

## **A Case of Arrested Development: The Historiography Relating to South Africa's Participation in the Second World War**

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### **Abstract**

The quantity and quality of military historical work on the participation of South Africa in the Second World War, with few exceptions, namely that of a few significant academic contributions over the last decade, lags appreciably compared to the plethora of titles offered on all aspects of the war in the buoyant international market. This article investigates and evaluates more important South African primary and secondary sources pertaining to the Union Defence Force's participation in the Second World War, highlighting available sources and limitations in published material. Possible opportunities for further research are identified where there are areas of historiographical hiatus. Reasons are offered for what amounts to a rather threadbare South African historiography, especially when compared to the prolific historiographical output of other belligerents. The article offers a brief survey of primary sources, identifying some of the archives that have received scant attention. Then follows an analysis of secondary sources broken down into official, semi-official and general history that examines their methodological integrity and completeness with a view to identifying what historical contributions may still be made in the light of what has been produced.

Keywords: Union War Histories, South Africa, Union Defence Force, South African military historiography, Second World War, official histories

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## Introduction

South Africa's somewhat troubled entry into the Second World War on 6 September 1939 was marked by political divisions within the country.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the other dominions, whose joining the Commonwealth war effort was a more straightforward affair,<sup>2</sup> General Jan Smuts, the deputy prime minister, initially in coalition with the Nationalists and then later forming a single party, had to resolve a bitter internal debate. The Prime Minister General J.B.M. Hertzog, who represented a significant portion of Afrikaner aspirations, delivered a strong bid to keep the Union neutral.<sup>3</sup> This internal division along political, racial and language lines played a significant role in sustaining tension throughout South Africa's war effort. Smuts noted poignantly in a speech to the nation on New Year's Eve 1940 that,

The outbreak of war, far from sobering our people into a sense of responsibility and calling a halt to our excessive party politics, seems to have coincided with a fresh impetus to our party's strength. This is the sadder side of our national life. In the moment of danger, instead of uniting around our leadership, we do our best to break it down.<sup>4</sup>

Smuts had to maintain a delicate, political, high-wire act for the remainder of the war, keeping in balance relations with the United Kingdom and harmony back home, armed until the 1943 election with a slim majority in parliament and having to deal with a fickle electorate sensitive to any losses that might be incurred in military adventures far from home.<sup>5</sup>

With the black population effectively locked out of the political process<sup>6</sup> and deep internecine divisions in the white community, South Africa embarked somewhat hesitantly on war in support of the Commonwealth. South Africa's political ambivalence was matched by her general unpreparedness for war, the poor state of her armed forces lacking in every sphere from vital coastal defences to modern armaments, and to the miniscule size of her army and air force and non-existent navy.<sup>7</sup> Despite these tenuous beginnings, South Africa was able to place her resources and economy on a war footing with some commendable alacrity and mobilise considerable manpower in the form of the 1<sup>st</sup> South African Infantry Division's deployment to Kenya completed at the end of November 1940 in support of a campaign to oust the Italians from East Africa. This South

African effort was the largest single force to take the field against the Italians in East Africa, providing motorised infantry, the greater part of the artillery and air force, and essential specialised support comprising engineering, medical and transport services.<sup>8</sup>

After a successful campaign to oust lacklustre Italians from East Africa, the Union Defence Force (UDF) redeployed to North Africa, and met up with the newly arrived Deutsches Afrika Korps (DAK) and reinforced Italians falling under the inspired leadership of General Erwin Rommel. Facing a formidable opponent in the form of the DAK, the UDF unfortunately suffered two of the greatest defeats of South African arms in quick succession: first losing the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade in a one-sided battle at Sidi Rezegh in November 1941 and then suffering the ignominious capitulation of the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> South African Infantry Division in the surrender of the Tobruk garrison in June 1942 under the command of Major General H.B. Klopper.<sup>9</sup> These defeats served to exacerbate already strained relations within the Union of South Africa and those of the Union and other Commonwealth states. Behind a facade of “business as usual”, some South Africans felt that they were perhaps being sacrificed unnecessarily on the battlefield by inept or indifferent British leadership,<sup>10</sup> while at the same time an undercurrent of doubt began to take root in certain British quarters, questioning the battlefield resolve of the South African soldier.<sup>11</sup> These complicated internal and external political forces would have a powerful influence on shaping South African military historiography and its subsequent development even up to the present day.

A much-reduced UDF suffering the loss of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division at Tobruk would go on to see the Axis Forces defeated at El Alamein in November 1942 and the eventual demise of the Afrika Korps in Tunisia in May 1943. The 6<sup>th</sup> South African Armoured Division was formed that same year and campaigned with distinction, first as part of the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army in the Italian campaign and then with the United States 5<sup>th</sup> Army, for the remainder of the war.

Looking at the historiography of this era, “there are many topics still to tackle and much room for debate.”<sup>12</sup> This is especially true in the South African situation where, as the title of this article suggests, the quantity and quality of military historical work produced on the participation of South

Africa in the Second World War has lagged compared to buoyant international trends with the exception of significant academic contributions over the last decade by authors such as Jeffrey Grey, Nick Southey, Andrew Stewart, Neil Roos, Deon Visser and Ian van der Waag, amongst the most prolific.

Context has been provided for the state of the historiography of South Africa's participation in the Second World War by providing a background of the political schisms surrounding the exploits of the UDF and its participation in the Second World War. The aim of this article is to evaluate and discuss the more important South African primary and secondary sources pertaining to the Union Defence Force's participation in the Second World War, highlighting the sources available together with limitations in the published material, and areas of historiographical hiatus that present opportunities for further research.

The development of South African military historiography will be examined next and compared to trends of the other major participants in the Second World War. Reasons will be offered as to the somewhat threadbare South African historiography, especially when compared to the other belligerents. A brief survey will be conducted of primary sources, identifying some of those archival sources inadequately accessed, followed by an analysis of secondary sources broken down into official, semi-official and general history examining their methodological integrity and completeness with a view to identifying what historical contributions may still be made in the light of what has been produced.

### **The Development of South African Military Historiography**

As has been noted, South Africa entered the war deeply divided and these political divisions influenced the shape of South African military historiography. The fact that the majority black population was to all intents and purposes excluded from the political process led to their omission in the historiography of that period, despite their contributing a third of the forces deployed by the UDF.<sup>13</sup> The reluctance of Afrikaner nationalists to join the war and their desire to remain neutral ensured that interest in the South African war effort would wane after an Afrikaner Nationalist Party government seized power in 1948.<sup>14</sup> The history of South African

participation in the war was sacrificed in the face of Afrikaner nationalism and their desire to build an Afrikaner nation.<sup>15</sup> It was in this political climate that South Africa's efforts to construct an official history were prematurely terminated. Afrikaner nationalists saw the UDF's participation in the war as largely irrelevant, and they despised those Afrikaners who took part.<sup>16</sup>

While the Nationalist government embarked on an Afrikaner nation-building exercise in which South Africa's war effort was for all intents and purposes ignored, English-speaking South Africans exploiting a different agenda, wrote military history reminiscent of the drum and trumpet style.<sup>17</sup> A fair proportion of regimental histories were written at a time when citizen force units, especially those of an imperial flavour, felt under threat of closure by a largely Afrikaner-dominated defence force structure headed up by Frans C. Erasmus, the Minister of Defence from 1948–1959, that sought to root out English influences in the army. Regimental histories – mostly of the English units – made their appearance with the dual aim of recording their contribution for posterity and perhaps to prove their worth to a nationalist government that increasingly saw little relevance in British-inspired regiments in the midst of what was increasingly becoming an Afrikaner-dominated army.<sup>18</sup>

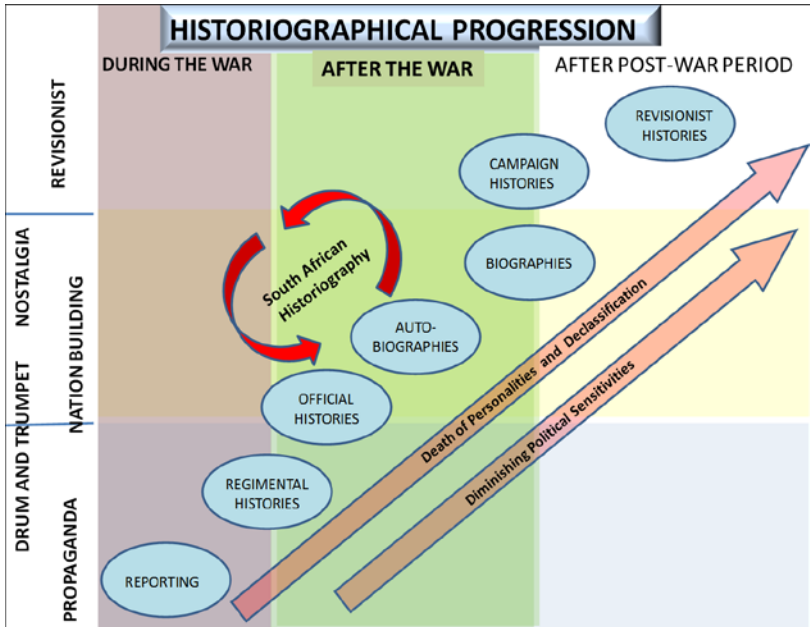
During the 1960s and 1970s, after South Africa had left the Commonwealth, the country experienced ever-increasing isolation in the face of a growing insurgency war, while the Nationalist government sought to unite English and Afrikaners against a common enemy.<sup>19</sup> This period saw a belated attempt through various government-sponsored, semi-official histories, some dealing with aspects of the Second World War, to rekindle a sense of "South Africanism" in the increasingly beleaguered white population.<sup>20</sup> Attempts to resuscitate memories of South Africa's participation in the Second World War have been made largely for political reasons – some being initiatives under the auspices of the government; others being projects undertaken by the various citizen force units and ex-servicemen's associations. An example of the latter being the semi-official histories of Neil Orpen and H.J. Martin perhaps encouraged by South Africa's opting to become a republic and subsequent breaking with the Commonwealth of Nations.<sup>21</sup>

