km
 Service ceiling: 8,200 m
 Rate of climb: 2.3 m/s

Armament

Guns: 2 × 7.92 mm MG 17 machine gun for-

ward, 1 × 7.92 mm MG 15 machine gun to rear
 Bombs: Normal load = 1 × 250 kg bomb beneath the fuselage and 4 × 50 kg, two bombs underneath each wing.

Fact File

The Lucky Bastard Club was an informal grouping of World War Two European bomber crew members from the American Eighth Air Force who completed a tour of duty. They often received certificates, a fly-over through the base and an honorary dinner for the crew. Membership gave crews credit for the work they did in the air. They were treated with high respect by their fellow peers and military cohorts. Club members were allowed special spots in mess halls.

The Junkers Ju 88 was a German World War II Luftwaffe twin-engined multi-role combat aircraft.

Like a number of other Luftwaffe bombers, it served as a bomber, dive bomber, night fighter, torpedo bomber, reconnaissance aircraft, heavy fighter and at the end of the war, as a flying bomb.

More than 16,000 Ju 88s were built in dozens of variants

Junkers Ju 88



Ju 88 A-4

Crew: 4 (pilot, bombardier/front gunner, radio operator/rear gunner, navigator/ventral gunner)
 Length: 14.36 metres
 Wingspan: 20.08 metres
 Height: 5.07 metres
 Loaded weight: 8,550 kg
 Engine: 2 × Junkers Jumo 211J[69] liquid-cooled inverted V-12, 1,044 kW (1,420 PS, 1,401 hp) each

Performance

Maximum speed: 510 km/h at 5,300 m
 Range: 2,430 km
 Service ceiling: 9,000 m
 Rate of climb: 235 m/min

Armament

Guns: 4 × 7.92 mm MG 81J machine gun
 1 × 7.92 mm MG 81Z twin machine gun
 Bombs: Up to 1,400 kilograms of ordnance internally in two bomb bays.

Dornier Do 17



The Dornier Do 17, sometimes referred to as the *Fliegender Bleistift* ("flying pencil"), was a light German bomber.

Designed in the early 1930s, it was one of the three main Luftwaffe bomber types used in the first three years of the war.

Do 17 Z-2

Crew: 4
 Length: 15.8 m
 Wingspan: 18 m
 Height: 4.56 m
 Empty weight: 5,210 kg (11,486 lb)
 Max takeoff weight: 8,837 kg (19,482 lb)
 Powerplant: 2 × Bramo 323P 9-cyl. air-cooled radial piston engines with 1,000 PS (986 hp, 736 kW) for take-off

Performance

Maximum speed: 350 km/h
 Cruise speed: 300 km/h
 Range: 660 km
 Service ceiling: 8,200 m

Armament

Guns: 6 × 7.92 mm MG 15 machine guns
 Bombs: 1,000 kg of bombs carried internally.

Heinkel He 111



Perhaps the best-recognised German bomber due to the distinctive, extensively glazed “greenhouse” nose of later versions, the Heinkel He 111 was the most numerous Luftwaffe bomber during the early stages of World War II. The bomber fared well until the Battle of Britain, when its weak defensive armament was exposed.

Nevertheless, it proved capable of sustaining heavy damage and remaining airborne.

He 111 H-6

Crew: Six
Length: 19.69 metres
Wingspan: 26.27 metres
Height: 5.31 metres
Empty weight: 8,435 kg
Loaded weight: 12,955 kg
Powerplant: 2 × Jumo 211F-1 or 211F-2 liquid-cooled inverted V-12, 986 kW (1,300 hp (F-1) or 1,340 (F-2) each

Performance

Maximum speed: 440 km/h

Range: 2,300 km
Service ceiling: 6,500 m

Armament

Guns: up to 7 × 7.92 mm MG 15 or MG 81 machine guns
1 × 20 mm MG FF cannon
1 × 13 mm MG 131 machine gun
Bombs: 2,000 kilograms in the main internal bomb bay.
Up to 3,600 kilograms could be carried externally.

Pe-8/AM-35A

Crew: Eleven
Length: 23.2 m
Wingspan: 39.13 m
Height: 6.20 m
Empty weight: 18,571 kg
Loaded weight: 27,000 kg
Powerplant: 4 × Mikulin AM-35A liquid-cooled V12 engine, 999 kW (1,340 hp) each

The Tupolev TB-3 was a heavy bomber aircraft which was deployed by the Soviet Air Force in the 1930s and during World War II. It was the world’s first cantilever wing four-engine heavy bomber.

Despite obsolescence and being officially withdrawn from service in 1939, the TB-3 performed bomber and transport duties throughout much of World War II.

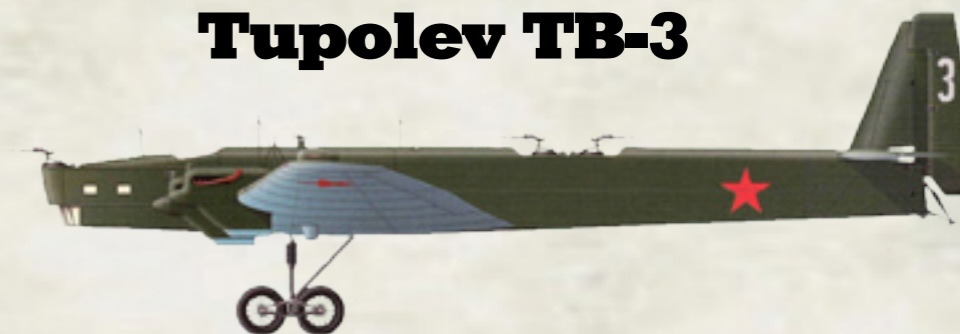
Performance

Maximum speed: 443 km/h
Range: 3,700 km
Service ceiling: 9,300 m
Rate of climb: 5.9 m/s

Armament

Guns: 2 x 20 mm ShVAK cannons
2 x 12.7 mm UBT machine guns
2 x 7.62 mm ShKAS machine guns
Bombs: Up to 5,000 kg

Tupolev TB-3



TB-3-4M-17F, 1934 model

Crew: Four
Length: 24.4 m
Wingspan: 41.80 m
Height: 8.50 m
Empty weight: 11,200 kg
Loaded weight: 17,200 kg
Powerplant: 4 × Mikulin M-17F V12 engine, 525 kW (705 hp) each

Performance

Maximum speed: 212 km/h at 3,000 metres
Range: 2,000 km
Service ceiling: 4800 m
Rate of climb: 1.25 m/s

Armament

Guns: 5 - 8 × 7.62×54 mm R DA machine guns
Bombs: Up to 2,000 kilograms of bombs



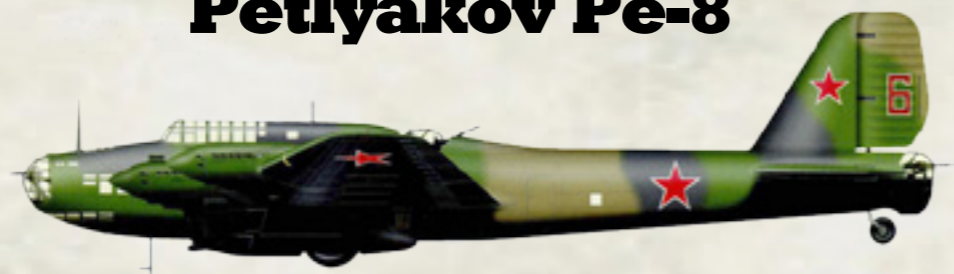
Soviet Bombers

The Petlyakov Pe-8 was a Soviet heavy bomber designed before World War II, and the only four-engine bomber the USSR built during the war.

Its primary mission was to attack German airfields, rail yards and other rear-area facilities at night.

Originally designated the TB-7, the aircraft was renamed the Pe-8 after its primary designer, Vladimir Petlyakov, died in a plane crash in 1942.

Petlyakov Pe-8



Fact File

During World War II, it was believed by many military strategists of air power that major victories could be won by attacking industrial and political infrastructure, rather than purely military targets.

International law at the outset of World War II did not specifically forbid aerial bombardment of cities

Fact File

Some forty thousand airmen died by the end of World War Two, or one in three crewmen. A World War Two bomber crew member’s life expectancy was fifteen missions. At the beginning of the war, twenty-five missions was considered a full tour of duty, but once pilots became more efficient and effective in air combat, the standard increased to thirty-five missions.

The life expectancy of a rear gunner, also known as ‘tail-end Charlie’, was desperately short; estimates vary but suggest that they could expect to be shot down, or killed, within two weeks, or up to five operations. According to Yorkshire Air Museum, 20,000 rear gunners lost their lives during World War II.



American Bombers

Consolidated B-24 Liberator



The B-24 heavy bomber was used extensively in World War II. It served in every branch of the American armed forces, as well as several Allied air forces and navies, and saw use in every theater of operations. Along with the B-17, the B-24 was the mainstay of the US strategic bombing campaign in the Western European theatre.

It holds records as the world's most produced bomber, heavy bomber, multi-engine aircraft, and American military aircraft in history.

B-24J

Crew: 11 (pilot, co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, radio operator, nose turret, top turret, 2 waist gunners, ball turret, tail gunner)
Length: 20.6 m
Wingspan: 33.5 m
Height: 5.5 m
Empty weight: 16,590 kg
Loaded weight: 25,000 kg
Powerplant: 4 × Pratt & Whitney R-1830-35 or -41 turbosupercharged radial engines, 1,200 hp (900 kW) each

Performance

Maximum speed: 488 km/h
Cruise speed: 346 km/h
Range: 3,300 km
Service ceiling: 8,500 m
Rate of climb: 5.2 m/s

Armament

Guns: 10 × 12.7 mm M2 Browning machine guns
Bombs: Short range 3,600 kg
Long range 2,300 kg
Very long range 1,200 kg

Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress



The B-17 was primarily employed by the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) in the daylight strategic bombing campaign of World War II against German industrial and military targets. The B-17 developed a reputation as an effective bomber, dropping more bombs than any other U.S. aircraft in World War II.

B-17G

Crew: 10: Pilot, co-pilot, navigator, bombardier/nose gunner, flight engineer/top turret gunner, radio operator, waist gunners (2), ball turret gunner, tail gunner
Length: 22.66 m
Wingspan: 31.62 m
Height: 5.82 m
Empty weight: 16,391 kg
Loaded weight: 24,500 kg
Powerplant: 4 × Wright R-1820-97 "Cyclone" turbosupercharged radial engines, 1,200 hp (895 kW) each

Performance

Maximum speed: 462 km/h
Cruise speed: 293 km/h
Range: 3,219 km with 2,700 kg bombload
Service ceiling: 10,850 m
Rate of climb: 4.6 m/s

Armament

Guns: 13 × 12.7 mm M2 Browning machine guns in 8 positions
Bombs: Short range missions 3,600 kg
Long range missions 2,000 kg
Overload: 7,800 kg

Boeing B-29 Superfortress

Designed for the high-altitude strategic bomber role, the B-29 also excelled in low-altitude night time incendiary bombing missions.

