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Editorial

From a defence and security point of view, the second half of 2022 continued to be overshadowed by the ongoing Russo–Ukrainian War, which started as far back as 2014. While the Russian invasion continues to be condemned widely internationally as an act of aggression, there appears to be no end in sight yet for the war. Matters were further compounded in September 2022 with the partial mobilisation of Russian reservists, the sham referendums by Russian-installed officials to annex occupied territories of Ukraine, the ongoing human suffering and the concerted efforts to destroy the Ukrainian economy, industry and infrastructure. However, despite the dire situation, Ukrainian forces showed extreme resolve and conducted large-scale counteroffensive operations in southern and eastern Ukraine, which met with some successes.

As the war continues to linger, military practitioners and academics across the globe keep on monitoring the Russo–Ukrainian War with great interest as it keeps developing. The war also continues to provide stark insights into the changing nature of modern warfare and international relations – particularly in terms of enduring superpower competition, hybrid or conventional warfare, force structure and employment, defence policy, military alliances, doctrine, and intelligence and coalition operations, to name but a few. These issues remain extremely relevant and will continue to generate academic interest over the coming months and years, irrespective of the duration and outcome of the war.

While the international geopolitical focus remains squarely fixed on the events in Eastern Europe, the Far East and Pacific Rim regions continue to be marked by increasing tension mainly fuelled by the actions of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the People’s Republic of China (PRC). There are continued reports of the DPRK launching short-range missiles into the Sea of Japan, which threatens the peace and security of Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the broader region. The military tension between the PRC and Taiwan also remains ever-present. This includes continued breaches of the Taiwan air defence zone and the ubiquitous threat of a full-scale invasion of the island nation. Our attention remains fixed on the geo-political situation in these regions in the hope that the situations do not deteriorate any further and that they will soon be brought under control through constructive dialogue and mediation.

The focus in Southern Africa remains fixed on the ongoing operational deployment of Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Rwandan forces to the ungoverned territory of Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique to combat the Ahlu-Sunnah Wa-Jama (al-Shabaab)-linked insurgents. The earlier successes of the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) between October 2021 and January 2022 appear to have disappeared, and it would seem as if the operational initiative once more shifted in favour of the insurgents as the SADC mission has once more been extended. The earlier reduction in insurgent attacks enabled SAMIM to shift their focus from a purely interventionist force to that of a force organised for complex and multidimensional peacekeeping. This change in mandate necessitated the reinforcement of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) contingent deployed to Mozambique as part of the regional task force, which up until then mainly consisted of special forces. Elements of Combat Team Alpha were consequently deployed to the Mhlori Base in Macomia in northern Mozambique from May 2022 onwards to help counter the Islamic insurgency. However, despite these developments, the bigger issues – post-conflict reconstruction and development, the re-establishment and maintenance of law and order, the provision of basic services and, above all, dealing with the key drivers of the insurgency – remain near absent in the public and academic debates. Moreover, despite increased SAMIM force levels, the security situation in Cabo Delgado does not seem to have stabilised, with insurgent attacks spreading and violence on the increase. As part of SAMIM, the South African deployment continues to stimulate some debate in academic and military circles, and it remains an interesting lens through which to investigate issues relating to doctrine, force structure and design, military operations, defence policy and alliances among others.

In this issue of *Scientia Militaria*, Vol. 50, No. 3, 2022, the articles consider both historic and contemporary issues associated with war and conflict, as well as defence and security-related matters. As always, it is trusted that these articles will provide key insights and act as a source of influence for individuals involved in the broader ambit of military planning, operations, management, and higher education.

The article by Mpho Maripane argues that food scarcity during the South African War (1899–1902) led to large numbers of the population dying from starvation or diseases related to hunger. The situation was compounded due to certain towns in the country being under siege, while farms and homesteads were also burned down. The article reports three main causes of food shortages during the South African War: the unequal distribution of food rations during the siege of Mafikeng, particularly in the concentration camps; complaints by white communities about the ‘spoiling of natives’; and the introduction of the ‘no work, no food’ policy. By doing so, Maripane provides fresh insights into a turbulent and still contested episode of South African history.