In the early 1990s, the Nationalist government again embarked on a politically motivated sponsorship of semi-official histories invoking UDF participation in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War. This time, the reason was to draw to the attention of the western powers to South Africa's always-willing contribution to the cause of the West by a loyal white minority. This government-sponsored Ashanti series was published at a time when government sought to elicit western sympathy and draw attention to South Africa's contribution to western military interests, on the eve of a negotiated settlement with the various black liberation struggle movements.<sup>22</sup>

South Africa's Second World War historiography has been shaped largely by political considerations in order to achieve certain political objectives. These strong political undertones made it virtually impossible to produce an unbiased history of South Africa during the Second World War. It is worth noting that the black population, largely ignored in the historiography, has as a result shown little interest in South African military history. The virtual discarding of South Africa's military history at various stages after the war and its use to meet political ends, contrasts with historiographical developments in the other major participants in the Second World War. Most other combatants completed excellent official histories, leading to a plethora of secondary sources examining countless aspect of the war.<sup>23</sup> The latter part of the twentieth century saw revisionary-type history emerging that took advantage of the declassification of primary documents, while the passing of many of the major personalities who participated in the war facilitated research no longer hindered by political sensitivities or restrictions. These trends were largely ignored in South Africa, where military history suffered relegation by a nation emerging from a divisive past.

Figure 1 depicts the natural progression of military historiography as experienced by most of the participants of the Second World War. The passage of time together with gradual political desensitisation and declassification has resulted in an explosion of secondary material that has built on the foundation of the official histories. Much of the latest material is of a revisionary style exploiting fresh approaches.<sup>24</sup> This trend has not been followed in South Africa where there is little public interest in the war and little progression beyond the first official histories due to political

considerations. Subsequent semi-official histories mainly served the “national interest” rather than producing ground-breaking work or using newly available sources, thus leaving South African military historiography languishing.



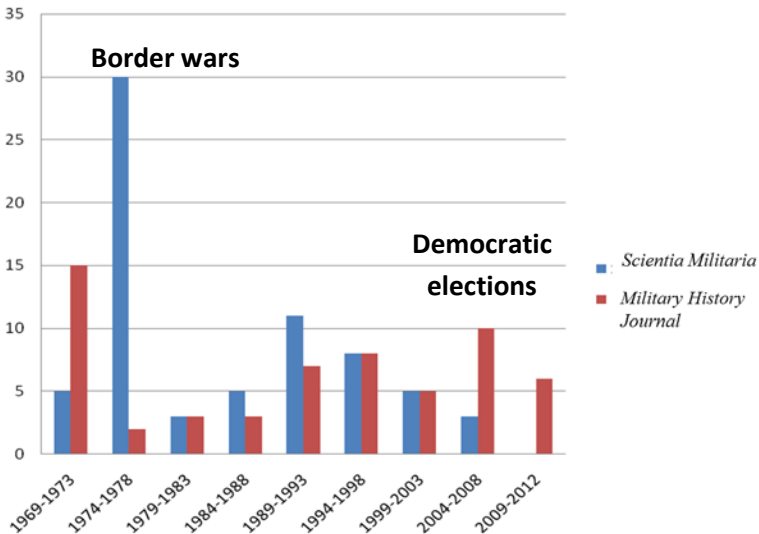
**Figure 1:** The natural progression of military historiography as experienced by most Second World War belligerents.

International public interest in the Second World War has continued unabated into the twenty-first century fuelled by the collapse of the iron curtain and the opening of the Soviet archives. South African historiography, however, has been trapped in a vortex of nation-building and nostalgia either being used to meet political goals or largely ignored for political reasons thus suffering an arrest in development. The natural progression of the historiography of South Africa’s participation in the Second World War, encompassing writing that examines a wider aspect of the Second World War other than that of pure campaign history, has been

limited to a few scholarly works that re-examine aspects of South African wartime participation.<sup>25</sup>

It has been indicated that South African historiography lags behind world trends in the quality and the variety of work produced since 1939 dealing with the Second World War. Furthermore, the total body of work produced in South Africa is small when compared to the number of publications produced by other participants in the war. Military history productivity in South Africa has been buoyed up by the introduction of the Military History Society formed in 1966 by a core group of amateur historians producing the *Military History Journal*, and the launch of the dedicated military history journal *Scientia Militaria*, an accredited, peer-reviewed scholarly journal, which investigates a broad spectrum of matters and issues relating to military affairs, with its first issue released in 1969.

### Articles produced by *Scientia Militaria* and the *Military History Journal* 1969–2012.



**Figure 2:** Articles produced on South Africa's participation in the Second World War by *Scientia Militaria* and the *Military History Journal*.



Figure 2 reflects the frequency of articles from these two publications from their inception to current times. Two productivity peaks can be identified, namely the height of the South African “border wars” in the mid-1970s and early 1980s and the period just prior to the democratic elections of 1994. What is noticeable is the steady waning of truly academic articles since 1994, leaving the largely amateur historians to carry the baton.

An examination of South African sources reveals aspects of the war that have been poorly covered or not covered at all. Most of these lacunae occur in the history of the support services, such as the chaplaincy, logistics, women at war, espionage, home defence, politics, demobilisation, medical services and in the economic sphere. Other omissions manifest in an absence of discussion on the indigenous populations of Kenya, Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia, and one cannot be blamed for thinking incorrectly that these large populations were conveniently absent in a “clean” war. Then there are areas of study that have been poorly served. An example of this is the amphibious campaign in Madagascar located on South Africa’s doorstep, which has received scant attention.<sup>26</sup> There is the matter of looking at the history from a perspective or viewpoint other than generalship, campaign strategy and tactics. There are opportunities to re-examine all aspects of war given the wisdom gained through the passage of time and seeking new insights using a growing body of knowledge. The Axis viewpoint could be incorporated and amalgamated more completely with that of the South African experience providing a unique perspective on battles such as Sidi Rezegh in the Crusader Operation. The history, demography and geology of the terrain that soaked up so much blood in the vicious desert battles could also be included into a history that incorporates many different aspects of the conflict. Lastly, research based on the archival residue is needed and the next section deals with what the primary sources have to offer.

### **Primary Sources**

A good deal of the primary sources available to the researcher in South Africa has been accumulated by the archives of documents and unpublished narratives collected by the Union War Histories Section housed at the South African Defence Force Archives in Pretoria. In order to place this remarkable collection of documents in context, what follows is a brief history of the Union War Histories Section (UWHS), headed up by the

much-underrated Professor J.A.I. Agar-Hamilton, a professional historian with links to the Universities of Pretoria and South Africa.<sup>27</sup>

The prevailing view on the outbreak of the Second World War was that the country's war efforts should be documented properly, to facilitate the formulation of a serious historical account after the war, which was a shift in methodology from the First World War.<sup>28</sup>

The UWHS research team under Agar-Hamilton consisted of university-based historians, government archivists, translators and research assistants, all overseen by an advisory committee formed in 1943. Agar-Hamilton, who was responsible for organising the structure of the unit and the methods by which material was collected, gained a reputation for meticulous accuracy.<sup>29</sup> The composition and mandate of the UWHS marked a departure from the idea that military history should only be undertaken by trained military officers who could understand the technicalities of warfare with the purpose of explaining the sacrifices made, and the lessons derived from it.<sup>30</sup> This "militaristic" approach had marked the official histories of the First World War that saw authors mainly of military extraction appointed to record the history of the Union of South Africa's participation in the campaigns of the war resulting in a largely unsatisfactory history being produced that was "stereotyped in approach and cliché-ridden in their descriptions".<sup>31</sup>

John Keegan points out that the worst types of official history are peculiarly desiccated and didactic, while the best are conscientious and inspired. It would seem that the efforts of the UWHS fall into the latter category.<sup>32</sup>

The UWHS was staffed by able assistants and managed to collect an abundance of official and unofficial documents, together with documents from the Axis forces.<sup>33</sup> The recruiting of professional historians with ready access to documents marked a clear departure from the procedures followed in the historiography of the First World War, and the resulting history was far superior to the official histories of the First World War. The trilogy of work<sup>34</sup> produced by the UWHS and a vast number of unpublished manuscripts, together with a plethora of documentation, form a rich seam of historiographical material, drawn upon by many subsequent scholars, and

available to mine for future work endeavouring to tell the story of South Africa's participation in World War Two.

However the bulk of the work undertaken by the UWS remains unpublished. It is this source of material that will now be discussed and analysed indicating potential areas for further research on South Africa in the Second World War. The Union War Histories are housed at the Documentation Service Directorate (Military Archives) in Pretoria which keeps an extensive collection of 391 boxes of narratives and reports. The collection of boxes is grouped under twenty-four headings; some of the more important narratives and reports (Nareps) will be discussed in this article.

The first seventy-five boxes deal with the economic issues affecting the South African war effort. Narratives appear on the South African war economy amongst others dealing with more specific issues such as commodity control, wastefulness, criticism of economic policy, and revenue and expenditure administration. Documents dealing with all aspects of the economic war effort are also contained in these boxes. There is a whole box containing a draft narrative on price control.<sup>35</sup> This section of the UWH is an extensive source for researching the economic policies and economic aspects of the Second World War and its effects on South Africa.