One of the B-29's final roles during World War II was carrying out the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



B-24J

Crew: 11 (Pilot, Co-pilot, Bombardier, Flight Engineer, Navigator, Radio Operator, Radar Observer, Right Gunner, Left Gunner, Central Fire Control, Tail Gunner)
Length: 30.18 m
Wingspan: 43.06 m
Height: 8.45 m
Empty weight: 33,800 kg
Loaded weight: 54,000 kg
Powerplant: 4 × Wright R-3350-23 Duplex-Cyclone turbosupercharged radial engines, 2,200 hp (1,640 kW) each

Performance

Maximum speed: 570 km/h
Cruise speed: 467 km/h
Range: 5,220 km
Service ceiling: 9,710 m
Rate of climb: 4.6 m/s

Armament

Guns:
8 or 10 × 12.7 mm Browning M2/ANs
2 × 12.7 mm and 1 × 20 mm M2 cannon in tail position
Bombs: 2,300 kg over 2,600 km
5,400 kg over 2,600 km
9,100 kg maximum over short distances at low altitude
Very long range 1,200 kg

Fact File

The first atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 by the Enola Gay, a B-29 Superfortress piloted by Paul Tibbets.

The second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on 9 August 1945 by a B-29 named Bock's Car and piloted by Charles Sweeney.

Edwin Swales

The South African pilot and Master Bomber who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and a posthumous Victoria Cross During World War II.

The Victoria Cross was awarded 182 times to 181 recipients for action in the Second World War.

A total of five South Africans were awarded the Victoria Cross during World War II. They were George Gristock, John Dering Nettleton, Gerard Norton, and Quentin Smythe.

The last South African to be awarded the Victoria Cross was Edwin Swales.

Edwin Essery Swales was born on 3 July 1915 at Inanda, Natal, in the Union of South Africa. He was one of four children. His parents, Harry and Olive, farmed in the Heatonville district.

Harry Swales died during the influenza epidemic of 1918-19 and Olive moved with the four children to the Berea in Durban.

Edwin attended Durban High School (DHS) where he took an active part in sports. He particularly enjoyed rugby and played for the DHS 2nd XV. The school exists to this day and is one of the oldest in the country.

He was also a member of the Boy Scout movement and he joined the 4th Durban Scout Troop.

After completing school he worked as a bank-

er for Barclays Bank (Dominion Colonial and Overseas - DCO) in Durban.

Before the war Swales joined the Natal Mounted Rifles (NMR) and rose to the rank of sergeant major (WO2).

During the early part of World War II the NMR saw action in North Africa. Swales personally saw action in Kenya, Abyssinia and North Africa.

He then decided that he want-

ed to swap boots on the ground for something different. On 17 January 1942 he transferred to the South African Air Force.

His initial flight training took place at Kimberley. While there he played rugby for the provincial team, Griquas. He was later selected as a reserve for the Natal rugby team, but was never capped.

Swales received his pilot's wings on 26 June 1943. On 22 August 1943 he was seconded to the Royal Air Force (RAF) whilst retaining his South African Air Force uniform and rank.

He received training on heavy bombers and in June 1944 he was posted to 582 Squadron at Little Staughton, in Huntingdonshire. This was an unusual posting.

No. 582 Squadron was part of No. 8 Pathfinder Group, an elite unit within the Air Force that would mark targets with flares to increase the accuracy of raids from the main bombing force.

It was normal for the Pathfinders to accept only experienced pilots who had completed a full tour on bombers. Although

Swales had never spent any time as a bomber pilot in a standard heavy bomber squadron, he went straight into the Squadron.

Swales' first operational flight with the Pathfinder Squadron was on 12 July 1944.

On 4 November 1944 he took part in a daring daylight bombing raid on the Gremberg railway yards at Cologne, Germany. Swales had recently been promoted to the rank of captain. Unlike the RAF, the South African Air Force used army ranks.

The leader of the raid was Swales' close friend Robert Palmer DFC. Palmer normally flew Mosquitos with 109 Squadron who were also based at Little Staughton.

Swales was the number two pathfinder, following Palmer as he marked the target. Palmer was an experienced pilot and had completed 110 bombing raids.

Palmer's Lancaster bomber was attacked by a German fighter and crashed. Six of the 30 aircraft that took part in the raid were lost.

For his part in the raid, Palmer was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. Swales was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

The citation for Swales DFC reads:

"This Officer was pilot and Captain of an aircraft detailed to attack Cologne in December, 1944. When approaching the target, intense anti-aircraft fire was encountered. Despite this, a good bombing attack was executed. Soon afterwards the aircraft was attacked by five enemy aircraft. In the ensuing fights, Capt. Swales manoeu-

vred with great skill. As a result his gunners were able to bring effective fire to bear upon the attackers, one of which is believed to have been shot down. Throughout this spirited action Captain Swales displayed exceptional coolness and captaincy, setting a very fine example. This Officer has completed very many sorties during which he has attacked a variety of enemy targets."

By 1945 Swales was now a Master Bomber and captain of Avro Lancaster III PB538. He had completed 42 operational flights.

On 23 February, the very same day as his DFC award was gazetted, he set off on his 43rd mission.

The target was Pforzheim in Germany. According to RAF Bomber Command the target was important for the production of precision instruments that were used in the German war effort.

Swales was the pathfinder leader of the group that consisted of 367 Lancaster bombers and 13 Mosquitos.

The marking of the target and bombing was done from only 2,400 metres, so it was very accurate. Some 1.825 tons of bombs were dropped in only 22 minutes. Tragically, 17,600 civilians were killed in the raid. Ten Lancasters were lost on the raid and another two crashed in France.

During the raid, Swales' Lancaster came under attack by a Messerschmitt Me110. One of the bomber's four engines was shattered and the fuel tank was riddled with bullets.

The rear turret gun had also

failed and the Lancaster was an easy target. This didn't seem to worry Swales and he resolutely continued to issue bomb aiming instructions to the main force of bombers.

The same German fighter attacked the Lancaster for a second time, knocking out a second engine. Although in serious danger, Swales stayed over enemy territory until he was happy the attack had been directed to the best of his ability.

Badly damaged and with its speed drastically reduced, Swales set off for home. With great skill and difficulty, Swales kept the heavy bomber in the air for another hour.

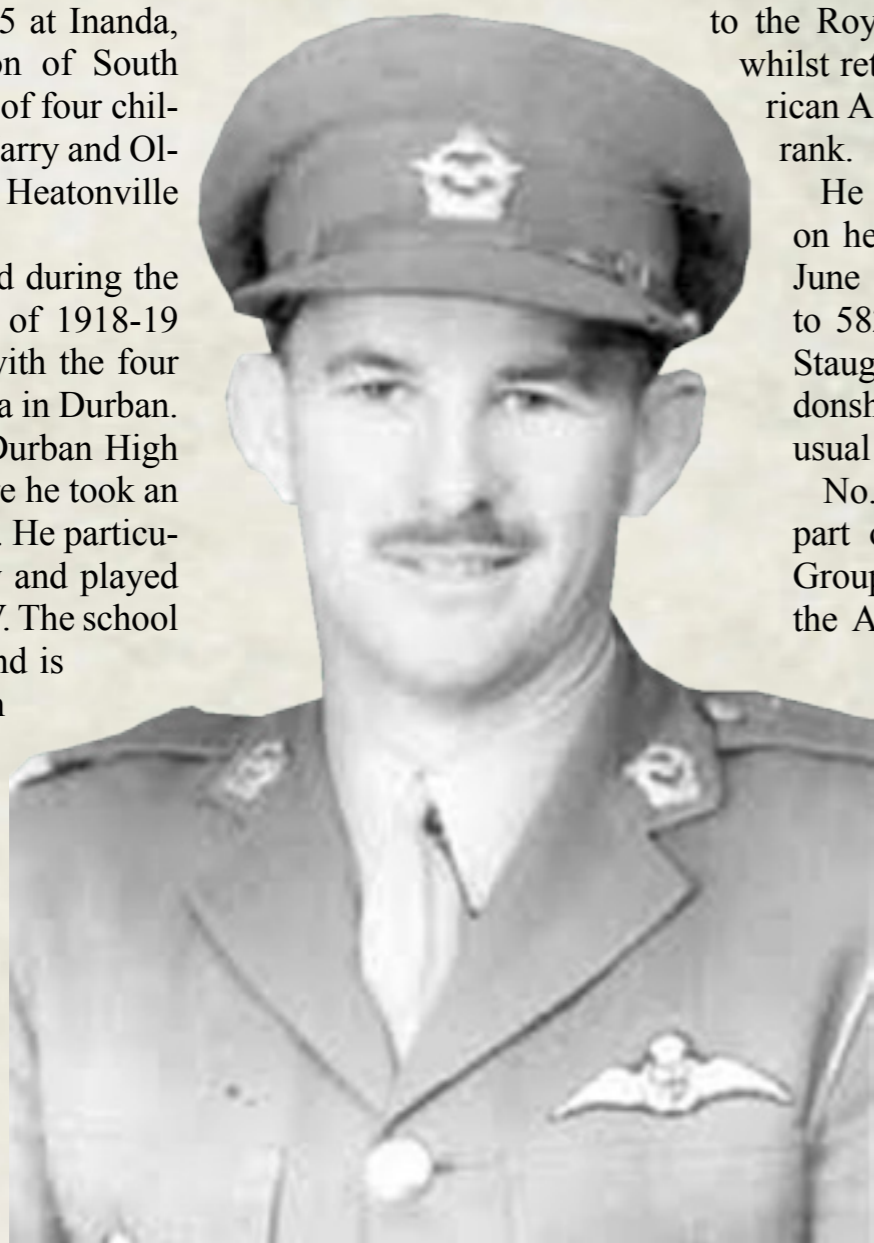
The conditions began to close in, but they were now over friendly territory in France. Because of this, Swales ordered the rest of his crew to bail out of the plane while the Master Bomber kept things level. It was an action that took great courage and skill but would be the demise of the brave man.

When the wreckage of the plane was discovered, Swales was dead at the controls. He had given his last moments on earth so that the rest of his crew could live. He was 29 years old.

For his actions Edwin Swales (now an acting major) was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross – the 3rd and last Pathfinder pilot to be so honoured. All had been posthumous.