In his article, Piet Bester makes a case for the psychological well-being of soldiers in pre-deployment fitness-for-duty evaluations by screening for psychological risk rather than pathology. He starts by discussing the existing process of pre-deployment fitness-for-duty evaluations in the SANDF, after which he conceptualises the assessment for psychological risk rather than psychopathology only. Bester further links the pre-deployment assessment of fitness-for-duty evaluations to the positive psychology paradigm, and goes on to

suggest an integrative military model for soldiers' psychological well-being in the external deployment context – which, he ultimately argues, is a feasible process.

The article by Will Gordon reports on the support of South African Defence Force (SADF) conscription by the mainstream Afrikaans sister churches between 1968 and 1991. He argues that, from the 1950s to the 1990s, white men were conscripted to serve in the SADF. Although conscription was an undeniable, and often unavoidable, part of life for white South Africa, it varied in its application and duration. Gordon also points out that, while conscription was neither universally accepted nor popular, resistance to it was largely confined to English-speaking citizens whose objections were often seen as cowardly or treacherous. Nevertheless, conscription had an influence on the psyche of white South Africa and was viewed in a serious light by various religious denominations. Ecclesiastical positions also varied and often changed over the course of time. However, as Gordon argues, in the main, Afrikaans churches were sympathetic towards conscription, while English churches were likely to oppose it. The latter position has been extensively documented, but the former remains neglected. The article analyses the role that mainstream Afrikaans sister churches played in supporting the National Party policies of conscription and ensuring their congregants' compliance. The relationship between those churches and the SADF, *inter alia* by referring to changes in conscription legislation and the reaction of the churches to those changes, is also discussed.

In their article, William Sikazwe, Eustarckio Kazonga and Evance Kalula evaluate the knowledge of, attitudes toward, and practices of ethics of war of the officers and soldiers of the Zambia Army. They argue that the changing character of warfare throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has resulted in uncertainties about how states will respond to acts of aggression in the face of ethics of war, or the moral rules of war. Moreover, it has become increasingly difficult for states to conduct permissible self-defence and military operations against non-state actors or sub-state groups. In the face of this reality, the authors set out to assess the said knowledge, attitudes, and practices among personnel in the Zambia Army. They conclude that, at the time of their research, Zambia Army officers and soldiers held very strong and positive attitudes towards the ethics of war. In addition, the personnel also widely accepted and supported the ethics of war and practiced the ethics of war extensively and regularly during both local and international military operations. Sikazwe et al. further recognise that much more research needs to be done in this field to increase knowledge levels and sensitivity to the ethics of war.

In his article, Saliou Abba focuses on the institutionalisation of the practice of intelligence-driven operations in the Gulf of Guinea, particularly before and during the Second World War. During this period, the colonial branches of the British, German and United States intelligence services conducted several clandestine operations in Spanish Guinea. Abba's article investigates the rationale behind these intelligence-driven operations, and he considers the ultimate value of these operations as part of the broader course of the Second World War in West Africa.

In the final article, Chris Magobotiti argues that the death penalty was long practised in South Africa as one of the sentence options for capital crimes, such as murder, rape,

treason, terrorism, and robbery with aggravating circumstances. Reflecting on some specific historical periods of the practice of the death penalty in South Africa, Magobotiti seeks to contextualise our understanding of the socio-political experience and perception of the death penalty to gauge its current relevance. He endeavours to determine whether the death penalty had a deterrent effect on capital crimes in South Africa during the pre-constitutional period. Magobotiti discusses key legislation, case law, execution patterns and deterrence literature in its context.

A selection of book reviews by Mpho Maripane, Ashwell Glasson, Gert van der Westhuizen, Louis Makau, Anri Delpont and Evert Kleynhans conclude this issue of *Scientia Militaria*.

The Editor
Evert Kleynhans 