There are fifty-four boxes containing narratives and documents pertaining to the campaigns in East Africa, Madagascar, the Middle East and Italy.<sup>36</sup> An example of an interesting narrative within the East Africa section is titled "An appreciation of the Ethiopian campaign by Col. O.C. Wingate".<sup>37</sup> Yet another narrative deals with the general outline of the native population of Eritrea, surely an area little explored in the context of the Second World War. Most aspects of the East African campaign – from training to individual reports to movement of the divisions to Egypt – are dealt with extensively. The Madagascar campaign is also covered by the UWS in a series of documents and narratives pertinent to the operation.<sup>38</sup> This particular campaign has not been dealt with extensively in published accounts and the UWH may be a significant source to further research.<sup>39</sup>

The narratives and documents dealing with the Middle East campaign include personal eyewitness reports, intelligence reports, regimental

histories, important documents, and narratives on all aspects of the war in the desert undertaken by the South African forces.<sup>40</sup> This section has most probably seen the largest amount of fruitful publication as it forms a good part of the source material for the two books on the Desert War published by the UWHS.<sup>41</sup>

The next bundle of narratives and documents deals extensively with the campaign in Italy and the history of the 6<sup>th</sup> South African Armoured Division.<sup>42</sup> One of the tantalising titles included in the narratives is “Agar-Hamilton and Turner. South African Sixth Division”, and “E. Axelson 6 SAA Div in Italy (Aug. 1944) up to the fall of Florence”.<sup>43</sup> The boxes on the Italian campaign also contain documents and narratives on all of the supporting arms such as the artillery and air force, as well as the engineering units and all the sub-units making up the Sixth Division.

Further boxes in the series contain individual regimental histories, including obscure units such as the 1<sup>st</sup> SA Entertainment Unit, the contribution of the supporting services such as the Medical Corps and the bomb disposal units and mine-lifting operations, and aspects of the “native” contingents sent North as part of the South African war effort.<sup>44</sup> The material on these “native” contingents may provide a significant source for further research into an area much neglected by historians.

There follows a section dealing with foreign, German, and Italian documents.<sup>45</sup> The UWHS was fortunate in being able to accumulate a large amount of captured and donated documents that give a unique insight into the campaigns fought by the UDF. The material covers a wide range, an example being the war diary of the German 90<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Division from 15 May 1942 to 5 July 1942, to the war diary of the Deutsches Afrika Korps itself. A good crop of Italian war documents is also accommodated in this section, giving rare exposure to the Italian war effort in the African campaign. It is fortunate that many of these documents are translated into English, and this creates an opportunity to research Axis material that would have been excluded due to a language barrier.<sup>46</sup> These Axis documents give a good indication of the war seen through enemy eyes as well as an assessment on the performance of the South African contingent they faced.

The UWHS Archives also include a section headed “Draft narratives”,<sup>47</sup> which contains material for the trilogy of books actually published by the UWHS and also, more importantly, unpublished material on the gaps in the desert war and operations in East Africa not dealt with in the published books, such as the Air Operations in the Middle East.<sup>48</sup> Further sections deal with narratives on specific actions of the war and herein lies the material for the further four books intended to be published by the UWHS, namely the campaign in Italy, the role of the SAAF, the campaign in East Africa, and the remaining battles not covered in the two published books on Tobruk and Sidi Rezegh.<sup>49</sup> The manuscripts for these books were largely completed at the time of the closure of the UWHS.<sup>50</sup>

Mention needs to be made of the existence of extensive collections of personal documents of several South Africans who played important roles during the Second World War. These collections are housed at various institutions in South Africa. These include amongst others documents of Field Marshal Jan Smuts (National Archives, Pretoria), Lieutenant General George Brink and Major General Frank Theron (Defence Archives, Pretoria), Prof. Eric Axelson (University of Cape Town), Colonel E.G. Malherbe (University of KwaZulu-Natal), and Colonel Neil Orpen (Defence Archives, Pretoria). A much-underutilised source of first-hand accounts resides in the many archives retained by South African regiments or their affiliated associations who are the custodians of many personal letters and effects of their members who fought in the war, giving researchers a chance to reconstruct a “face of battle”-type history.

The contents of the unpublished manuscripts and documents of the UWHS have been examined above, albeit in a cursory manner, in order to assess what is available for research purposes. The collection of UWHS documents is vast and extensive and deals with issues of the history of South Africa in the Second World War beyond the published works. It is a promising source of information readily available for research purposes, comprising first-class primary and secondary material.<sup>51</sup> The three published official volumes alluded to above will now be examined in somewhat more detail.

## **Official Histories of the Second World War and the Union War Histories Section**

The UWHS managed to produce three magnificent volumes of history before its forced closure in 1961. This excellent trilogy remains unsurpassed today by anything else produced on the subjects covered.<sup>52</sup> It is worth quoting the citation for an honorary degree awarded to Agar-Hamilton at Rhodes University as it illuminates the esteem that the books produced by the UWHS are held in by the academic world. The trilogy is praised for being, “one of the best and most objective of all military histories and the best of official histories.”<sup>53</sup> These histories, despite the efforts of subsequent historians, have remained largely unsurpassed as exhaustive treatments of the campaigns they covered.<sup>54</sup>

The first book produced by the UWHS covers the fall of Tobruk and the First Battle of Alamein.<sup>55</sup> Here Agar-Hamilton deals with the reasons for the fall of Tobruk and the resulting surrender of the South Africans. The book most probably has a twofold purpose in that a proper academic explanation was needed for the fall of Tobruk in the light of the Australian success in holding the fortress the year before, and it offers something in the way of lessons learned.<sup>56</sup> The second book deals in great depth with Operation Crusader and the destruction of the 5<sup>th</sup> South African Infantry Brigade.<sup>57</sup> It seeks to resolve the controversy regarding the destruction of 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade and the Crusader battles.<sup>58</sup> The third and final publication in the UWHS trilogy, deals with naval operations in South African and adjacent waters, and South African participation in the amphibious operations culminating in the invasion of Madagascar.<sup>59</sup> Using documents and extensive research from London and Germany and including input from the South African Air Force, resulted in perhaps the best official history ever produced in South Africa.<sup>60</sup>

The UWHS was both scrupulous and conscientious in making extensive use of British, American, German, Italian and South African documents in compiling these comprehensive books.<sup>61</sup> However, the public reception was anything but overwhelming and each book was released into an ever-waning public interest in the war. With the passing in 1958 of Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom, who was an unlikely protector of the UWHS, so too passed any real prospect of completing the official histories. There is

little doubt that Agar-Hamilton and the UWHS suffered under a Nationalist government and must have treaded very carefully when examining such issues as the surrender of Tobruk in the light of the prominent position given to Klopper by the Nationalist government in 1952. The efforts of Agar-Hamilton were finally extinguished in 1962 when all pretences of government interest in producing an official history of the war ended in the premature closure of the UWHS.<sup>62</sup>

The unpublished manuscripts together with all of the accumulated documents are now housed in the Defence Archives in Pretoria. These manuscripts and documents form an important resource for the semi-official publications that followed and remain to this day an important resource for future publications on South Africa's participation in the Second World War. It is usual for the official histories, which are the "first histories" to be supplanted later by full academic works, subsequent research standing on the shoulders of the official history. However in the case of the UWHS, nothing of sufficient weight has followed to displace their standing as *locus classicus*. The semi-official histories will now be examined, their birth ushered in by the premature demise of the UWHS in 1961, when Dr H.F. Verwoerd closed the section down.<sup>63</sup>

### **The Semi-Official Histories of Neil Orpen and James Ambrose Brown**

The premature closure of the UWHS created a hiatus in recording the history of South Africa's participation in the Second World War. Thus far, the UWHS had managed to publish material on South Africa's worst defeats and had not been given a chance of publishing some of its greatest achievements during the war.

Lieutenant General George Brink who headed up a body of veterans' organisations was instrumental in establishing the South African War Histories Advisory Committee.<sup>64</sup> This committee then appointed two writers, Neil Orpen and James Ambrose Brown, to continue the work of the UWHS and complete the history of South Africa's participation in the Second World War.<sup>65</sup> Orpen produced a number of regimental histories and served with the armed forces being commissioned in the Cape Garrison Artillery in 1938, and was one of the luckless garrison captured at Tobruk in June 1942.<sup>66</sup> Brown, a well-known novelist approached for his literary

skills,<sup>67</sup> and Lieutenant General H.J. Martin who later replaced Brown, together with Orpen, produced eight volumes in the South African Forces World War II series published by Purnell between 1962 and 1982.<sup>68</sup>

This series drew heavily on the UWHS unpublished and published work in its construction and also relied on the numerous regimental histories and secondary sources that had been published by that time.<sup>69</sup> Other than making use of the work produced by the UWHS, there is little evidence of original research. The books are of a concise nature and when compared with the monumental works of Agar-Hamilton and the UWHS, they lack sophistication and are neither as rigorous nor as authoritative.<sup>70</sup> An anecdotal source has it that after the series had appeared, a former researcher and narrator at the UWHS was less than happy with Orpen's approach. Whereas the trilogy of official histories was carefully researched and given over in draft form for comment to all the major Axis and Allied participants, Orpen apparently simply transcribed large sections of some draft manuscripts without correction and outside commentary.<sup>71</sup> Exceptions were the volume titled *South Africans at War* and the two-volume history of the SA Engineers Corps produced by Orpen and Martin. There are also indications that the body of work has been sanitised to a certain extent, by removing all reference to excesses committed by the South African forces, and conflicts between English and Afrikaans soldiers, or any instance that may have caused embarrassment to the South African government.<sup>72</sup>

It is debatable whether the series does justice to the original body of work produced by the UWHS whose work the authors were appointed to complete. Martin, Orpen and Brown, unlike those who worked in the UWHS, were not trained professional historians and this limitation is reflected in the series. Undeniably, the series does make a valuable contribution to the historiography of South Africa in the Second World War in the absence of the official histories on the same subject. Neil Orpen's contribution was central to the successful publication of the South African Forces World War II series, and he played a significant part in writing up the regimental histories of a number of citizen force units.<sup>73</sup> His and other contributions to the regimental history of South African units will be examined next.