The citation to his Victoria Cross reads:

"Captain Swales was 'Master Bomber' of a force of aircraft which attacked Pforzheim on the night of February 23, 1945. As Master Bomber he had the task of locating the target area



with precision and of giving aiming instructions to the main force of bombers in his wake.

Soon after he reached the target area he was engaged by an enemy aircraft and one of his engines was put out of action. His rear guns failed. His crippled aircraft was an easy prey for further attacks. Unperturbed, he carried on with his allotted task; clearly and precisely he issued aiming instructions to the main force. Meanwhile the enemy fighter closed the range and fired again. A second engine of Captain Swales' aircraft was put out of action. Almost defenceless, he stayed over the target area issuing his aiming instructions until he was satisfied that the attack had achieved its purpose.

It is now known that the attack was one of the most concentrated and successful of the war. Captain Swales did not, however, regard his mission as completed. His aircraft was damaged. Its speed had been so much reduced that it could only with difficulty be kept in the air. The blind-flying instruments were no longer working. Determined at all costs to prevent his aircraft and crew from falling into enemy hands, he set course for home. After an hour he flew into thin-layered cloud. He kept his course by skilful flying between the layers, but later heavy cloud and turbulent air conditions were met. The aircraft, by now over friendly territory, became more and more difficult to control; it was losing height steadily. Realising that the situation was desperate Captain Swales ordered his crew to bail out. Time was very short and it



HEAVY BOMBER: An Avro Lancaster heavy bomber, similar to the one which Edwin Swales flew.

required all his exertions to keep the aircraft steady while each of his crew moved in turn to the escape hatch and parachuted to safety. Hardly had the last crew-member jumped when the aircraft plunged to earth. Captain Swales was found dead at the controls. Intrepid in the attack, courageous in the face of danger, he did his duty to the last, giving his life that his comrades might live."

In the city of Durban, a branch of Barclay's Bank was named after him. The city of Durban also honoured him by naming a major arterial road 'Edwin Swales VC Drive'. In 2007 the eThekweni Municipality changed the name of the road to Solomon Mahlangu Drive.

Swales' full size war medals and some other possessions are held and displayed at the South African National Museum of Military History in Saxonwold, Johannesburg.

At his old school, Durban High School (founded in 1866), a school 'House' is named Swales House.

The original set of miniature medals belonging to Swales, and a silver model Lancaster Bomber, are now housed in an

exhibition honouring Swales at his old school.

Many years ago, the miniature medals and the model had been sold by a member of the Swales family. After changing hands a few times, the group came up for auction in London in July 2004, at which time the medals and model were sold to a UK collector.

A medal collector and DHS Old Boy tracked down the buyer and convinced him to sell his recent acquisitions to the School.

After four months of negotiations, the medals and model were delivered to their new home at DHS, where they were first displayed on Armistice Day, 11 November 2004.

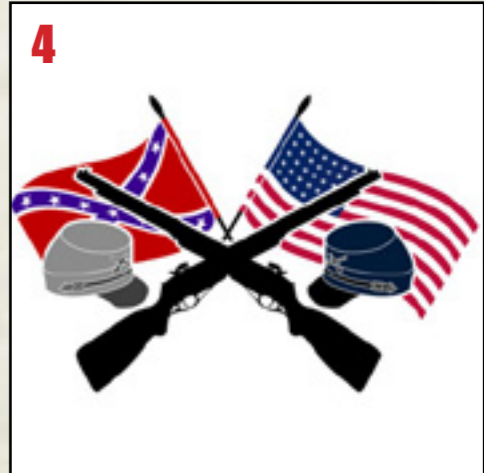
Awards and recognition

- The Victoria Cross
- The Distinguished Flying Cross
- The 1939–45 Star
- The Africa Star
- The France and Germany Star
- The Defence Medal, 1939–1945
- The 1939–1945 War Medal (Victory Medal)
- The Africa Service Medal

Who said that?

Some military figures have said some wise things about war. Others have made bold statements. So do you know who made the following statements? Answers on page 65.

1. "In war there is no second prize for the runner-up."
2. "We make war that we may live in peace."
3. "We sleep safely at night because rough men stand ready to visit violence on those who would harm us."
4. "It is well that war is so terrible, else we should grow too fond of it."
5. "My centre is giving way, my right is in retreat, situation excellent. I attack."
6. "In times of peace, prepare for war. In times of war, prepare for peace."
7. "In the absence of orders, go find something and kill it."
8. "I don't know what effect these men will have upon the enemy, but, by God, they terrify me."
9. "I fear all I have done is awakened a sleeping giant and filled him with a terrible resolve."
10. "Killing the enemy's courage is as vital as killing his troops."
11. "A bad peace is even worse than war."
12. "May God have mercy on my enemies, because I won't."
13. "The quality of the kite (aircraft) matters little. Success depends upon the man who sits in it."
14. "Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake."
15. "The military don't start wars. Politicians start wars."
16. "Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons."
17. "The difference between a republic and an empire is the loyalty of one's army."
18. "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."
19. "War is cruelty. There is no use trying to reform it. The crueler it is, the sooner it will be over."
20. "I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep; I am afraid of an army of sheep led by a lion."
21. "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes."
22. "It doesn't take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who goes into battle."
23. "Son, if the Marines thought you needed a wife, we would have issued you one."
24. "I hear a lot of crap about what a glorious thing it is to die for your country. It isn't glorious - it's stupid! You don't go into battle to die for your country. You go into battle to make the other bas-
25. "First, we are going to cut it off, and then we are going to kill it."



B-17 Flying Fortress

From its introduction in 1938, the B-17 Flying Fortress would go on to become the third most produced bomber of all time.

In 1934 the United States Army put out a tender for a new multi-engined bomber to replace the Martin B-10. The Air Corps had a number of requirements.

The aircraft would have to carry a “useful bombload” at an altitude of 3,048 metres with a top speed of at least 320 km/h. It should also have a range of around 3,200 km. This meant that it would have stay in the air for around 10 hours without refuelling.

Three companies would compete and the contract would be decided by a ‘fly-off’ at Wilbur Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio.

The aircraft selected were the Douglas DB-1, the Martin Model 146, and the Boeing B-17.

The prototype B-17, with the Boeing factory designation of Model 299, was designed by a team of engineers led by E. Gifford Emery and Edward Curtis Wells, and was built at Boeing’s own expense.

It combined features of the company’s experimental XB-15 bomber and 247 transport. The B-17’s armament consisted of five 7.62 mm machine guns, with a payload of up to 2,200 kg of bombs on two racks in the bomb bay behind the cockpit.

The aircraft was powered by four Pratt & Whitney R-1690 Hornet radial engines, each

producing 750 hp (600 kW) at 2,100 metres.

The B-17 went far beyond the requirements of the competition and was streets ahead of every other current airplane in the world.

It was the first all-metal bomber with an enclosed cockpit. It was capable of flying much higher and faster, and it could carry more bombs.

The procurement officers were sold and immediately decided after the first flight on 28 July 1935 that the Air Corps should buy sixty-five B-17s.

On seeing the bristling multiple machine guns during that first flight Richard Williams, a journalist from the *Seattle Times*, remarked, “Why, it’s a flying fortress!” Boeing liked the name and quickly copyrighted it. The B-17 now became known as the B-17 Flying Fortress.

Disaster strikes

On its second flight, the test pilots forgot to disengage the ‘gust lock’ before take off.

The gust lock locked control surfaces in place while the aircraft was parked on the ground. The plane went into a stall just after takeoff and crashed, killing everyone on board. Boeing and the B-17 Flying Fortress were immediately disqualified from the competition.

The Air Corps gave the contract to the Douglas Air Craft company for 133 of its twin engine B-18 Bolos. That should have been the end of the B-17.

Yet the Air Corps officers that had seen the B-17 Flying Fortress could not let it go. They were convinced that the B-17 was still the better plane.

The persuaded their friends in congress not to abandon the Boeing project and Generals Andrews and Westover managed to keep Boeing in the game with a limited contract to produce thirteen more B-17s.

It was hardly what Boeing had hoped for, but it kept the company afloat and in the game. Boeing’s engineers redesigned the B-17 Flying Fortress with even more powerful engines and added other improvements.

One of the positives taken from the crash of the B-17 was the introduction of a pre-flight check list. This is still used to this day by all pilots to prevent potential problems before take-off.

The 13 planes were delivered to Langley Field on 1 March 1937 and they quickly became the planes that every pilot wanted to fly.

When Douglas ran into manufacturing problems and its plane was stalled on the assembly line, the way was clear for Boeing.



BOMBER OF CHOICE: The B-17 Flying Fortress would become the predominant plane in the United States Army Air Corps with more than 12,000 being built.

From its initial humble order of 13 planes, more than 12,000 B-17s would be built by the end of World War II. It became the third-most produced bomber of all time, behind the B-24 and the multi-role Ju 88.

The B-17 goes to war

Strangely enough, it wasn’t the Americans that were the first to use the B-17 during World War II. It was rather the British Royal Air Force (RAF).

The RAF had entered the war with no heavy bombers in service. The largest they had were medium bombers such as the Vickers Wellington, which could carry up to 2,000 kg of bombs.

It was only in 1941 that the Short Stirling and Handley Page Halifax became its primary bombers. So in early 1940 the RAF entered into an agreement with the US Army Air Corps to acquire 20 B-17Cs, which were given the service name Fortress I.

They carried out their first operation against Wilhelmshaven on 8 July 1941, but it was unsuccessful. On 24 July they

attacked the German battleship *Scharnhorst*, anchored in Brest, and inflicted considerable damage on the vessel.

On 20 June 1941, less than six months before America entered World War II, the Air Corps was renamed the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF).

The 19th Bomber Group had been deployed to Clark Field in the Philippines a few weeks before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. This was the first of a planned heavy bomber buildup in the Pacific.

On 8 December 1941, the day after Pearl Harbour, half of the groups B-17s were wiped out when they were caught on the ground. They were busy refuelling and rearming for a planned attack on Japanese airfields in Formosa.

The remaining B-17s operated against the Japanese invasion force until they were withdrawn to Darwin, Australia.

In early 1942, the 7th Bombardment Group began arriving in Java with a mixed force of B-17s and LB-30/B-24s.

A squadron of B-17s from this force detached to the Mid-

dle East to join the First Provisional Bombardment Group, thus becoming the first American B-17 squadron to go to war against the Germans.

After the defeat in Java, the 19th withdrew to Australia where it continued in combat until it was sent back home.

In July 1942, the first USAAF B-17s were sent to England to join the Eighth Air Force. Later that year two groups moved to Algeria to join Twelfth Air Force for operations in North Africa.

