

From the editors

Military science, like conflict, war and warfare from which the discipline derived its existence, is a broad and complex field of study. The focus of *Scientia Militaria*, the South African Journal of Military Studies, has always been driven by two key considerations. Firstly, an *interdisciplinary approach* to the study of all things military and, secondly, an understanding that, irrespective of how widely the study of military affairs, the idea of *warfighting* and the need to be effective in the use of military forces in the provision of security, remains at the heart of military sciences. This edition of the journal is a typical reflection of this focus.

Theo Brinkel and Soumia Ait-Hida from the Dutch Defence Academy provide an interesting overview of their research on the increased use of terror tactics by the so-called Boko Haram group in Nigeria. The article provides interesting insights into the nature of Boko Haram, its ideology, its methods, and its international connections. Of particular interest is the analysis of religion as a defining ideology in the motivation of the group, in their recruitment, the legitimisation of their violence and as a criterion for the selection of targets. The authors also highlight the fact that the group has been able to survive counterterrorist measures by the Nigerian government in Boko Haram's increasing use of terror against selected targets inside and outside their traditional area of operations. In conclusion, the authors emphasise the fact that Boko Haram is inspired by a Jihadist version of Islam. Jihadists view themselves as the true exponents of the Islamic faith. Ultimately, their aim is to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria based on Sharia Law. Boko Haram's ideology and terror, therefore, give rise to three different polarisations in Nigeria: between fundamentalists and moderate Muslims, between Muslims and Christians, and between the symbols of the western-dominated international order in Nigeria and the Islamic purity as upheld by Boko Haram, which rejects all things western.

Using the theory of the Copenhagen School on securitisation as a framework for analysis, Robin Walker and Annette Seegers focus their discussion on the US securitisation of Africa in the wake of 9/11. They highlight the US security establishment's perception that weak states pose an existential threat to the US. As a result, the US – under different administrations – more than tripled its investment in Africa in the years following 9/11. Of particular interest is the interplay between the executive branch of the US government as claimant and the US Congress as legitimiser of the US security involvement in Africa. The authors argue that the

political advantage belongs to the core executive where key individuals are responsible to populate and influence the threat agenda. The core executive rewards those who accepted their claims with a budget and status. The attacks of 9/11 created a context for the US securitisation of Africa. However, the majority of American voters remain opposed to foreign aid, regardless of how it is dressed up, and the authors postulate that greater public involvement would result in failed securitisation of the state.

A very interesting military historical article from an unexpected source is one way of describing the contribution of Linda Robson and Mark Oranje from the Department of Town and Regional Planning of the University of Pretoria. Their article seeks to analyse the British settlement patterns on the turbulent Cape Eastern Frontier of South Africa in an effort to indicate how occupation of this area was influenced by British colonial strategy and policy. The study concerned the imperial colonial era, from the second British occupation of the Cape colony in 1806 until representative self-governance of the Cape colony in 1872. The authors argue that the history of the Cape Eastern Frontier offers a fascinating insight into British military strategy as well as colonial development in the late 1800s. For more than 100 years, this was the area where four key South African population groups (the Dutch, the British, the Xhosa and the Khoikhoi) met. The key decisions taken on this frontier, the authors contend, were seminal in shaping the history of South Africa as well as the trials and tribulations of conflict and peace in the area ever since.

Guerrilla warfare remains a socio-historical reality, and attempts to counter those who wage small wars led to numerous studies. The study of contemporary counterinsurgency is focused among others on three key areas of understanding: how to locate the insurgents, how to isolate the insurgents, and how to eradicate the insurgents. The Anglo-Boer War in its second phase embodied a classic insurgency war against a dominating hegemonic power. The contribution of Prof GN van den Bergh from North-West University relates an interesting case study of how the British dealt with this problematic situation in the Potchefstroom area during the guerrilla phase of the Anglo-Boer War. The continued military resistance of the Republics and the fluidity of the resistance after the occupation of Bloemfontein and Pretoria through the advent of guerrilla tactics deeply frustrated the British High Command. In the case of the Potchefstroom region, British aggravation came to focus on the successful resurgence of the Potchefstroom Commando, under Gen. Petrus Liebenberg, swelled by surrendered burghers from the Gatsrand again taking up arms. The British occupational policy of the area came to revolve around denying Liebenberg use of the abundant food supplies in the Gatsrand area through

the application of a scorched earth policy in Gatsrand and the adjacent Mooi River basin. This gave rise to the systematic depopulation and destruction of the agricultural infrastructure of these areas. As a result, the first and largest concentration camp in the Transvaal was established in Potchefstroom. These policies succeeded in dispelling Liebenberg from the region and set an example of some success in a small theatre of battle during the war.

The Saldanha Bay area on the west coast of South Africa has been exposed to human activities, including military training and the preparation of forces for war, over a protracted period of time. In his article, Jacques Bezuidenhout presents his findings of an investigation of the areas where human activities took place via a mapping of the variation in primordial radioactive isotopes. For purposes of research, the author obtained *in situ* gamma-ray data from selected locations in the Saldanha Bay area. The data were used to extract concentrations of primordial radioactive isotopes in these locations. The radioactive primordial isotope concentrations were then mapped and compared to historical evidence of human activities in these areas. The concentrations of potassium isotope showed a relationship to the height above mean sea level. Historically, human activities were mainly confined to flatter regions of the area around Saldanha Bay and therefore also relate to the height above mean sea level. The potassium concentrations and the areas where human activities took place were compared and a significant relationship was found. The potential value for future research by using this methodology in other areas is pointed out in this contribution.

The article by Gary Baines focuses on the story of the nine South African soldiers who were captured during or shortly after the South African invasion of Angola in 1975–6. Of particular interest is the focus on the story behind the story in the article: how the apartheid government attempted to keep the capturing of the soldiers out of the media out of fear for the possible political domino effect it could have and the possible jeopardising of negotiations for the release of the prisoners, and the role that intermediaries such as the International Committee of the Red Cross played in the negotiations for the release of the prisoners. The discussion is very wide in order to outline the context. However, it is an important contribution to the growing literature on the so-called “Border War”. The article addresses an issue that is very often only referred to in passing. Of course, as the archives are opened it is increasingly possible to unravel the underlying and behind-the-scenes political narratives to place these histories in context, and this contribution serves as a pointer toward future research to unravel the fog of war and semantic tug-of-wars related to both the Border and Angolan Civil Wars.

History, we are reminded by Geyl and Romein, like politics, is a dialogue without end. One person's terrorist is another one's freedom fighter. Seemingly the world is caught up between the negativity of a clash of civilisations and the hopes for a dialogue between communities and nations. Hussein Solomon's viewpoint article is an important contribution to the growing debate on what is called terrorism in South Africa and abroad. In the contemporary discourse, it is difficult to divorce any discussion on terrorism from, firstly, the 9/11 and other terrorist attacks in the western world and the West's reaction in dealing with international terrorism – specifically the so-called “Global War on Terror” – and, secondly, the rise of Muslim and other religious fundamentalisms. It is thus interesting to see that the author steered away from an explicit definition of terrorism in his contribution. However, the article is also a clear illustration of the problématique confronting the scholarly community in addressing this complex theme through research. Challenges for research in this field are manifold, i.e. to steer clear of becoming ideological as in our argumentation and, secondly, to avoid a possible conspiracy theory approach in debating the underlying problems and issues.

The editors**Abel Esterhuysen & Ian Liebenberg**