## The Regimental Histories

The published and unpublished material of the UWHS played a fundamental role in the formulation of many of the better South African regimental histories discussed below. The South African regimental histories of the Second World War have been written largely independently of any influence from the regular forces with varying degrees of professionalism and skill.

Most of these regimental histories cover the life of the regiment that in some cases spanned from the Boer War and earlier, the First World War, through to the Second World War and beyond. Thus, the Second World War chapters form only a part of the regimental histories, albeit a major part in some cases, and are therefore by nature concise and limited. It has to be kept in mind that the primary purpose of a regimental history is, *inter alia*, to instil regimental pride in members of the unit, as well as to record the history of the unit. In fulfilling this purpose there is an inclination to glorify the efforts of the regiment even if these resulted in reversals or even defeat and to protect the reputation of individuals. An example of this can be found in the regimental history of the South African Irish, where Monick,<sup>74</sup> the author, sees the defeat of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade at the hands of the Afrika Korps as a pyrrhic victory not dissimilar to Isandlwana where the tactical victor subsequently lost strategically due to the over-expenditure of resources in securing that victory. Thus Monick, in an effort to glorify the demise of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade and its South African Irish component, presents somewhat of a casuistic argument.<sup>75</sup>

Orpen wrote no less than five regimental histories and in doing so made good use of the same sources, in many instances, that he utilised in the South African World War II series, namely that of the official publications of the UWHS and the unpublished material such as the narratives and reports of the UWHS residing in the archives. He also made extensive use of the South African World War II series together with other published regimental histories in constructing his own archive. In using the same formula and sources as his major series, he has produced a competent set of regimental histories in comparison with some other attempts, and yet there is very little in the way of new research or material, beyond reproducing essentially the same history in a regimental format. Ideally, the official histories would serve the purpose of being the “first histories”, to be

supplanted later by full academic works. It cannot be said that the regimental histories have added in any significant way to the body of knowledge offered by the history produced by the UWHS.<sup>76</sup>

There are many different approaches to regimental history. Working on the history of the Witwatersrand Rifles (1989), Monick espoused, “a unique and refreshingly original approach to regimental history specifically, and South African military history in general”.<sup>77</sup> Thus, according to Monick, he went beyond compiling mere facts and beyond the narrow confines of the regiment itself in conceiving its history, thus adopting a more sociological approach and “capturing the rhythms” of the regiment as a social organism.<sup>78</sup> Themes such as the role of personalities, the political-social context and the role of regenerating life streams are developed in the book.<sup>79</sup>

Monick also produced *Clear the Way* which is the regimental history of the South African Irish Regiment from 1880 through to 1990, parts of which are dedicated to the history of the South African Irish Regiment in the Second World War.<sup>80</sup> The author unfortunately has not achieved the admirable aims set out above to the same extent as his history of the Witwatersrand Rifles. The section on the Second World War consisting of a single, massive, 300-page chapter includes a myriad of personal accounts quoted directly from source, and whole newspaper articles reproduced word for word. Documents and war diaries have received the same treatment in being reproduced word for word in part but mostly in whole. Endless name lists and orders of battle frequent many of the pages where they perhaps belong more properly in an appendix of sorts. Citations and extracts from books and other regimental histories liberally fill the pages of the Irish regimental history. Monick has no qualms in extracting large tracts of text from the works of Orpen and Agar-Hamilton, and incorporating them verbatim into the text. The author also sees fit to treat the reader to a lesson in the writing of a regimental history in the middle of the text.<sup>81</sup> This treatment of sources seems to be an exercise in a “cut-and-paste” approach. A specific case in point that demonstrates Monick’s aversion to venture far from the official history is an interesting letter by a Lieutenant E.C. Maunsell who offers a dissenting view to the otherwise heroic reports emanating from the disastrous destruction of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade at Sidi Rezegh.<sup>82</sup> Monick reproduces the letter verbatim and offers nothing more

insightful than a comment as to its possible origins, leaving the reader guessing as to its historical relevance.<sup>83</sup>

Moreover, Monick attempts to justify his approach by drawing a distinction between official histories, which by necessity distance themselves from an individual subjective approach, and a regimental approach that conceptualises the regiment as the sum total of individual memories and experiences. It is in the execution of this ideal of incorporating the individual recollection into the “bigger picture” of the battle or campaign that Monick’s work falls short of his stated ideals. The numerous individual accounts that appear in the book, unedited and verbatim, could have been incorporated seamlessly with a more skilled amalgamation of these individual accounts, social aspects and campaign histories. The result is a text that is difficult to read and which looks more like a primary source than a research work capturing the “rhythm” of the South African Irish Regiment.

In direct contrast to this, is a monumental work in the form of the regimental history of the Transvaal Scottish titled *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish* by Carel Birkby.<sup>84</sup> Birkby was a journalist by trade spending much of his time in the field with the South African Forces in East Africa and the Western Desert. Birkby wrote the regimental history of the Transvaal Scottish prior to any publication or definitive work by the UWHS. He was however allowed access to the draft narratives of the UWHS and was able to submit his own drafts for revision by the UWHS. As a result of his close cooperation with the UWHS and a somewhat pleasing writing style, he was able to produce what amounted to a ground-breaking history that examined the East African and North African campaigns through the eyes of the Transvaal Scottish.

Birkby was able to exploit his close friendship with Lieutenant General George E. Brink<sup>85</sup> and in 1987 he published one of the few and certainly the best biography of a Second World War South African General.<sup>86</sup> South African historians, perhaps with the exception of Birkby, have been unable to produce any worthwhile biographies of those who led South African Forces in the Second World War.<sup>87</sup> Birkby’s biography of Brink makes use of declassified documentation in the form of an illuminating personal report to Jan Smuts on the disaster of Sidi Rezegh and

the loss of the South African 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade in Operation Crusader, which was to that date the largest South African defeat, eclipsing that of Delville Wood in the First World War.

In sum, the plethora of regimental histories, with a few exceptions, add little to the combined knowledge contained in the official and unofficial histories to which they owe their foundation. An examination of their source base reveals quite an incestuous relationship between the regimental accounts themselves and the official and semi-official publications. An area where the regimental work does complement the existing body of research is its favouring of personal accounts that add the human factor often missing from the official history. The divisional or corps accounts have many of the strengths and weaknesses of the regimental books, and they are examined next.

### **Corps and Divisional Histories**

The regimental histories examined above form an important but concise part of the historiography of South Africa's participation in the Second World War. The corps and divisional histories are more focused on their role as an organisation in the campaign rather than the more individualistic approach of looking at the role of personalities in the regiment. The corps histories highlight the structure of the higher echelons of the organisation and give insight into the administration and logistics of the war enterprise. Among these histories are several volumes produced by the Documentation Service Directorate as part of the Black Publications series. The Black Publications were written with an underlying political motive being sponsored by the Nationalist government that in some instances – through the publication – attempted to unite English and Afrikaans South Africans by highlighting a common military heritage within the armed forces since Union. The hope, perhaps, was to fortify an increasingly insecure apartheid regime that was beginning to face the “winds of change”.

The Black Publications<sup>88</sup> series were the fruit born of the establishment in 1950 of a permanent military archives section manned by university-trained personnel of the permanent force. Military history now had an academic, scientific and responsible footing institutionalised within the Defence Force.<sup>89</sup> Colonel Jan Ploeger wrote the first of the Black

Publications, and nurtured a team of young historians that included Richard Bouch, Richard Cornwell and F.J. Jacobs, under whose auspices the Black Publications continued to appear until 1991, totalling nine issues in all.<sup>90</sup> The books were published with the intention of demonstrating military leadership and lessons learned in combat as well as instilling unit pride through the knowledge of past achievement. The Black Publications that contain references to the Second World War add a new dimension to that conflict from a South African perspective by introducing the role of the Signals, Artillery, Medical, and Defence Force Institutes, establishments that have not been given the same treatment as the more popular campaign, Air Force, Infantry, Armour and Engineer histories.

It is of interest to note that, with one notable exception, a pictorial history on the Second World War edited by John Keene,<sup>91</sup> very little has been published since 1945, by way of a dedicated book dealing specifically with the UDF or components of it in that war. The Black Publications span a number of years with the Second World War merely an event in the total history of the respective corps. However, these histories covering the UDF at least bring to light some of the important support services largely ignored in previous works.

Another exception to the dearth of publications of the South African contribution to the Second World War is a recent book published in 2011 by J. Bourhill titled *Come Back to Portofino*, dealing with the 6<sup>th</sup> South African Armoured Division in Italy.<sup>92</sup> Bourhill deploys a chronological format using his father's diary, over 350 personal letters, newspapers of the period and a liberal dose of archive material from the UWHS. It is interesting to compare the methodology of Bourhill's book to that of Monick's *Clear the Way*, in the light of the fact that both made use of very similar types of primary material. It is the treatment of these primary sources that draws a distinction between the two narratives. It seems that Bourhill has achieved a smooth integration of his three main primary sources,<sup>93</sup> while managing to humanise the experience of the 6<sup>th</sup> South African Armoured Division, by giving the reader an insight into the experiences of the ordinary soldier serving at the front. John Keegan cautions that using private diaries incorrectly may lead to something approaching an anecdotal history.<sup>94</sup> Bourhill avoids this trap by combining diaries with more general sources. It

is somewhat ironic that Bourhill has achieved the very thing that Monick has strived for but failed to deliver.<sup>95</sup>

A quality book that predates that of Bourhill and which covers the same period of history, albeit as a first-hand account, is Eric Axelson's *A year in Italy*.<sup>96</sup> Axelson joined the 6<sup>th</sup> SA Armoured Division in February 1944 as its historical recording officer. He was responsible for maintaining a credible war diary for each unit in the division supplemented with a running record of the activities of the Division, including interviews with participants. He also kept a log of activities of his recording section. Axelson produced a valuable product and items from his log were used during the war for officer tuition at the SA Military College. Its circulation was limited by security considerations which no longer apply.<sup>97</sup> A primary source of importance is the personal documents of Axelson housed at the University of Cape Town.

