

in the first volume begins with an extensive introductory section. First is an appraisal of the physical conditions pertaining to warfare in East Africa followed by an interesting background to the campaign by means of an early history of East Africa dating from the century when the first arab slave traders arrived in the region. With regards to the campaign itself, *Military Operations in East Africa* covers the period dating from August 1914 until late 1916. This is a little unfortunate as, in many respects, this is an unnatural cut-off point as it was only a year later that the conventional phase of the operations in East Africa came to an end. At this instant, General von Lettow-Vorbeck's army of German regulars and Askaris, deprived of supplies and reinforcements, retreated deep into Portuguese territory from where they waged a very successful guerilla war against the Allies. The undefeated von Lettow was finally forced to lay down his arms at Abercorn on 25 November 1918 after it had been made known that the German Army had surrendered in Europe.

This account of the first half of the East African Campaign is very detailed and, in fact, so much so in fact that some may find it "heavy going". This need not be viewed as a drawback but it would be prudent to bear in mind that the volume was not intended to make for light reading. *Military Operations in East Africa* should be viewed as a book for serious students of military history and to this extent it is an invaluable reference work.

While it is rather unfortunate that Hordern's work does not contain any source notes. Although this sheds some doubt as to what exactly was used to provide the research material from which the book was written, it should be remembered that this was not the historical method of the time. It would appear as if extensive use has been made by the writers of diaries and records in the hands of campaign veterans in addition to the government papers of Britain and the various Commonwealth countries which had forces in the theatre. In this respect Collyer's book presents stiff competition with regard to research and accuracy as he was known to be meticulous in his method and made extensive use of the UDF War Records Office. Nevertheless, in the final analysis it should be emphasised that regardless of whether sources are acknowledged or not the text would appear to be accurate and sufficiently complete. What is interesting to note is that much of the information used for the analysis of the German side of the campaign was gathered by Charles Hordern at the *Kriegsgeschichtliche Forschungsanstalt des*

Heeres in Germany. The German army personnel there commendably continued to assist him right up until the outbreak of the Second World war in 1939.

While the book is quite obviously not illustrated, it should be noted that the extensive and detailed maps found in the original edition could not be included in this reprint. The reason for this is two-fold, firstly the inclusion of maps would have escalated printing costs to an untenable level, and secondly, most of the maps were very inaccurate. Be that as it may there are nevertheless still plenty of maps in this book for the topographical enthusiast.

From a South African interest point of view the book is informative and important with extensive coverage given to the exploits of the South African Expeditionary Force in East Africa. The strategic spotlight also falls largely on the Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Forces in the theatre, Lieutenant General Jan Smuts. For those who are interested in this theatre of First World War history this book may well provide the most comprehensive overview of the East African campaign yet written and would make a worthwhile addition to any military book collection.

N.M. Cowling, Documentation Service, Private Bag X289, Pretoria 0001.

DIÉ WAT WEN

'n Generaal se storie uit 'n era
van oorlog en vrede

Jannie Geldenhuys

J.L. van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria : 1993

261 pages

illustrated

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R79-99

The title of this book of General Jannie Geldenhuys he explains in his ultimate paragraph. Napoleon, when asked on an occasion, which soldiers were the best, replied : "Those who are victorious" - Dié wat wen. Jannie Geldenhuys served during his last decade in the South African Defence Force as Chief of the Army and thereafter as Chief of the SADF. During those years he certainly exercised command over victorious South African soldiers, soldiers (or rather servicemen) who

maintained the record of those who served in the two World Wars of this 20th Century.

His book is not an academic military history of recent years, nor is it a straightforward autobiography with the shortcomings so often encountered in that sort of writing. Rather it is a human account of a man's life in the service of South Africa's military which ends at the top level of command, being faced with considerably more responsibilities than those of the pure militarist. He of necessity finds himself involved with politicians, domestic, foreign as well as international diplomats, the media, businessmen and of course soldiers, the latter being both friends and enemy!

The Commandant General of the Ossewa Brandwag, the anti-government organisation in South Africa during World War 2, Dr Hans van Rensburg, wrote a fascinating book entitled *Their Paths Crossed Mine*. It was based on his experiences during encounters with as varied personalities as Neville Chamberlain, General Jan Smuts and Adolf Hitler. Jan Geldenhuys could have aptly used a similar title as his path was crossed by even more varied personalities: Pik Botha, Jonas Savimbi, Chester Crocker and Fidel Castro.