The B-17s were primarily involved in the daylight precision strategic bombing campaign against German targets ranging from U-boat pens, docks, warehouses and airfields to industrial targets such as aircraft factories.

In the campaign against German aircraft forces in preparation for the invasion of France, B-17 and B-24 raids were directed against German aircraft production while their presence drew the *Luftwaffe* fighters into battle with Allied fighters.

Secret Weapon

At this time the Army Air Corps came into the possession of a device that, along with the B-17 Flying Fortress, would revolutionize bombing - the Norden bombsight. It would prove to be one of the great inventions and greatest secrets of World War II.

The U.S. did not even share the bombsight with the British for fear that it might fall into enemy hands. It was developed by an eccentric Dutch engineer, Carl Norden, who had emigrated to the U.S. in 1904. Norden

Equipment worn by 8th Air Force bomber crews on high-altitude missions 1944-45



developed the bombsight for the Air Corps while he worked for the Sperry Corporation.

A bomb does not fall in a straight line from a moving plane. It follows a parabolic trajectory as the various forces of physics—speed, gravity, and inertia—carry it on its long journey to the ground.

The bombsight computed all these factors to guide the bomb to its target. It used a series of gears, gyroscopes, and ball bearings that the bombardier would look through over a target. By inputting the speed and altitude, the bombsight could calculate the trajectory of a bomb.

The bombardier even controlled the flight of the plane through the site during the time over the target. The U.S. would eventually buy 90,000 bombsights from Norden at a cost of \$1.5 billion between 1933 and 1945.

Bomber defence

The B-17 dropped more bombs than any other US aircraft during World War II. Of

the 1.5 million tonnes of bombs dropped on Nazi Germany and its occupied territories by U.S. aircraft, 640,000 tonnes were dropped from B-17s.

Before the advent of long-range fighter escorts, B-17s had only their 12.7 mm calibre M2 Browning machine guns to rely on for defence during the bombing runs over Europe. As the war intensified, Boeing used feedback from aircrews to improve each new variant with increased armament and armour.

Defensive armament increased from four 12.7 mm machine guns and one 7.62 mm nose machine gun in the B-17C, to thirteen 12.7 mm machine guns in the B-17G. But because the bombers could not manoeuvre when attacked by fighters, and needed to be flown straight and level during their final bomb run, individual aircraft struggled to fend off a direct attack.

To address this problem, the United States developed the bomb-group formation, which evolved into the staggered combat box formation in which

all the B-17s could safely cover any others in their formation with their machine guns. This made a formation of bombers a dangerous target to engage by enemy fighters. German pilots nicknamed the B-17 *fliegendes Stachelschwein* (flying porcupine).

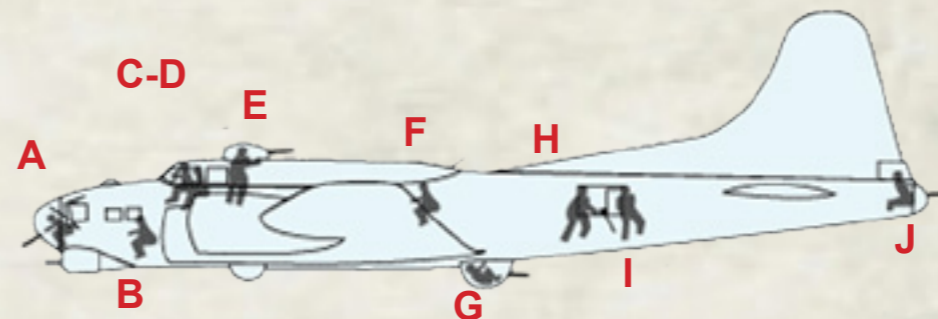
After examining wrecked B-17s and B-24s, Luftwaffe officers discovered that on average it took about 20 hits with 20 mm shells fired from the rear to bring them down. Pilots of average ability hit the bombers with only about two percent of the rounds they fired, so to obtain 20 hits, the average pilot had to fire one thousand 20 mm rounds at a bomber.

B-17 crew

Prior to 7 June 1944, a B-17 crew consisted of 10 men. There were four officers and six enlisted men.

Officers

- Pilot
- Co-pilot
- Navigator / Flexible Gunner
- Bombardier / Flexible Gun-



B-17 CREW: A - Bombardier, B - Navigator, C - Pilot, D - Co-pilot, E - Flight Engineer, F - Radio Operator, G - Ball Turret Gunner, H - Starboard Waist Gunner, I - Port Waist Gunner, J - Tail Turret Gunner.

ner, Chin Turret Gunner (B-17G)

Enlisted Men

- Flight Engineer / Top Turret Gunner
- Radio Operator / Flexible Gunner
- Ball Turret Gunner
- Port Waist Flexible Gunner
- Starboard Waist Flexible Gunner
- Tail Turret Gunner

From 7 June 1944 there were nine crewmen. One of the two Waist Gunners removed from crews. It was a gradual adjustment over about two weeks.

From 23 February 1945 there were eight crewmen. Remaining Waist Gunner removed from crews.

Pilot

Besides flying the aircraft, the pilot was also the aircraft commander. He would be responsible for discipline and training of his crew and was responsible for his crew and their actions, 24 hours a day.

Co-Pilot

The co-pilot was the second in command. On long flights he would often have to relieve the

pilot and take over the controls. In the event of the pilot being wounded or killed, the co-pilot would take over as commander.

Navigator

The responsibility of the navigator was to direct the flight from departure to destination and return. He had to know the exact position of the aircraft at all times. If the aircraft came under attack he would man one of the flexible machine guns.

Bombardier

The main function of the bombardier was to ensure that the bombs hit the target. On the run in on the target he took control of the plane. He would tell the pilot what to do, and until he said "Bombs away" his word was law.

Flight Engineer

He worked closely with the co-pilot, checking engine operation, fuel consumption, and the operation of all equipment. He would also have to be able to work with the bombardier, and know how to cock, lock, and load the bomb racks. If the aircraft came under attack he would man the top gun turret.

Radio Operator

He was responsible for all radio communication. He would ensure that the liaison and command sets were properly tuned and in good operating order. He would also render position reports every 30 minutes. He would also keep a flight log.

Ball Turret Gunner

The Sperry ball turret was very small in order to reduce drag, and was typically operated by the smallest man of the crew. There was no room inside for a parachute, which was left in the cabin above the turret.

Waist Gunners

The waist gunners were responsible for defending either the left or right side of the aircraft. The B-17 was not pressurised, so at high altitude there was not enough oxygen to breathe and the temperature would be below zero. The crew would have to wear specially heated flight suits and make use of oxygen masks.

Tail Turret Gunner

The tail turret gunner was responsible for defending the aircraft from any attack from the rear.

Many B-17 crew members received military honours and 17 received the Medal of Honor, the highest military decoration awarded by the United States.

The last B-17 in active service, with the Brazilian Air Force, was retired in 1968.

The Battles of Muizenberg and Blaauwberg

There were a few early battles on the coast of South Africa, most of which were little more than skirmishes. The two outstanding ones were the Battle of Muizenberg and Blaauwberg. By Paul J. Els.

The Battle of Muizenberg was a small but significant military affair that began in June 1795 and ended three months later with the (first) British occupation of the Cape. Thus began the period (briefly interrupted from 1804 to 1806) of British control of the Cape, and subsequently much of Southern Africa.

The historical remnant of the Battle of Muizenberg is a site on the hillside overlooking False Bay that holds the remains of a defensive fort started by the Dutch in 1795 and expanded by the British from 1796 onwards.

August 1795 saw the start of a short military action in Muizenberg that resulted in the British taking control of the Cape from the Dutch VOC or East India Company. That is why we speak English today in Southern Africa, instead of French.

Background

In March 1793, France declared war on Great Britain and the House of Orange. The French advanced on Holland, the British sent an expeditionary force to its defence. France and Britain were at war for the privilege of protecting the

Netherlands, and its possessions, which included the Cape.

Britain needed access to the Cape in order for her ships to reach India, which was then a vital colony. The sea voyage was a long one, and the ships had to stop en route for water and supplies, to effect repairs and to drop off sick seamen. The Dutch had the same requirements for them to get to their colonies in the Far East, which was why they founded Cape Town, as a refreshment station in the first place, in 1652.

When revolution spread to Holland the citizens supported not Britain but France, Britain's bitter enemy at the time. It was clear to the British East India Company that if they did not take action the Cape would be closed to them and that would cut them off from India. Lord Baring the Chairman of the East India Company, persuaded the British Government to send a military force to the Cape to ensure that did not happen.

The Fighting

A small British fleet arrived in July 1795 and anchored in Simon's Bay. After unsuccessfully negotiating with the Dutch to protect the Cape from their

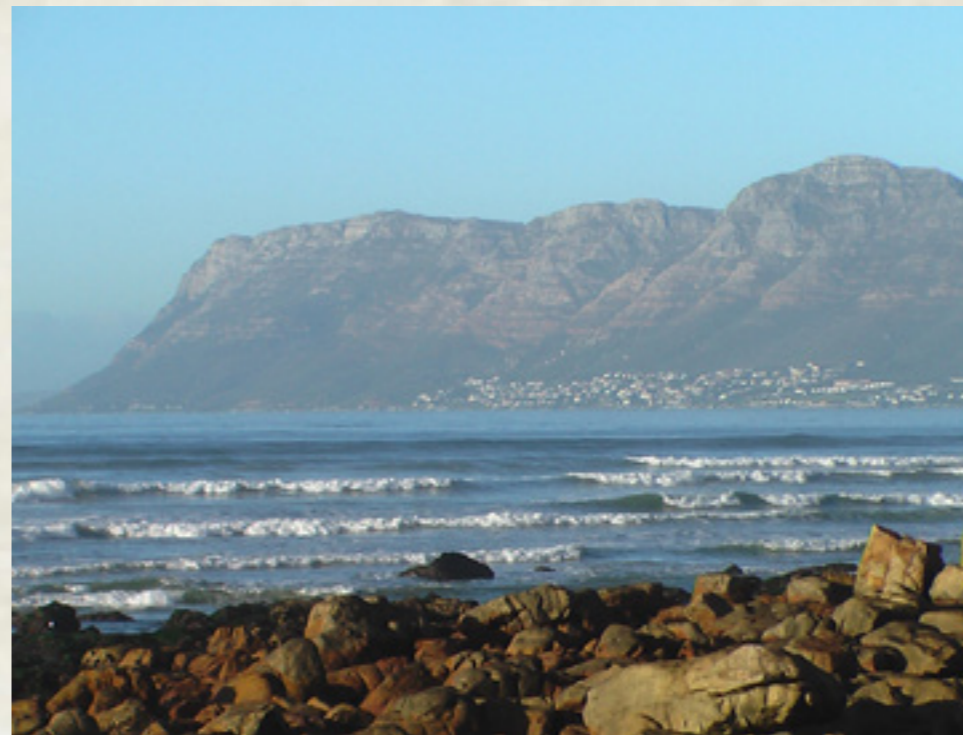
enemies, the British landed a small army of 1,400 men and sailors and began the march on Cape Town. On the 7th of August 1795 the column marched along the coast road from Simon's Town through Fish Hoek and Kalk Bay towards Muizenberg.