The remainder of the corps and divisional histories cover a wide range of topics and units from the Air Force, Navy, Engineers, Army and various support units. Some were written during the Second World War while others appeared shortly thereafter. The quality of the work once again varies, with most of the work adding very little to the official histories and not having the same standards of rigour and professionalism. Next to be examined are yet another set of semi-official publications that unfortunately once again add very little to the body of knowledge that preceded them.

### **The Semi-Official Histories Published by Ashanti (South Africans at War Series)**

It has been seen that some of the corps and divisional histories took the form of semi-official publications funded by government. Again the military establishment funded the publication of a twelve-book series by Ashanti Publications titled *South Africans at war*.<sup>98</sup> These books appeared between 1990 and 1994, reintroducing South Africa's role in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War demonstrating keen support of the West in a common struggle, in an attempt to relieve some of the isolation that South Africa felt due to the political climate of the time.<sup>99</sup> Most of the authors were journalists and lay historians and most were probably unaware that they were working on a government-funded project.<sup>100</sup> The books are

unfortunately of varying quality, relying on secondary sources such as the semi-official Purnell series and the regimental histories. The series breaks little new ground and one would find more reward sidestepping the Ashanti series and referring to the official and semi-official works discussed previously.

There are exceptions to the general feeling of mediocrity engendered by the series, and those are where some authors have endeavoured to cover material different from the usual campaign-orientated, mainstream history. A much-overlooked and often-ignored area in the historiography of the UDF is the role of its black members who took part in the Second World War in considerable numbers mainly in a support role.<sup>101</sup> This significant participation in the war is made known by retired general, Ian Gleeson, in his book *The unknown force*,<sup>102</sup> while in her book titled *A country at war 1939–1945*, Jennifer Crwys-Williams tackles the experiences of South Africans in the war from the home front to the front lines providing interesting insights into what it was like to live through the war seen through the eyes of ordinary people.<sup>103</sup> The general histories dealing with South Africa in the Second World War will be examined next.

### **General Histories of South Africa in the Second World War**

Numerous general histories have also appeared on various aspects of South Africa during the Second World War. Those written during the war and shortly thereafter with the purpose of boosting home-front morale have value for reflecting the times they were written in, but suffer from the unavailability of documents for research purposes. There are few single volumes of any standing covering the UDF from 1939 to 1945, nor any other historical works of this period of an outstanding nature. An exception to this is a book written on the siege of Tobruk by E.P. Hartshorn that seeks to redress the negative perception of the South African forces due to their somewhat hasty surrender of Tobruk in 1942 that sent shockwaves around the Commonwealth and caused both Churchill and Smuts considerable political discomfort.<sup>104</sup> Hartshorn makes reference to having had access to the elusive findings of the court of inquiry into the fall of Tobruk, asserting that the court findings largely exonerate Klopper, the South African garrison commander of the garrison of the fortress at Tobruk, a claim perhaps that simplifies greatly the full findings of the inquiry and perhaps ignores some

of the extensive background evidence that forms part of the proceedings of the court.<sup>105</sup> However, the book at least dealt with the court of inquiry and its general findings for the first time whereas the UWS, due to restrictions on the material of the inquiry, was unable to refer directly to it although the UWS made extensive use of the material in their 1952 publication. As Andrew Stewart has noted, these same restrictions prevented Klopper and Lieutenant General Sir Claude Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief Middle East, from quoting directly from the board of inquiry.<sup>106</sup> Klopper subsequently (1950) published a set of popular articles in the *Huisgenoot* magazine, giving his version of events of the fall of Tobruk in 1942.<sup>107</sup>

### **Academic Works and Articles on Aspects of South Africa in the Second World War**

Academic efforts via articles in journals and theses are an indispensable component in historical research and scholarship, allowing for intellectual flexibility, increased levels of specialisation, and opportunities for innovative historical research. The production of academic journals provides a stimulus for further research and debate.<sup>108</sup> Journals are also subject to rigorous peer review and thus the standards obtained are higher than purely commercial projects.<sup>109</sup> With few exceptions, most of the advanced research that has furthered the work of the official histories resides within journal literature published subsequent to the UWS trilogy.

Academic articles have formed the backbone of the military historiographical output over the last fifteen to twenty years making up the majority of all work produced covering South Africa's participation in the Second World War. This is unlike the situation found in the case of most of the other participants, where the subject of the Second World War has been embraced by a much wider percentage of the population and which has led to a plethora of books being published annually covering a wide range of aspects of the war. It seems that interest in South Africa is largely limited to the academic community.

*Scientia Militaria* is an important South African journal that provides a vehicle for articles of a military historic nature. In 1950, a permanent Military Archives section was set up that appointed university-trained historians and established its military history journal in 1969. Although the



practise of academic, scientifically responsible military history was now effectively institutionalised in the South African Defence Force, as Van der Waag notes, the Second World War was once again largely ignored in favour of wars fought on South Africa soil.<sup>110</sup> In the 1970s, two articles dealing with the Second World War as a topic did appear in *Militaria*. These were direct copies of manuscripts produced by the UWHS and originally written by one of Agar-Hamilton's assistants.<sup>111</sup> In the mid-1980s, *Militaria* made use of official history in the national interest countering South Africa's increasing isolation by highlighting the country's role in supporting the West in both world wars and in the Korean conflict.

Most of the theses produced on the topic of South Africa's participation in the Second World War have been of a regimental or a divisional nature describing the exploits of that particular formation during the war. A notable exception to this is the doctoral thesis of Louis Grundlingh who has produced a pioneering work dealing with black South African participation in the Second World War.<sup>112</sup> This monumental work deals extensively with black participation in the UDF in general with particular reference to the Second World War. Black participation in the war has proved to be a popular topic amongst academics since 1994, resulting in a number of academic articles appearing in history journals examining the impact of the war on Africa and black South Africans. Grundlingh has once again pioneered the examination of this previously neglected field with a number of important articles dealing with the social aspects of South African black experience in the Second World War.<sup>113</sup>

In the same vein, but looking at white experiences of the Second World War, is an article by Albert Grundlingh that examines the Afrikaner perspective of a war that did not enjoy solid grassroots support amongst the Afrikaner population.<sup>114</sup> Mention must be made here of N. Roos whose academic book deals with white servicemen both English and Afrikaans in the service of the UDF and their particular experiences both during and after the war.<sup>115</sup> J. Lambert has contributed two articles dealing with English-speaking South Africans and their experiences in the Second World War.<sup>116</sup> Nancy Clark gives insight into the structuring of the wartime economy of South Africa and the role of women in that period. She has also addressed the racial issues endemic to South Africa and the social structure of the workforce influenced by this "racism".<sup>117</sup>

Anglo-South African relations have been an important mainstay and the debate has provided fascinating insights into the delicate relationship between Pretoria and London and the careers of many a politician and soldier when the allied war effort went bad. Deon Visser has examined the complicated social schisms in South Africa, especially those between English and Afrikaans speakers, as well as the resulting tensions in Anglo-South African relations prevailing shortly before and after the outbreak of the Second World War, using the story of a crew of South African sailors who refused duty".<sup>118</sup> Visser, by highlighting the various tensions experienced by the crew aboard the *Erebus*, extrapolates the political tensions within South Africa and between South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Andrew Stewart, further exploring delicate Anglo-South African relations, has written two articles on the surrender of Tobruk in 1942, an event that had the potential to devastate the careers of Churchill and Smuts and adversely influenced the precarious political situation in South Africa at the time.<sup>119</sup> The victory of the Commonwealth forces at Alamein a few months later removed the impact of the Tobruk disaster from the forefront of the allied efforts. Stewart re-examines the impact of the hasty Tobruk surrender, at the hands of Klopper, a young South African general, who was in command of the fortress, in the light of accusations of cowardice and incompetence in Britain and South Africa, reviving questions in Britain of the reliability of the South Africans' commitment and contribution to the war effort. The fall of Tobruk brought into focus the unique and somewhat fragile nature of the relationship between South Africa and Britain, dating back to the turn of the century. In a second article, Stewart examines the post-war efforts of Klopper who sought to rehabilitate his somewhat besmirched name due to the alacrity with which Tobruk was surrendered.<sup>120</sup> While examining the jousting sessions between Klopper, Auchinleck, the British and South African governments, Stewart reveals interesting insights into the actual surrender of the Tobruk fortress as well as the political sensitivities of both governments during the crisis.

An area of historiographical neglect that has received little or no attention is that of the formation and history of the UDF and its leadership. Ian van der Waag has addressed the South African High Command in both World Wars, examining all of sixty-one generals in terms of their social

background, education, force of origin, and combat experience together with their so-called “Britishness”.<sup>121</sup> Studies of this nature involving South African military leadership have been neglected, unlike the attention this subject receives in the United States. Van der Waag, circumventing a hiatus in the historiography, uses prosopographical techniques to draw “a first portrait” of the high command by taking into account the politico-strategic environment and a quantitative overview of the approximately sixty-one men making up the high command from 1912 to 1948. Van der Waag also examined the UDF between the world wars up to 1939,<sup>122</sup> together with Andre Wessels who takes the study further in his article that looks at the first two years of the UDF in the Second World War.<sup>123</sup>

Van der Waag has also produced an important and first insight into official South African military historiography by examining official and semi-official publications and highlighting how the political climate has influenced them in a chapter titled “Contested Histories” referred to extensively in this article.<sup>124</sup> This article, read together with N. Southey’s and F. Mouton’s article on Agar-Hamilton, makes for fascinating reading and provides valuable insights into the workings of the UWHS.<sup>125</sup>

Kent Fedorowich has produced an article dealing with Axis espionage efforts in South Africa and allied counter-intelligence measures and the successful covert operations conducted prior to the invasion of Vichy-controlled Madagascar in May 1942.<sup>126</sup> The article examines the creation by Pretoria of a military intelligence apparatus in wartime South Africa, the establishment of several British liaison and intelligence-gathering agencies and gauges the activities of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in the region, and the SOE’s working relationship with South African intelligence agencies, and the tensions which arose in this regard between London and Pretoria.

Lastly there is the *Military History Journal* of the South African Military History Society formed in 1966 in Johannesburg by group of amateur historians with the purpose of studying and promoting military history.<sup>127</sup> Issues of this journal cover a number of interesting topics of varying quality; some being produced by enthusiastic amateurs and others by learned academics, but obviously not subject to the same rigorous research and review processes of the academic historical journals. However

the Military History Society, through their journal, makes an invaluable contribution in recording the personal experiences of some of the participants and, importantly, keeping alive the interest, albeit in a diminishing interest group, of South Africa's participation in the war.

### **Conclusion**

The context that has fashioned South African Second World War historiography has been outlined and some of the reasons behind its hesitant development identified and traced from inception to current times. Following a brief overview and evaluation of the diverse material constituting primary and secondary sources, areas likely to yield profit to the researcher have been highlighted by identifying historiographical gaps, and limitations in the published material. Comparisons have been drawn to other participants in the Second World War whose historiographies seem to have benefitted from a robust public interest that has been fed by prolific numbers of published works that increasingly examine different aspects of the war. In sharp contrast, the torch in South Africa has been borne by a handful of academics and some enthusiasts, who over the last decade have produced material on hitherto unexplored aspects of the war.

Looking at the situation in more detail one finds that politics in South Africa has been a constant companion, largely of detrimental nature, to this period of historiography. As a result, the somewhat muted history of the UDF in the Second World War has not developed in line with trends established among the other major participants. The unpopularity of the war in a large percentage of the population together with a failure to produce a history that incorporated the black members of the UDF has left its mark on a South African population largely unaware and disinterested in this period of our history. The rise of Afrikaner nationalism, culminating in the return to power of the Nationalists in 1948, stifled the little enthusiasm that remained for the war and South Africa's participation in it.

The incomplete official histories produced by the brilliant UWHS could have served as the foundation on which new research would be built but these, in the main, have not been surpassed. It is also unfortunate that these works, due to premature closure of the section, only cover two of South Africa's worst military disasters, leaving many more of the

triumphant moments and feats of arms languishing unpublished in the archives. Most other belligerents have produced comprehensive official histories that have formed the backbone of a vast multitude of publications covering all aspects of the war. The Second World War was largely ignored in a Nationalist-led South Africa only to be resuscitated via sporadic, sponsored, semi-official histories that served some political purpose rather than add substance to the nation's collective memory. These semi-official histories mostly lacking in original research and relying heavily on the work of the UWHS have added very little to the general body of knowledge. Other attempts at writing the history of this period that have not been sponsored by government, such as the regimental histories, suffer from many of the same weaknesses. Originality and quality have been sacrificed in favour of producing politicised and often partisan historical works that borrow extensively from the work of the UWHS.

The ushering in of a new democratic dispensation in 1994 has seen interest in and published material on South African participation in the Second World War floundering, compared to the unabated demand for Second World War history in other participant countries. In South Africa, the official histories have become the last word rather than a foundation from which to build further research and revision in the light of declassification and the reduction of political sensitivities.

Happily, the journal literature and academic dissertations of the past two decades are an important exception to the general dearth of material produced on South Africa's participation in the Second World War. These academic works have contributed original and insightful material on new aspects of the war from a South African perspective and give hope of a fresh impetus to research coming out of this lethargic and oft politically constrained quagmire. Although limited in number, this scholarship examines several previously neglected areas of study, such as the war-time social fabric of South Africa, the role of so-called "out groups", South Africa's complicated relationship with the United Kingdom, and the impact of politics on the memory of the war. It is these academic works, together with extensive unpublished documentation of the Union War Histories, that will form a solid foundation and give impetus to new research enticing various disinterested and alienated South African population groups to reclaim their rightful place in history.

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- <sup>1</sup> A Stewart. "The British government and the South African neutrality crisis, 1938–39". *English Historical Review* 123. 2008. 947–972; J Grey. "'Standing humbly in the ante-chambers of Clio': The rise and fall of union war histories". *Scientia Militaria* 30/2. 2000. 253.
- <sup>2</sup> The Canadian entry into the war was perhaps a little less smooth than the other Dominions but not nearly as difficult as the South African situation. See for example WAB Douglas & B Greenhouse. *Out of the shadows: Canada in the Second World War*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- <sup>3</sup> Stewart *op. cit.*, pp. 947–972.
- <sup>4</sup> As quoted by J Crwys-Williams. *A country at war 1939–1945: The mood of a nation*. Rivonia: Ashanti, 1992, 53.
- <sup>5</sup> The United Party under Field Marshal Jan Smuts gained 89 seats out of a 150-seat parliament, winning an outright majority in the 1943 election. D Visser. "Anglo-South African relations and the Erebus Scheme, 1936–1939". *Scientia Militaria* 35/1. 2007. In this article, Visser highlights the internal stresses existing in South African society and Anglo-South African relations through the example of South African crew members stranded in the United Kingdom on a training exercise between that country's and later South Africa's declaration of war against Germany.
- <sup>6</sup> Interestingly, the government received support via a resolution from the African National Congress for South Africa's entry into the war at its annual conference in December 1939. See L Grundlingh. "The participation of South African blacks in the Second World War". PhD thesis. Rand Afrikaans University, 1986, 10.
- <sup>7</sup> H Martin & N Orpen. *South Africa at war: Military and industrial organization and operations in connection with the conduct of the war, 1939–1945*. Cape Town: Purnell, 1979, 24–32. South Africa's defence needs were perhaps up to this stage more inwardly looking and based on the more immediate threat of internal security.
- <sup>8</sup> N Orpen. *East African and Abyssinian campaigns*. Cape Town: Purnell, 1968, 61–70. Orpen sums up South Africa's contribution to this campaign succinctly in the introduction to the book stating, "In no other theatre was any British commander so well served by fighting units and formations which apart from a few Indian gunners, came entirely from Africa".
- <sup>9</sup> The circumstances surrounding the surrender of Tobruk were investigated by a court of inquiry whose findings largely exonerated Major-General HB Klopper. However, there is some evidence that the contention that the defences of Tobruk had been allowed to fall into disrepair, mines and obstacles had been removed to other locations and no maps of the minefields were to be found, making the fortress indefensible, is not strictly supported by the Board of Inquiry.
- <sup>10</sup> A Danchev & D Todman (eds). *War diaries 1939–1945: Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke*. London: Phoenix, 2002, 243, 244. Alanbrooke states in a 31 March 1942 entry a mere two and a half months prior to the fall of Tobruk that, "Half our Corps and Divisional Commanders are totally unfit for their appointments, they lack character, imagination, drive, and the power of leadership."
- <sup>11</sup> This undercurrent of doubt in the South African's resolve to fight and on the other hand a feeling by South Africans that they had been sacrificed unnecessarily can be found stated blatantly or more subtly in numerous sources.

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- See, for instance, W Churchill. *The Second World War: The hinge of fate*. Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1950, 382–383 for Churchill’s famous comment on hearing of the surrender of Tobruk, that “defeat is one thing and disgrace is another”.
- <sup>12</sup> J Black. *Rethinking military history*. New York: Routledge, 2004, 243.
- <sup>13</sup> K Grundy. *Soldiers without politics: Blacks in the South African Armed Forces*. London: University of California, 1983, 76. According to the author, 122 254 black people were recruited by the UDF by February 1943.
- <sup>14</sup> A Stewart. “The Klopper Affair: Anglo-South African relations and the surrender of the Tobruk Garrison”. *Twentieth Century British History* 17/4. 2006. 540. Stewart states that, “Successive Apartheid regimes ensured interest would soon fade. Publications gradually made less mention of what was seen as a British imperial matter”.
- <sup>15</sup> Nationalist Afrikaner reluctance to join in the war should be distinguished from the general feeling among Afrikaners – see H Giliomee. *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2009, 441: “Afrikaners did not boycott the war as a group ... about half the fighting troops were Afrikaners”. A portion of Afrikaner reluctance both during and after the war can be attributed to factors other than pure nationalism and anti-British sentiment. Hardships experienced during the war by Afrikaners in the form of discrimination against those who did not volunteer for overseas duty, constant surveillance, internment camps for transgressors, and domestic hardships such as rationing played a major role in building an anti-war sentiment.
- <sup>16</sup> A Grundlingh. “The King’s Afrikaners? Enlistment and ethnic identity in the Union of South Africa’s Defence Force during the Second World War, 1939–45”. *The Journal of African History* 40/3. 1999. 352. Grundlingh states that General Jan Smuts was regarded as a ‘traitor’ by many ‘true’ Afrikaners because of what they considered to be his pro-British stance. “In the eyes of anti-war nationalists, those who had taken the oath were seen as the handymen of empire and the ultimate betrayers of Afrikanerdom. Politically and culturally, they were regarded as reprobates and singled out for particular opprobrium. Such stereotyping meant that subsequent nationalist historians discarded those Afrikaans-speakers who had served in the armed forces, tacitly assuming that in the military blender they had become indistinguishable from their English-speaking counter-parts” (pp. 362–363).
- <sup>17</sup> Although books of a ‘drum and trumpet’ style continue to be prolific in the non-South African markets right up to the present day, the traditional approach has perhaps been superseded or rather refined by adopting an informed consideration of operational capability. See Black *op. cit.*, p. 8.
- <sup>18</sup> I van der Waag. “Contested histories: Official history and the South African military in the 20th century”. In J Grey (ed), *The last word? Essays on official history in the United States and British Commonwealth*. Westport, PA: Praeger, 2003, 39. So-called English-speaking regiments were subject to a process of Afrikanerisation under Erasmus, which included the closure of regiments, the breaking of regimental alliances with Commonwealth counterparts and the regimental name changes in some instances.