Sailing along the coast next to the soldiers were four warships of the Royal Navy. At Kalk Bay the Dutch had a piquet of one cannon.

HMS America fired one gun and the Dutch retreated to their fort outside Muizenberg. At that fort 800 Dutch soldiers waited for the British. They were lightly armed but had a few cannons pointed down the road. To their surprise the four war ships anchored alongside and began firing broadsides. There was no way the Dutch could reply effectively and within an hour they had retreated around the corner to Zandvlei.

The fighting continued for some weeks, pushing the Dutch slowly back to Wynberg Hill, where a stalemate was reached.

In early September a much larger British force arrived and with that the Dutch surrendered the Cape. Few lives were lost in the action.



FALSE BAY: The coast off Muizenberg (c2010). In the background is Fish Hoek and to the far left is Simon's Town.

The Consequences

This was the first British Occupation, followed a few years later by the second, permanent occupation. 7 August 1795 is a defining moment in our history, the day when control of the Cape passed from the VOC to the British. It marks the end of the *Vereenigde Ost-Indische Compagnie* in South Africa.

It marks the start of English as an official language of the country. It also marks the beginning of English colonisation of Africa, with all the benefits and ills that argument rages about to this day. It marks British control of the Cape sea-passage, with the impact that had on world history. A big day, all told. The Muizenberg fortifications slipped into disuse after this, but they were not forgotten.

Battle of Blaauwberg

The Battle of Blaauwberg, also known as the Battle of Cape Town, fought near Cape

Town on 8 January 1806, was a small but significant military engagement. Peace was made under the Treaty Tree in Woodstock. It established British rule in South Africa, which was to have many ramifications for the region during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A bi-centennial commemoration was held in January 2006.

The battle was an incident in Europe's Napoleonic Wars. At that time, the Cape Colony belonged to the Batavian Republic, a French vassal. Because the sea route around the Cape was important to the British, they decided to seize the colony in order to prevent it - and the sea route - from also coming under French control. A British fleet was despatched to the Cape in July 1805, to forestall French troopships which Napoleon had sent to reinforce the Cape garrison.

The colony was governed by Lieutenant General Jan Willem Janssens, who was also com-

mander-in-chief of its military forces. The forces were small and of poor quality and included foreign units hired by the Batavian government. They were backed up by local militia units.

The first British warship reached the Cape on Christmas Eve 1805, and attacked two supply ships off the Cape Peninsula. Janssens placed his garrison on alert. When the main fleet sailed into Table Bay on 4 January 1806, he mobilised the garrison, declared martial law, and called up the militia.

After a delay caused by rough seas, two British infantry brigades, under the command of Lieutenant General Sir David Baird, landed at Melkbossstrand, north of Cape Town, on 6 and 7 January. Janssens moved his forces to intercept them. He had decided that "victory could be considered impossible, but the honour of the fatherland demanded a fight". His intention was to attack the British on the beach and then to withdraw to the interior, where he hoped to hold out until the French troopships arrived.

However, on the morning of 8 January, while Janssens's columns were still slowly moving through the veld, Baird's brigades began their march to Cape Town, and reached the slopes of the Blaauwberg mountain (now spelled "Blouberg"), a few kilometres ahead of Janssens. Janssens halted and formed a line across the veld.

The battle began at sunrise, with exchanges of artillery fire. These were followed by an advance by Janssens's militia cavalry, and volleys of musket

fire from both sides. One of Janssens's hired foreign units, in the centre of his line, turned and ran from the field. A British bayonet charge disposed of the units on Janssens's right flank, and he ordered his remaining troops to withdraw.

Janssens began the battle with 2 049 troops, and lost 353 in casualties and desertions. Baird began the battle with 5 399 men, and had 212 casualties.

From Blaauwberg, Janssens moved inland to a farm in the Tygerberg area, and from there his troops moved to the Elands Kloof in the Hottentots Holland Mountains, about 50 km from Cape Town.

The British forces reached the outskirts of Cape Town on 9 January. To spare the town and its civilian population from attack, the commandant of Cape Town, Lieutenant-Colonel Hieronymus Casimir von Prohlow, sent out a white flag. He handed over the outer fortifications to Baird, and terms of surrender were negotiated later in the day. The formal Articles of Capitulation for the town and the Cape Peninsula were signed the following afternoon, 10 January, at a cottage at Papendorp (now the suburb of Woodstock) which became known as "Treaty Cottage." Although the cottage has long since been demolished, Treaty Street still commemorates the event. The tree under which they signed remains to this day.

However, the Batavian Governor of the Cape, General Janssens, had not yet surrendered himself and his remaining troops and was following his plan to hold out for as long



THEY FOUGHT HERE: Now a popular holiday destination, Blaauwberg is now known as Blouberg. This is where the battle took place.

as he could, in the hope that the French troopships for which he had been waiting for months would arrive and save him. He had only 1 238 men with him, and 211 deserted in the days that followed.

Janssens held out in the mountains for a further week. Baird sent Brigadier General William Beresford to negotiate with him, and the two generals conferred at a farm belonging to Gerhard Croeser near the Hottentots-Holland Mountains on 16 January without reaching agreement. After further consideration, and consultation with his senior officers and advisers, Janssens decided that "the bitter cup must be drunk to the bottom". He agreed to capitulate, and the final Articles of Capitulation were signed on 18 January.

Uncertainty reigns as to where the Articles of Capitulation were signed. For many years it has been claimed that it was the Goedeverwachting estate (where a copy of the treat-

ty is on display), but more recent research, published in Dr Krynauw's book *Beslissing* by Blaauwberg suggests that Croeser's farm (now the Somerset West golf course) may have been the venue. An article published in the 1820s by the then resident clergyman of the Stellenbosch district, Dr Borchers, also points towards Croeser's farm.

The terms of the capitulation were reasonably favourable to the Batavian soldiers and citizens of the Cape. Janssens and the Batavian officials and troops were sent back to the Netherlands in March.

The British forces occupied the Cape until 13 August 1814, when the Netherlands ceded the colony to Britain as a permanent possession. It remained a British colony until it was incorporated into the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910.

An extract from Paul J. Els' new book **Amanzi Southern Africa**.



**Military Despatches needs
YOU**

If you're a member of a Veteran's Organisation, a military history organisation, or have a story to tell, then why not tell us about it?

Or if there is any particular subject that you would like us to write about, why not let us know.

Send us an e-mail at editor@hipe.co.za

WinSPMBT!

War is hell. Especially if Matt O'Brien has anything to do with it as he gets to grips with Steel Panthers: Main Battle Tank.

In the mid-1990s a game was released by the name of Steel Panthers. It was a DOS-based game that was set during World War II. And damn, it was a good game. Later they released Steel Panthers II.

Steel Panthers was named the best war game of 1995 by Computer Gaming World, PC Gamer US and Computer Games Strategy Plus. The editors of PC Gamer US called it "easily one of the best tactical simulations ever developed for the PC." Steel Panthers and Steel Panthers II were named, collectively, the 62nd best computer game ever by PC Gamer UK in 1997.

A decade later the rights to the series was later acquired by Matrix Games/Shrapnel Games. They later released Steel Panthers: Main Battle Tank for Windows. The game was set in the postwar years from 1946 to 2020.

It's a turn-based strategy simulation that you can play in three different modes. You can play either in single player (where you go up against the computer AI) or in multi-player where you can challenge an opponent.

The first mode is Scenario Mode. Here you are presented with real life or hypothetical scenarios.

The real life scenarios, which start with the Korean War in 1950, will present you with a

battle that really took place. The map will represent the actual terrain, the date of the battle, and the participants.

You select which side you want to be and you are given a briefing as to the tactical situation and what your objectives are.

All of the troops and equipment are exactly the same as during the real event. You are then given a number of turns to complete your objective.

At the end you can see what the real outcome was, as well as see if your tactics would have changed history.

There are also a number of hypothetical situations and battles. For example, what if Russia had invaded West Germany and the Cold War had turned hot. Would NATO have coped?

The game comes with no fewer than 272 scenarios. The second mode is Campaign Mode. These are a number of scenarios linked together and there are 12 different campaigns to choose from.

The last mode is Battle Mode. Here you can set up battles of your own. You choose the time (season and year), the terrain, and the participants. You also get to choose the parameters of a mission.

In Battle Mode there are no fewer than 92 countries you can choose from.

The troops and equipment available to a country will de-

pend on the year that you have chosen. Let's say you want to fight a battle using the United States Marine Corps in 1968. You will be able to select all of the troops types, weapons, vehicles, armour, aircraft, helicopters, artillery, etc. that was available to the USMC in 1968.

If, for example, you choose South Africa before April 1994 then they will be represented by the old South African flag and will be the SADF. Choose them after April 1994 and the new South African flag is shown and they are now the SANDF.

The graphics in the game are nothing to write home about. It is a top-down view and the map is divided up into hexagons. What makes this game special is the attention to realism.

The size of an infantry squad, for example, will be exactly the same size as that army used at a particular period. They will also be armed with the same individual and squad weapons that they would have actually used. They will also carry the same amount of ammunition, so it's quite possible for them to run out of ammo until they are resupplied.

The training, leadership and morale is also important, as it is in real life. A poorly trained unit will be more apt to surrender or retreat than an elite unit.

Vehicles, equipment, aircraft and helicopters are also realistic. Tanks, for example, are not



all the same. Each tank will be based on real life statistics. Various factors will be taken into account in the game.

What is the thickness of the armour at various points on the tank? What type of armour is it. What main gun does the tank use, and what is its range? Does it use HE, AP, SABOT, HEAT rounds, or combination? How many rounds does it carry. What is the rate of fire? What fire control system does it use? How many machine guns does the tank have, what calibre are they, and how many rounds do they hold? How many crew does the tank take? What is the speed of the tank? All of these factors are taken into consideration.

Vehicles and armour can become bogged down in muddy or swampy terrain. A hit could immobilise a tank, making it an easy target.

Artillery can play a vital role in the battles. These can include long-range artillery, self-propelled guns, anti-tank guns, anti-aircraft guns, mortars, and so

on. Sometimes you will have off-map artillery support.

Artillery can also depend on whether you firing a bombardment at an area, or whether you have forward observers guiding the fire.

The game also comes with a map editor which is brilliant. Using this you can set up your own scenarios. You can choose the exact terrain that you want, set the date and year, choose what units, vehicles, aircraft and equipment you want for all sides. You can also select how many turns the scenario should last, what the objectives are and any other parameters you choose.

You can put in buildings, bunkers, trenches, sandbags, barbed wire, tank traps, mine fields and whatever else you decide. Once you've set up a scenario you can then save it or even upload it online.

There are thousands of scenarios already online. And the good news is that many of these deal with Southern Africa, including scenarios set in Rho-

desia, Angola and South West Africa. You can find scenarios for Ops Savannah, Smokeshell, Protea, Cassinga, Cuito Cuana-vale and many more online.

You can even take paratroopers, load them into a Dakota or C-130, and then drop them onto the map.

Steel Panthers: MBT is one of the most realistic turn-based strategy games ever created.

Even if you've never played a computer game before, if you're interested in military history or tactics, you've got to try this game.

The good thing is that it will run on just about any computer. You don't need a high-end computer with tons of memory and a super graphics card to run it. It will even run on your laptop.

And the best of all is that you can get Steel Panthers: Main Battle Tank free of charge.

Just go to this link [here](#) and download it from Shrapnel Games. Once its downloaded, open the files and click on the .exe file to load the game.



Publisher - THQ

Genre - FPS/RPG

Score - 8/10

Price - R300 (on Steam)

Memphis Belle

Released in 1990, *Memphis Belle* is a British-American war drama directed by Michael Caton-Jones and written by Monte Merrick.

The film is a fictionalization of the 1943 documentary *Memphis Belle: A Story of a Flying Fortress* by director William Wyler, about the 25th and last mission of an American Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber, the *Memphis Belle*, based in England during World War II.

The 1990 version was co-produced by David Puttnam and Wyler's daughter Catherine and dedicated to her father. The film closes with a dedication to all airmen, friend or foe, who fought in the skies above Europe during World War II.

The film features an all-star cast with Matthew Modine, Eric Stoltz, and Harry Connick Jr. (in his film debut) in leading roles.

In May 1943, the crew of the *Memphis Belle*, a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress of the US Army Air Force, are grounded while their aircraft is being serviced and repaired.

They are part of a bomber squadron under the command of Col. Craig Harriman.

Bomber crews are taken off active duty once they have flown 25 missions. The *Memphis Belle* has flown 24 missions.

An Army publicist, Lt. Col. Bruce Derringer (John Lith-

gow) is visiting the base, to interview the *Belle* crew in anticipation of their flying their 25th mission.

Derringer is eager to use the crew on a war bonds tour state-side. He believes their success would help the war effort and confides to Harriman that many people back home are upset at the losses the Air Force has suffered. Some are beginning to think daylight bombing is ineffective, while Harriman openly favours it.

The target chosen for the day is Bremen in Germany. One of the most heavily defended targets.

Back at base Harriman and Derringer get into an argument. Derringer accuses Harriman of being cold-hearted and concerned only with advancing his military career. In response Harriman shows him letters he has received from the grieving families of lost airmen.

Over the Bremen the bomber squadron comes under fierce attack by German fighters. The *Memphis Belle* ends up becoming the lead bomber.

Will the *Memphis Belle* make it back to England? And will all of the crew survive?

Cast

- Matthew Modine as Captain Dennis Dearborn, pilot.
- Tate Donovan as 1st Lt. Luke Sinclair, co-pilot.
- D.B. Sweeney as 1st Lt. Phil

Lowenthal, navigator.

- Billy Zane as 1st Lt. Val Kozlowski, bombardier.
- Eric Stoltz as Staff Sgt Danny "Danny Boy" Daly, radio operator.
- Reed Diamond as Staff Sgt Hoogesteger, top turret gunner and flight engineer.
- Sean Astin as Staff Sgt. Richard "Rascal" Moore, ball turret gunner.
- Courtney Gains as Staff Sgt. Eugene "Genie" McVey, right waist gunner.
- Neil Giuntoli as Sgt. Jack Bocci, left waist gunner.
- Harry Connick, Jr. as Staff Sgt. Clay Busby, tail gunner.
- David Strathairn as Col. Craig Harriman.
- John Lithgow as Lt. Col. Bruce Derringer.

Click on the poster below to watch a trailer for the film.



SAAF's Border War

The South African Air Force in combat 1966 - 1989. By Peter Baxter.

South African Mirages and Cuban MiG-21s dog-fighting over Cuito Cuanavale, the largest tank battle on African soil since El Alamein; Puma troopships shot out of the skies by Strela missiles and RPG-7 rockets; Alouette III gunships hovering menacingly above Koevoet tracker-combat teams as they close in for the kill; Hercules and Transall transports disgorging their loads of Parabats over Cassinga; suicidal helicopter hot extractions of Recce operators deep in enemy territory; and a lone Alouette pilot who disobeyed orders and under intense ground fire evacuated a critically wounded soldier such is the story of the South African Air Force, the SAAF, over the 23-year period 1966-1989, the period of conflict that became known as the 'Border War'.

Set against the backdrop of the Cold War, the SAAF was effectively South Africa's first line of defense against Soviet expansionism in southern Africa. That the Soviets, through their surrogates-the Cuban military, Angola's FAPLA and Namibia's SWAPO-sought a communist regime in South Africa is indisputable, as too was the SAAF's skill, quality, determination and capability to defeat the best Soviet air defenses of the time. This account covers

all the major operations that the SAAF was involved in, from Operation Blouwildebees, the opening salvo of the conflict at Omgulumbashe, South West Africa in 1966 to the final curtain, Operation Merlyn, the so-called April Fool's Day 'war' of 1989 when the SAAF and Koevoet, almost alone, frustrated SWAPO's last throw of the dice with its illegal invasion of South West Africa.

In this account, highlighting such operations as Reindeer, Bootlace/Uric, Sceptic, Protea, Daisy, Askari, Moduler, Hooper and Packer, among many, as well as the ongoing methodological operations like Lunar, Maanskyn, Donkermaan and Butterfly, Baxter examines and brings to life the squadrons and aviators that fought in both counterinsurgency and conventional warfare roles.

Besides an extensive selection of rare photographs, the book features a comprehensive section on camouflage and markings and six pages of color aircraft profiles and insignia by noted SAAF authority William Marshall, making this title especially useful for modelers.

Peter Baxter is an author, amateur historian and African field, mountain and heritage travel guide. Born in Kenya and educated in Zimbabwe, he has lived and travelled over much



of southern and central Africa. He has guided in all the major mountain ranges south of the equator, helping develop the concept of sustainable travel, and the touring of battlefield and heritage sites in East Africa. Peter lives in Oregon, USA, working on the marketing of African heritage travel as well as a variety of book projects. His interests include British Imperial history in Africa and the East Africa campaign of the First World War in particular. His first book was *Rhodesia: Last Outpost of the British Empire*; he has written several books in the *Africa@War* series, including *France in Centrafrique*, *Selous Scouts*, *Mau Mau* and *SAAF's Border War*.

Paperback: 80 pages

Price: R220.00

From [Bush War Books](#)

You've got the call

Some former national servicemen recall their first week in the military.

Most people will remember the day when that letter arrived. The one that had 'Amptelik' and 'Official' stamped all over it. On the inconspicuous looking envelope would be your name, address, and your SADF serial number. Inside was a cunningly worded invitation to spend an all-expenses paid holiday with the South African Defence Force. More commonly it was known as your call-up papers or 'instructions to report for national service.'

It usually arrived during the vacation shortly after you had completed your schooling and it really had the ability to stuff up a perfectly good day.

One wonders, however, if any of you realized that the process actually started around two years earlier, with an event that passed unnoticed and unremembered.

The "National Service Questionnaire" was a document distributed to all 16 year old white males via all "white" schools in South Africa. The document had to be completed and returned to the SADF and it was an offence not to do so.

In the words of the accompanying DD 1806 E (Important Information for Completing your questionnaire) "By completing the questionnaire properly you are helping us to place you where you will fit in best".

Quite apart from the reality that the questionnaire apparently ensured that you were helping the SADF to place you where you would definitely NOT fit in, by completing this questionnaire, you were submitting yourself (and giving your passive okay) to state control of your very life that would influence your opinions on a range of topics from personal relationships, through your understanding of tolerance of other opinions, to politics.

Perhaps you only now realise just how all encompassing national service was.

You're sending me where?

Naturally not everyone was pleased as to where they would be doing their national service.

Dave was 18 when he was called up, and he was shocked to find out where he would be doing his training.

"I had no problem about being called up. In fact, I was actually looking forward to it.

"I was from Durban and most of the guys from my school had been called up to 5 South African Infantry Battalion. This was cool because they were in Ladysmith, which was only about 250 km from home.

"Guess where I was going? 2 SAI in Walvis Bay. It wasn't even in South Africa. It was in South West Africa and 2,400 km away from Durban. I wasn't

happy at all."

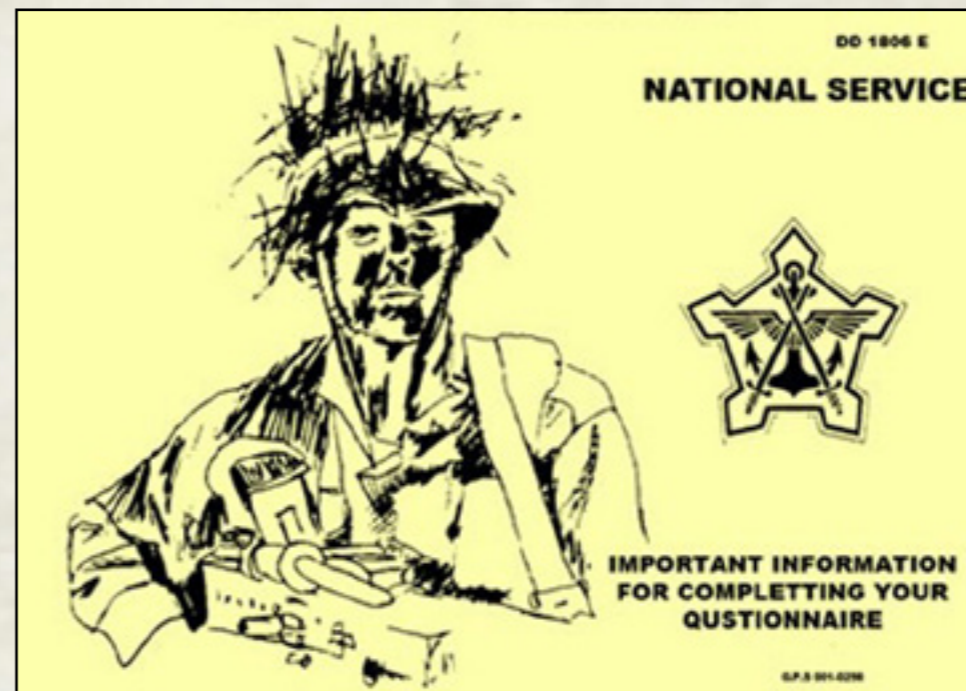
The army claimed the lion's share of those called up for national service. A far smaller percentage was allocated to the South African Air Force or South African Navy. In fact one of the questions on your initial SADF questionnaire asked whether you wanted to serve in the army, navy, or air force.