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- <sup>19</sup> R Warwick. “White South Africa and defence 1960–1968: Militarization, threat perceptions and counter strategies”. PhD thesis. University of Cape Town, 2009. See chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis, where the melding of Afrikaners and Englishmen into the South African Defence Force in the 1960s is discussed in great detail.
- <sup>20</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*; these being the so-called Black Publications “using official history in the national interest”, as Van der Waag puts it.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40. These semi-official histories were an attempt by interested parties to repair and maintain links with the Commonwealth Forces by emphasising South Africa’s contribution to the common struggle against fascism.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42. The Ashanti Series is described by Van der Waag as a “concealed” or “secret history”, where most of the authors were unaware of their government sponsorship.
- <sup>23</sup> In the late 1970s, the Germans rather belatedly produced a monumental 13-volume work by the *Militär-geschichtliches Forschungsamt* (German Armed Forces Military History Research Office) titled *Germany and the Second World War*, which covers many aspects of the war previously glossed over from a German point of view. This makes it an indispensable aid to research on any topic involving the Second World War. Historiographical developments in the other major participants include an emphasis on war and society and cultural aspects of the war, including an attack on culture and memory, in what Black *op. cit.*, p. 6, calls a “tendency to de-militarize military history” by considering those who experienced war but were not fighting.
- <sup>24</sup> An article by J Miller highlights some of these new trends taking place in academic history that has seen a move away from ‘Drum and Trumpet’ military history, toward a social history that includes race, sex and class at its core. This trend away from pure military science has occurred mainly at higher learning faculties where military history is seen as “a subject for right wing, imperialistic warmongers”, according to Professor Robert Bruce, quoted in the article. J Millar. “Sounding taps: Why military history is being retired”. *National Review Online*. 9 October 2006  
<<http://www.nationalreview.com/nrd/article/?q=YTdiMDkzZDJjYTYwOwM4YmlyMmE4N2IwODFINWU0MjE=>> Accessed on 10 September 2012.
- <sup>25</sup> The growing market for military history has led some to believe that the academic community has largely handed the baton over to popular writers who lack the intellectual and monetary resources necessary to produce true scholarly works. See Black *op. cit.* p. 25, who says that historians’ hostility to military history has damaged academic writing.
- <sup>26</sup> This campaign was dealt with in a series of five articles appearing in *Scientia Militaria*, the first appearing in 1977. See J Grobler. “Die geallieerde besetting van Madagaskar in 1942”. *Scientia Militaria* 7/4. 1977.
- <sup>27</sup> N Southey & FA Mouton. “‘A volksvreemde historian’: JAI Agar-Hamilton and the production of history in an alien environment”. *South African Historical Journal* 44. 2001. 72.
- <sup>28</sup> Grey “‘Standing humbly ... ” *op. cit.*, p. 255.
- <sup>29</sup> Southey & Mouton *op. cit.*, p. 91.
- <sup>30</sup> Grey “‘Standing humbly ... ” *op. cit.*, p. 253.



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- <sup>31</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, pp. 32–36.
- <sup>32</sup> J Keegan. *The face of battle*. London: Pimlico, 1995, 23.
- <sup>33</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, p. 37.
- <sup>34</sup> The UWHS is best known for the publication of a trilogy of books that deal meticulously with specific aspects of the war. The three works are: J Agar-Hamilton & L Turner. *Crisis in the desert, May–June 1942*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1957; J Agar-Hamilton & L Turner. *The Sidi Rezegh Battles, 1941*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1957 and L Turner, H Gordon-Cumming & J Betzler. *War in the southern oceans, 1939–1945*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- <sup>35</sup> Directorate Documentation Services (DDS) (Military Archives), Union War Histories Section, Box 50.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, Box 119 to 173.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, Box 121.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, Box 126.
- <sup>39</sup> Articles that deal briefly with aspects of the Madagascar campaign are J Grobler. “Die geallieerde besetting van Madagaskar in 1942: Die toetrede van die Suid-Afrikaanse landmagte en die besetting van Tananarive”. *Scientia Militaria* 8/2. 1978 (see footnote 22) and J Clayton. “The South African Air Force in the Madagascar campaign”. *Military History Journal* 9/2. 1992. A Wessels wrote an article for the *Military History Journal* that deals briefly with this little-explored campaign. See A Wessels. “South Africa and the war against Japan 1941-1945”. *Military History Journal* 10/3. 1996.
- <sup>40</sup> DDS *op. cit.*, Box 127 to 139.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Box 127 to 139.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Box 140 to 143.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Box 141.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, Box 144 to 173. Attention must be drawn here to the work of I Gleeson. *The unknown force: Black, Indian and coloured soldiers through two world wars*. Rivonia: Ashanti, 1994 and Grundlingh “The participation of South African blacks ...” *op. cit.*, both works dealing with black participation in the UDF of the Second World War. Grundlingh’s work remains inexplicably unpublished despite its comprehensiveness and nature of its ground-breaking subject matter.
- <sup>45</sup> DDS *op. cit.*, Box 174 to 237.
- <sup>46</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, p. 37. Beside the assistance of researchers and archivists in the UWHS, a number of translators were deployed to translate these documents to English.
- <sup>47</sup> DDS *op. cit.*, Box 316 to 337.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Box 317
- <sup>49</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, p. 40.
- <sup>50</sup> Grey ““Standing humbly ...” *op. cit.*, p. 265.
- <sup>51</sup> In fact, examples of these unpublished manuscripts have been published in *Militaria* since the demise of the UWHS, two of which are JW North. “South African Army Postal Services 1940–1946”. *Militaria* 2/6. 1970 and FJ Jacobs & R Bouch. “6 Armoured Division Italy”. *Militaria* 4/2 and 4/3. 1974.
- <sup>52</sup> Black *op. cit.*, p. 29, makes the point that even though there is a perception that the operational dimension of the war may have been thoroughly covered,

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- frequently recounted battles benefit from re-examination, leaving room for further academic insight.
- <sup>53</sup> EJ Verwey. *New dictionary of South African biography*. Pretoria: HSRC, 1995, 5.
- <sup>54</sup> Southey & Mouton *op. cit.*, p. 92.
- <sup>55</sup> Agar-Hamilton & Turner, *Crisis in the desert op. cit.*
- <sup>56</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, p. 37.
- <sup>57</sup> Agar-Hamilton & Turner, *The Sidi Rezegh Battles op. cit.*
- <sup>58</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, p. 37.
- <sup>59</sup> Turner, Gordon-Cumming & Betzler *op. cit.*
- <sup>60</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, p. 37.
- <sup>61</sup> Southey & Mouton *op. cit.*, p. 93.
- <sup>62</sup> Grey ““Standing humbly ... ” *op. cit.*, p. 263.
- <sup>63</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, p. 38.
- <sup>64</sup> Orpen *op. cit.*, p. iii. The South African War Histories Advisory Committee was formed by Colonel Dom Ollemans at General Brink’s request after he had expressed concern in 1961 that the history would be lost if appropriate action was not taken.
- <sup>65</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, p. 40.
- <sup>66</sup> Orpen was in fact a master’s graduate in Modern History and English. After a brief sojourn as an accountant, he became a journalist and finally a prolific historian writing a good number of regimental histories.
- <sup>67</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, p. 41.
- <sup>68</sup> Orpen *op. cit.*; J Brown. *Gathering of eagles: The campaigns of the South African Air Force*. Cape Town: Purnell, 1970; N Orpen. *War in the desert*. Cape Town: Purnell, 1971; J Brown. *Eagles strike: The campaigns of the South African Air Force*. Cape Town: Purnell, 1974; N Orpen. *Victory in Italy*. Cape Town: Purnell, 1975; H Martin & N Orpen. *Eagles victorious: Operations of the South African forces*. Cape Town: Purnell, 1977; H Martin & N Orpen. *South Africa at war*. Cape Town: Purnell, 1979; N Orpen & H Martin. *Salute the Sappers, Part 1*. Johannesburg: Sappers Association, 1981; N Orpen & HJ Martin. *Salute the Sappers, Part 2*. Johannesburg: Sappers Association, 1982.
- <sup>69</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns op. cit.*, p. 370.
- <sup>70</sup> Grey ““Standing humbly ... ” *op. cit.*, p. 265.
- <sup>71</sup> This anecdote was related to the author via an email dated 1 March 2012 by a former colleague of the researcher and narrator referred to above.
- <sup>72</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, p. 41.
- <sup>73</sup> Some of the regimental histories written by Orpen are N Orpen. *Gunners of the Cape: Story of the Cape Field Artillery from its formation in 1857 through the Boer War, WWI in SWA, until the end of WWII in different theatres of war in Abyssinia, North Africa and Italy*. S.I.: CFA Regimental History Committee, 1965; N Orpen. *History of the Transvaal Horse Artillery, 1904–1974*. Johannesburg: Transvaal Horse Artillery Regimental Council, 1975; N Orpen. *Prince Alfred’s Guard, 1856–1956*. Cape Town: Books of Africa, 1967; N Orpen. *The Cape Town Highlanders, 1885–1970*. Cape Town: Cape Town Highlanders History Committee, 1970; N Orpen. *The Dukes: A history of the Cape Town Rifles*. Cape Town: Cape Town Rifles Dukes Association, 1984.
- <sup>74</sup> Stanley Monick holds a PhD degree in English Literature and Education.