In 1979 a fourth arm, the South African Medical Services, was formed. When registering you could list your first, second, and third choice. If you listed the army as your first choice you had a better than even chance of getting your wish. This was not always the case though, as Chris (18) recalls.

"When I was 16 I had to register for national service. On the form I was asked to state in which arm of the SADF I preferred to serve. I'm a Durban boy and I grew up at the coast. All of my friends indicated that they wanted to serve in the navy. Not me, no ways.

"I have this pathological fear of the water. I don't know what it is, but I am terrified of the sea. As a boy I would go to the beach and tan but I would never go in the water. I also have another problem. I get seasick just looking at the ocean.

"When I was in Standard Eight my brother-in-law decided to take me deep sea fishing. We went out on a fairly large



RETURN TO SENDER: The DD1806 E Questionnaire that had to be completed by every white male when they turned 16.

boat that took about thirty people. The sea wasn't that rough but I was hanging over the side and puking my lungs out before we even left the harbour.

"So there was no ways I wanted to go to the navy for my national service. I put down the army as my first choice. The air force was my second choice and I didn't even fill in my third choice.

"None of my friends who put down navy as their first choice came right. All of them were called up for the army. Where was I sent to? You guessed it right, the navy. My call up papers said that I had to report to SAS Saldanha for my basics.

"After my basics and individual training I went on a Junior Leadership course and was then posted to SAS Scorpion at Salisbury Island in Durban. At least I was close to home but believe me I would rather have been on the border.

"I was assigned to harbour protection and was a crew member on a Namacurra patrol

launch. We would often go off shore to carry out inspections of fishing trawlers and other small craft. I spent a good deal of time on the water and never did manage to get over my fear or my seasickness.

"If someone had to ask me what I did during my national service I can honestly say that I spent most of it hanging over the side of a Namacurra feeding the fishes."

You're sending me where?

Few people who experienced it will ever forget that initial train trip that took them to their unit to begin national service. You didn't really know what to expect. Of course you had all heard stories from friends who were already doing their national service or who had just completed it. Yet these did nothing to quell the nerves. If anything, they just made you more apprehensive.

Mark (18) was called up to Voortrekkerhoogte and he remembers his train trip clearly.

"I was from Cape Town and had been called up to Technical Services in Pretoria. Before we got on the train the army guys weren't too bad to us. Once we boarded the train it was a different story.

"I was in a compartment with five other guys, none of whom I knew from a bar of soap. The train had these metal shutters on the windows and we had to keep them up for the entire trip. So you couldn't even look out the window at the scenery. The reason for this, I later learnt, was so that the enemy could not look into the train and see how many troops were on board. How ridiculous was that?

"We also had to keep the door to our compartment open the entire time. The only time you could leave your compartment was to go to the toilet. The corridors were filled with corporals and military police. If one of them walked into your compartment, which for some reason they often did, you would have to jump to your feet.

"The train left Cape Town at about midday and we must have stopped at every little station where more conscripts boarded the train. At about 6.30 that evening some guy came around and we were all given a styrofoam cup. Then about half an hour later they came around with supper. We were all given a cup of coffee and two sandwiches. The coffee was really horrible. It was really cheap instant coffee with milk powder and sugar already put into it. We each received one cheese sandwich and one polony sandwich. The cheese was rock hard and the bread was stale.

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

“I couldn’t believe what I had just seen. We were given no blankets or anything. You just slept on the bunk just like that. When we put the lights out I lay on the top bunk and began to cry. I must have been about ten-years-old the last time I cried. But at that moment I felt homesick, alone and more than a bit scared.

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

“For breakfast the next morning we were given coffee, a banana and a boiled egg. My banana was vrot (rotten) and the inside of my egg was blue. I wasn’t really hungry but I ate it anyway because I didn’t want to get into trouble.

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

The Roofie Ride

No matter where you reported for national service most conscripts followed a similar procedure. The train trip may have been exciting or apprehensive, depending on your frame of

mind, but the fun really started when you arrived at the station at the end of the trip. Vehicles would be waiting to transport you to the camp and few people don’t have memories of that first ride in a military vehicle. Glynn (18) was called up to 1 SAI in Bloemfontein and he can still recall that first trip.

“We arrived at Bloemfontein station at about seven in the morning. There was a line of Bedford trucks waiting to take us to the camp. The trucks were driven by national servicemen just like us, but with one major exception. These guys were ‘ou manne’. In other words they had already completed nearly three-quarters of their national service.

“We were piled into the back of the Bedfords and the drivers then set off to camp. It seemed that our driver had two objectives. First of all was to see how quickly he could get back to the camp, and secondly to see how many of our bones he could break. When he pulled away, he would stand on both the clutch and the accelerator at the same time. Then he would take his foot of the clutch, causing the truck to jerk violently forward. When he had to stop, and there were numerous traffic lights and stop streets along the way, he would wait until the last second before slamming on the brakes. All of this caused much amusement to the driver and even more discomfort to those of us in the back of the truck. We were thrown all over the show. It was so bad that some of the suitcases actually popped open and the contents were scattered all over the back of the truck.

“By the time we arrived at the camp it looked as if someone had filled the back of the truck with people, clothes and baggage and then stirred it all up. I thought that our driver was a lunatic but I later learnt that all of the drivers had given their passengers the same treatment. It was known as a ‘roofie ride’ and it was something of a tradition.

“Much later on I also became a driver and when I went to pick up the next intake at the station, I made sure that they received the same treatment as I had.”

I want out

Sean was 17 when he moved with his parents from Ireland to South Africa. After completing his matric he was called up to 1 South African Infantry Battalion in Bloemfontein and soon discovered that he hated the place.

“I had only been in South Africa for a year. My parents moved from Dublin to Johannesburg, but I was still a Paddy at heart. I did my last year of school at a private school that was very English. So you can imagine the culture shock I received when I arrived in Bloemfontein.

“Everyone and everything seemed to be in Afrikaans and my knowledge of the language was very limited at that time. I hadn’t been in Bloemfontein for an hour and I wanted out. I was trying my utmost to come up with some scheme that could get me as far away from Bloemfontein as possible.

“Salvation arrived a few days after we arrived in the guise of some guys wearing maroon



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

berets. They were a recruiting team from 1 Parachute Battalion and were looking for anyone that wanted to join the Parabats.

“Look, I must be honest and say that I had no great desire to go jumping out of aeroplanes but at that stage I was desperate enough to do anything to get away from Bloemfontein. So I was one of those that put my hand up and volunteered.

“Those of us that had volunteered spent almost an entire day doing fitness tests - sit ups, push ups, a 2,4 km run and that sort of thing. I was fairly fit and didn’t struggle too much. About 45 of us were selected and we were told to go and pack all our kit and report back to the parade ground. I was ecstatic, not because I had been selected, but because I would at least be getting out of Bloemfontein. No matter where we were going, it couldn’t be as bad.

Imagine my sheer disgust and horror when we marched out

of the main gate, turned right, went down the road about 600 metres and then turned left into the gates of 1 Parachute Battalion. How the hell was I supposed to know that the Parabats were also based in Bloemfontein. Basically across the road.”

Hello Corporal

On arrival at the camp the recruits would make their first real acquaintance with the SADF. Of course they would also meet their corporals for the first time.

Most of the basic training of recruits was carried out by corporals. While some of the corporals were permanent force members, the vast majority were national servicemen. They had completed their basic training and advanced individual training. Then they had gone through a Junior Leaders course and finally a Drill and Musketry Instructor’s course.

For the next nine weeks of basic training the corporal would

become the recruit’s mother and father. He would be with them from morning to night.

Stick out your tongue

Once the conscripts had been put into sections or squads, the following week was taken up by administration. This included medical examinations, the issue of uniforms and kit, pay administration, and orientation.

Many conscripts will remember the medical examination. It wasn’t something that you could really forget, was it? Mel (18) is one of those who still laughs about it.

“I was in the July intake and went to 2 Field Engineering Regiment at a place called ‘Lekkerdril’ in Bethlehem. I wasn’t there an hour when I decided that I didn’t think I was going to like this national service thing. My corporal was an Afrikaans boy from some hick town in the Free State. He didn’t like English guys and, because I was from Durban, he liked me even less. According to him people from Durban could only do two things - surf and smoke dagga. This was a load of crap because I had never surfed in my life.

“Anyway, we had to go for these medical exams. We had to go from office to office where different people checked us out. To speed up the process we all had to strip down to our underpants. Now this was really fun because this was Bethlehem in the middle of winter. Before being called up the furthest I had ever been away from Durban was a day trip to Port Shepstone. Back in Durban when the temperature reached 18 degrees I put on a jersey. On the day we

did our medical it was minus three. I was blue with cold.

“I remember going into this one office and there was this old auntie in a nurse’s kit. She looked like she was about 80 years old. I was hoping that she wasn’t going to try and give me the kiss of life or something. Jeez bru, no problems to this old goose. She sticks her hand down the front of my underpants, grabs me by the nuts, and tells me “cough.” She could have at least warmed her hands first. Cough! It was so cold that I couldn’t even breathe.

“Then we went to another office and there was this army doctor. I’m sure that this oke did his degree through a correspondence course and that half of his lessons got lost in the post. I stood in front of him while he poked and prodded away at me. Then he took his freezing stethoscope and stuck it all over me, just making me that little bit colder.

“He took this form and asked me some questions, ticking off my answers. Then he asked me if I suffered from any diseases or medical conditions. I told him that I sometimes suffered from eczema. What does this arsehole write down on the form? He writes there that I suffer from epilepsy. I pointed out his mistake and told him that it was eczema and not epilepsy that I suffered from. I then had to explain what eczema was to him. What sort of a doctor was this oke? Was he even a real doctor?