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- <sup>75</sup> S Monick & S Baker. *Clear the way: The military heritage of the South African Irish, Volume 1: 1880–1945*. Johannesburg: South African Irish Regimental Association, 1992, 283–288.
- <sup>76</sup> Van der Waag *op. cit.*, p. 41. Orpen, as has been noted, was somewhat of a specialist in the genre of regimental history.
- <sup>77</sup> S Monick. *A bugle calls: The story of the Witwatersrand Rifles and its predecessors, 1899–1987*. Germiston: Witwatersrand Rifles Regimental Council, 1989.
- <sup>78</sup> I van der Waag & D Visser. “War, popular memory and the South African literature of the Angolan conflict”. *Journal of Contemporary History* 34/1. 2009. 21.
- <sup>79</sup> Van der Waag & Visser *op. cit.*, p. 22.
- <sup>80</sup> Monick & Baker *op. cit.*
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.
- <sup>82</sup> Lt. Maunsell’s harrowing account of the day’s traumatic events at Sidi Rezegh can be found in the South African Irish War diaries housed at the Directorate Documentation Services (Military Archives).
- <sup>83</sup> Monick & Baker *op. cit.*, p. 194.
- <sup>84</sup> C Birkby. *The saga of the Transvaal Scottish 1932–1950*. Johannesburg: Transvaal Scottish Regimental History Committee, 1950.
- <sup>85</sup> It is worth noting that the personal papers of Brink are housed at the SADF archives in Pretoria.
- <sup>86</sup> C Birkby. *Uncle George: The Boer boyhood, letters and battles of Lieutenant-General George Edwin Brink*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1987.
- <sup>87</sup> Another biography of a South African general is A Pollock. *Pienaar of Alamein*. Cape Town: Cape Times Limited, 1943. This work, appearing in both official languages in 1943, was hurriedly produced and had definite political and nation-building objectives.
- <sup>88</sup> The black publications books that pertain to the Second World War are R Bouch. *Infantry in South Africa, 1652–1976*. Pretoria: South Africa Defence Force, 1977; R Bouch, S du Preez & R Cornwell. *South African corps of signals*. Pretoria: South African Defence Force Documentation Service, 1975; C Nöthling. *Ultima Ratio Regum: Artillery history of Southern Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers, 1987; W Otto, J Blatt, J Ploeger & F Jacobs. *The Special Service Battalion, 1933–1973*. Pretoria: South African Defence Force Documentation Centre, 1973; I van der Waag. *A history of the South African Defence Force Institute 1914–1990*. Pretoria: Directorate Documentation Services, 1991.
- <sup>89</sup> Van der Waag “Contested histories ...” *op. cit.*, p. 41.
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>91</sup> J Keene. *South Africa in World War II: A pictorial history*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1995.
- <sup>92</sup> J Bourhill. *Come back to Portofino: Through Italy with the 6<sup>th</sup> South African Armoured Division*. Johannesburg: 30 Degrees South, 2011.
- <sup>93</sup> The three sources being the divisional history gleaned from the archives and official histories, and the personal narratives of soldiers on the ground.
- <sup>94</sup> Keegan *op. cit.*, p. 33.

- <sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27. Keegan states that military history is often about generals and generalship. It is rare to find a military history that moves beyond the two-dimensional approach and incorporates the viewpoints of the other players on the battle field, such as the ordinary soldier, as Bourhill has achieved.
- <sup>96</sup> E Axelson. *A year in Italy: An account of a year as military historian with the South African 6<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division in Italy, 1944–1945*. Port Elizabeth: Walton, s.a. The author was employed by the UWHS and reported directly to Agar-Hamilton. Many of the UWHS narratives owe a debt to the work of Axelson.
- <sup>97</sup> I van der Waag. Book review. *The Journal of Military History* 68/2. 2004. 1004.
- <sup>98</sup> The eight Second World War books in the Ashanti series: P Bagshaw. *Warriors of the sky: Springbok air heroes in combat*, 1991; J Brown. *War of a hundred days: Springboks in Somalia and Abyssinia, 1940–41*, 1990; J Brown. *Retreat to victory – A Springbok diary in North Africa: Gazala to El Alamein 1942*, 1991; J Crwys-Williams *op. cit.*; Gleeson *op. cit.*; C Harris. *War at sea: South African maritime operations during World War II*, 1991; J Kros. *War in Italy: With the South Africans from Taranto to the Alps*, 1992; M Leigh. *Captives courageous: South African prisoners of war – World War II*, 1992.
- <sup>99</sup> Van der Waag “Contested histories ...” *op. cit.*, p. 41.
- <sup>100</sup> This was related to the author via a conversation on 12 May 2012 with a former member of the Publications Directorate Committee who confirmed that almost the entire publication was bought up by the Defence Force for distribution to ‘interested parties’. In the same conversation it was intimated that some of the authors were unaware of government funding, and in one instance where a potential author knew of it he flatly refused to write for the publication. In another conversation with one of the authors in the series, the contention that almost the entire publication was bought up by the Defence Force was disputed. The last word on this matter is perhaps contained in documents yet to be declassified that may prove or disprove the government’s complicity.
- <sup>101</sup> An in-depth study into the participation of black people in the UDF has been undertaken via Grundlingh “The participation of South African blacks ...” *op. cit.*
- <sup>102</sup> Gleeson *op. cit.* Although it must be noted that Grundlingh’s thesis not only predates Gleeson but is significantly more comprehensive and in fact Gleeson appears to make extensive use of the thesis.
- <sup>103</sup> Crwys-Williams *op. cit.*
- <sup>104</sup> E Hartshorn. *Avenge Tobruk*. Cape Town: Purnell, 1960.
- <sup>105</sup> The proceedings of the Court of Inquiry, held soon after the fall of Tobruk, was until recently classified and only seven copies were made. A copy of the Tobruk Court of Inquiry is housed at Directorate Documentation Services (Military Archives), Union War Histories Section.
- <sup>106</sup> Stewart, “The Klopper Affair ...” *op. cit.*
- <sup>107</sup> General HB Klopper produced a series of articles for *Huisgenoot* magazine running in several issues starting in June 1950 on his version of events leading up to the fall of Tobruk. The significance of these articles should not be overrated except for the fact that beside these articles there is very little else offered by General Klopper as to his version of events. He was not present at the board of Inquiry, as he was a prisoner of war at the time of the hearing. It is interesting to speculate on the timing of the release of these articles in what was at the time a

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- popular Afrikaans magazine launched in 1916 as a Nationalist mouthpiece to provide the Afrikaner population with inspiration, information and entertainment in Afrikaans
- <sup>108</sup> The lack of interest in general among the South African population in South Africa's role in the Second World War that contramimics the strong interest shown by other participant nations has a negative effect on South African academics who wish to publish their own work. See Black *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- <sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28. Black makes the point that most non-academic history written for the popular market lack "insights, new material, or judicious reflection", and have a "novelistic" style.
- <sup>110</sup> Van der Waag "Contested histories ..." *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 42.
- <sup>111</sup> North *op. cit.*; Jacobs & Bouch *op. cit.*
- <sup>112</sup> Grundlingh, "The participation of South African blacks ..." *op. cit.*
- <sup>113</sup> L Grundlingh. "Non-Europeans should be kept away from the temptations of towns: Controlling black South African soldiers during the Second World War". *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 25/3. 1992; L Grundlingh. "Soldiers and politics: A study of the political consciousness of black South African soldiers during and after the Second World War". *Historia* 36/2. 1991; L Grundlingh. "Prejudices, promises and poverty: The experiences of discharged and demobilized black South African soldiers after the Second World War". *South African Historical Journal* 26. 1992.
- <sup>114</sup> Grundlingh, "The King's Afrikaners ..." *op. cit.*
- <sup>115</sup> N Roos. *No ordinary Springboks: White servicemen and social justice in South Africa, 1939–1961*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.
- <sup>116</sup> J Lambert. "South African British? Or Dominion South Africans? The evolution of an identity in the 1910s and 1920s". *South African Historical Journal* 43. 2000; J Lambert. "Their finest hour? English-speaking South Africans and World War II". *South African Historical Journal* 60/1. 2008.
- <sup>117</sup> N Clark. "Gendering production in wartime South Africa". *The American Historical Review* 106/4. 2001. 1181–1213.
- <sup>118</sup> Visser *op. cit.*; D Visser. "'Mutiny' on HMS Erebus, September 1939". *War & Society* 27/1. 2008.
- <sup>119</sup> Stewart, "The Klopper Affair ..." *op. cit.*, pp. 516–544.
- <sup>120</sup> A Stewart. "The Atomic Despatch: Field Marshal Auchinleck, the fall of the Tobruk Garrison and post-war Anglo-South African relations". *Scientia Militaria* 36/1. 2008.
- <sup>121</sup> I van der Waag. "Smuts's generals: Towards a first portrait of the South African High Command, 1912–1948". *War in History* 18/1. 2011. 33.
- <sup>122</sup> I van der Waag. "The Union Defence Force between the two world wars, 1919–1940". *Scientia Militaria* 30/2. 2000.
- <sup>123</sup> A Wessels. "The first two years of war: The development of the Union Defence Forces (UDF) September 1939 to September 1941". *Military History Journal* 11/5. 2000.
- <sup>124</sup> Van der Waag, "Contested histories ..." *op. cit.*
- <sup>125</sup> Southey & Mouton *op. cit.*

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<sup>126</sup> K Fedorowich. “German espionage and British counter-intelligence in South Africa and Mozambique, 1939–1944”. *The Historical Journal* 48/1. 2005. 209–230.

<sup>127</sup> It is interesting to note that of all the articles appearing in the journal, those covering the Second World War make up but a small percentage. This seems to mirror the general reception given to the Second World War in South Africa, where the Boer war tends to dominate the historiography.