“Finally we had to go and receive our ‘shots’. The best part of this was that this was done in the hall. It was about 400 metres

away from the offices where we had been doing everything until then.

“Now you must realise that we were still dressed in only a pair of underpants and we had to walk this distance exposed to the elements. Halfway to the hall and I was numb. I still remember thinking ‘Great, my first day in the army and I’m going to die of hypothermia.’

“Inside the hall was a line of tables and each table was manned by a medic. You went down the line, stopping at each table to get an injection. Jeez bru they injected you against everything known to man. Cholera, polio, VD, rabies, tetanus, yellow fever, scarlet fever and a couple of other colours thrown in for good luck.

“Because of the cold, the injections hurt like hell. As if all this wasn’t bad enough our corporal took childish delight that afternoon in punching us on the arm at every opportunity. Only one thing stopped me from beating the crap out of my corporal that day. The fact that he was twice my size.”

One size fits all

Ready or not, you were there and you had a slight suspicion that things were not about to get better in a hurry. Once you had completed the administration and medical it was time to be issued with your uniform and the other odds and ends that would begin the process of changing you from schoolboy to soldier.

It was amazing the amount of stuff that you were issued with. Nearly everything that was issued to you was brand new and I have often wondered what it

must have cost the SADF (for SADF read taxpayer) to equip two national service intakes per year.

Kevin (18) did a year’s national service at the Army Gym in Heidelberg during 1976. He gives a description of what it was like to be issued with your equipment.

“I can still remember that first week in the army. It was chaos let me tell you. We had to do our medical examinations, sort out the pay administration, and then get issued with our uniforms. We were taken to the stores and given this crap-load of kit. This, to the best of my memory, is what we were initially issued:

- 3 x ‘browns’ shirts.
- 3 x ‘brown’s pants.
- 1 x ‘browns’ bush jacket.
- 1 x jersey.
- 1 x ‘browns’ bush hat.
- 1 x web belt.
- 2 x pairs boots.
- 1 x beret.
- 1 x ‘step out’ jacket.
- 2 x long sleeve ‘step out shirts’.
- 2 x ‘step out’ pants.
- 1 x ‘step out’ tie.
- 1 x ‘step out’ belt.
- 2 x pairs ‘step out’ shoes.
- 4 x pairs socks.
- 4 x pairs underpants (known as Santa Marias).
- 2 x tee shirts.
- 2 x black PT shorts.
- 1 x pair canvas PT shoes.
- 2 x vests.
- 1 x steel helmet with derby (plastic inner helmet).
- 1 x webbing big pack.
- 1 x set kidney webbing.
- 4 x ammunition pouches.
- 1 x water bottle with cover and fire bucket.



SAY GOODBYE TO CIVVIE STREET: A new intake reports at NASREC in Johannesburg. In the background are family and friends that have come to see them off.

- 1 x set dixies.
- 1 x eating set (knife, fork and spoon).
- 1 x balaclava.
- 1 x toiletry bag (canvas bag used to carry razor, toothbrush, etc.).
- 1 x plastic soap container.
- 2 x towels, large.
- 1 x towel, small.
- 1 x raincoat.
- 1 x bivvie half (groundsheet).
- 1 x sleeping bag.
- 1 x housewife (small sewing kit that contained needles, thread, and a pair of small scissors).
- 1 x rifle cleaning kit.
- 1 x 20 m toggle rope.
- 1 x balsak (large kit bag).
- 1 x trommel (metal trunk).

“Now this stuff was all issued with lightning speed and you just hoped that you had something that actually fitted you. You

were then required to take your kit to your bungalow.

“Now our company bungalows were about a kilometre away from the stores and we had to carry everything there. We put on the webbing and the steel helmet. The rest of the stuff was crammed into the balsak and trommel. The balsak was then balanced across the trommel, you picked up the trommel by the handles on the side, and off you went.

“By the time we reached our bungalow I was exhausted. I think that when I was issued my kit it made me realise for the first time that this wasn’t some bad dream. I was really in the army now.”

Drop and give me 20

Before long it was time to meet another nightmare of basic training, the physical train-

ing instructor, or better known as the much hated PTI. The function of the PTI was to conduct physical training sessions.

According to the SADF these PT sessions were aimed at raising the fitness level of the conscripts to an acceptable standard. This has always remained open to debate.

The general consensus of most people who did national service is that the PTI’s main function was to see just how quickly they could reduce you to a state of physical exhaustion.

Most of the PTI’s were national servicemen themselves. After completing basic and individual training it was possible to apply to become a PTI. Prospective candidates were given a fitness test and those who passed were sent to the Physical Training Branch in Pretoria.

A conscript’s first contact with the PTI’s was usually not a pleasant experience. Rifleman David (17) testifies to this fact.

“Without exception every single person in my squad hated our basic training corporal with a passion. He was a short little guy and I’m sure he suffered from a Napoleon complex. We received no mercy or leniency from him. If he could ride you for something he did.

“Yet there was one group of people that we hated even more than our corporal and those were the physical training instructors, or PTIs. Most of the PTIs held the rank of corporal or lance corporal.

“They used to take us for physical training every morning. It was rumoured that the object of physical training was

to get you fit. That was a laugh. Our PTI's thought that the objective of physical training was to see how much they could make you suffer.

"These guys must have stayed awake at night thinking up new tortures for us. Besides the normal push-ups and sit-ups, they had some delightful routines. We used to do our PT on the rugby field and one of their favourite tricks was to make us run from the 25-metre line, around the rugby posts, and back again. We were given 40 seconds to complete this.

"Now this is only a 50-metre run and it doesn't sound difficult at all. Yet there was a small catch to this. Everyone in the group had to complete it in 40 seconds or you did it again. Now in every group you would obviously have one or two overweight guys or guys who were really unfit. They wouldn't have made it if you gave them 40 minutes. So while most of us would complete this little sprint in less than 40 seconds, these guys just couldn't do it. So off you went again, and again, and again.

It's been 42 years since I did my national service, but if I close my eyes right now I can still hear the voice of the PTI.

"40 seconds around the rugby poles and back. Cheers!"

We would sprint off as fast as we could go and arrive back gasping for breath. It was usually all in vain.

"Oh," the PTI would shout when some of the group did not make it in 40 seconds. "I see that some of your buddies think this is a joke. They're laughing at you. *Hulle wil nie saamwerk*

(They don't want to work together). So we will do it again. 40 seconds around the rugby poles and back. Cheers!"

"Off we would go again, rapidly losing our cool with the guys who were slowing us up. Sometimes we would grab them by the shirts and try and drag them with us. Tempers would often become frayed and this was a constant source of amusement to the PTIs."

I'm not ready for this

After a day or so the fact that you were in the military began to sink in. For many of the conscripts it was their first time away from home. While some conscripts adapted quickly, others were still in a state of shock that first week. Clive (18) was one of those who was not quite prepared for his national service.

"I guess I was spoilt rotten when I was growing up. When I was at school I would wake up in the morning, shower, have breakfast and the leave for school. My school uniform was laid out for me and my shoes had been polished. When I arrived home in the afternoon my bed had already been made. We had a maid who did the washing and ironing. She would also polish my shoes for me.

"Going to the army was a shock to my system. I had to wash my own clothes and iron them. I was also required to make my own bed in the morning, polish my footwear and do everything for myself. You should have seen me the first time I tried to iron my shirt. The thing had more creases in it than a road map.

"The first time I polished my boots was even more fun. More polish ended up on me than it did on the boots. Inspections were a nightmare for the first two weeks. The corporal found fault with everything. Yet I must admit that I learnt bloody quickly. You had no choice, you had to learn quickly.

"When I look back at it now I think that national service wasn't a bad thing. The reasons for national service may have been bad, you know, fighting for apartheid and all that. But the concept was good. The army made me grow up very quickly and it taught me to stand on my own two feet and it taught me discipline."

Lots more to come

That first week in the military was a blur. Reporting at your assembly point, the train trip, the roofie ride, getting divided up into squads, meeting your corporal, the haircut, admin, medical, getting issued with your kit, and organised chaos.

And the thing is that you knew that there was a lot more to come. Your first inspections, PT sessions, your first attempts at drill, your first pay day, your first trip to the shooting range, visitor's day, and your first weekend pass.

Taken from the digital book Service Rendered by Matt Tennyson. If you would like a copy of the book, send an e-mail to editor@hipe.co.za and put Service Rendered in the subject line.

Quiz Answers

So how did you do with this month's quiz? Here are the answers.

- World War II US General Omar Bradley.
- Aristotle 325 B.C.
- Winston Churchill.
- US Civil War General Robert E. Lee.
- World War I French general and military theorist Ferdinand Foch.
- Chinese general and military strategist Sun Tzu in his book 'The Art of War'.
- World War II German Field Marshall Erwin Rommel.
- The Duke of Wellington on receiving a draft of new recruits during the Peninsular War.
- World War II Japanese Admiral Yamamoto after the bombing of Pearl Harbour.
- Prussian general and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz.
- Roman senator and a historian of the Roman Empire, Tacitus.
- World War II US General George S. Patton.
- World War I German fighter ace Manfred von Richthofen, the Red Baron.
- Napoleon Bonaparte.
- Commander of the US forces during the Vietnam War, General William C. Westmoreland.
- World War II US General Douglas MacArthur.
- Roman Emperor Julius Caesar.
- American Revolutionary War soldier and spy Captain Nathan Hale.
- US Civil War General William T. Sherman.
- Alexander the Great.
- American Revolutionary War Colonel William Prescott at the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775.
- US General H. Norman Schwarzkopf.
- General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, in reply to a Marine's formal request for permission to be married.
- General George S. Patton.
- General Colin Powell, on plans to destroy the Iraq Army during the Gulf War.

Useful links

Every month we will be featuring 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.



Hipe!

media

E-mail
editor@hipe.co.za



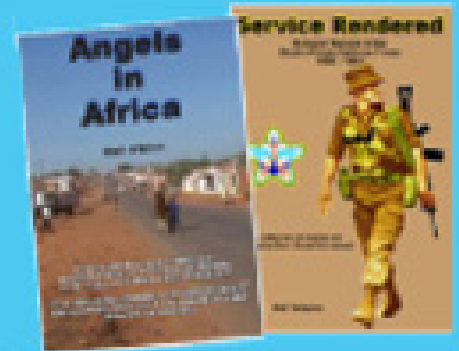
Online Magazines

Flip book magazines with pages that can be turned.



E-books

Produced in any electronic format required.



2D & 3D Animation

Produced in any video format.



Video Production

Scripting, storyboard, filming and editing done to any video format required. We also do aerial and underwater video and stills.



Still Photography

If you're thinking digital media then think Hipe Media.