His dealings and "wheelings" in some cases with these and so many other characters are discussed often in considerable detail through the book. It is these interludes which make his story so readable and at the same time expose him as a man's man, a soldier's soldier (Ches-

ter Crocker's words in *High Noon in Southern Africa*) and above all a true human.

Throughout, the writer varies his style from a philosophical analysis of our "life and times" to an exposé of military plans and their execution to recalling many amusing anecdotes.

Biographically Geldenhuys sketches his career as a professional soldier from his first days as a "lonely and lost" recruit at the Military Gymnasium through the highlights and low points which all who have followed a similar path will recognise as so true and accurate. When I received my copy of *Dié Wat Wen* from Jannie he said: "When you have read it let me know whether or not you feel I am telling the truth in this book". I personally vouch for the truth of this story! I was privileged to have crossed his path many times and to have shared in some of the trials, tribulations and lighter moments he so competently describes.

It is clear that his service in South West Africa and his experiences there in several different military posts left a lasting impression on him of the territory and its people.

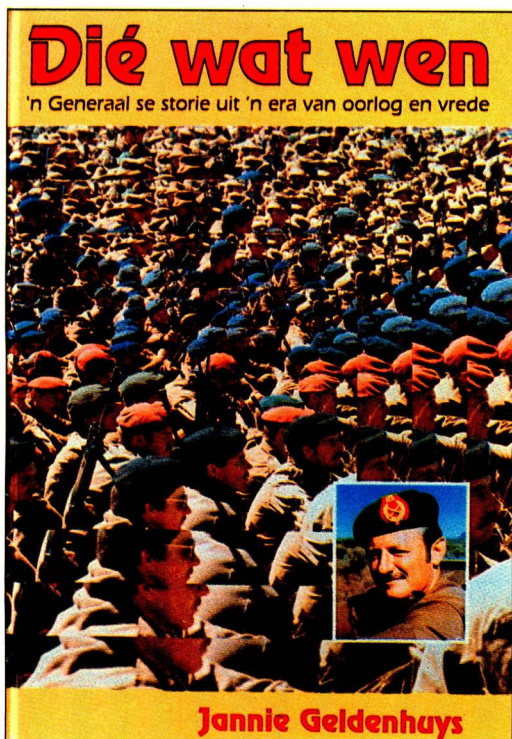
His understanding of the land, the activities of the various population groups and the problems associated therewith is clearly demonstrated. Here, however, I must be careful as he insists: "There are no problems, only challenges"!

This understanding coupled with the experience he gained whilst serving on the staff of the South African Consulate General in Luanda in the late sixties made him an officer with a specialist knowledge of Angola, South West Africa, the Portuguese and indigenous people of that part of the sub-continent.

I must mention a point here which one gathers whilst reading his story though he does not spell it out himself. He is no mean linguist - we served together on the Free State Public Service Language Test Committee in the late fifties. His Portuguese is very good. Then in September 1983 as Chief of the Army he was invited to Chile where I was the South African Ambassador. He received a decoration at a formal ceremony and his speech in reply was in faultless Spanish!

A human point to mention here - on that visit he brought me some bottles of wine commemorating the 50th anniversary of 1 Special Service Battalion, the regiment where we met on his posting as an officer in 1956.

The historical value of his book is unquestion-



able. No one else can relate so many of the events described with the same degree of authority. He not only lived the history, he made a lot of it himself!

The speech made by Harold Macmillan at a joint sitting of the Union Parliament in 1960 regarding "the winds of change blowing down Africa" is often quoted. Jannie Geldenhuys commanded the guard of honour at the airport on Macmillan's arrival. It is thus perhaps fitting that he should have experienced those winds of change to such a degree himself.

He recounts the operations in South West Africa and Angola as well as certain other cross-border actions clearly - and truthfully. It is trusted that the ghost of Cuito Cuanavale has now been laid to rest. (Chester Crocker calls it a "South African victory" as against a "Cuban legend"!)

The objectives set, the planning and execution of operations, often stories of the participants are told in soldiers' language and make excellent reading. The part played by the "Friction de Guerre" of Von Clausewitz is brought out through the length of Geldenhuys' book.

Napoleon again - once said that the best generals were "the lucky ones". Some have said Jannie Geldenhuys was lucky but one needs to bear in mind what Gary Player once retorted to a similar remark : "Yes the more practise, the luckier I become!" In Jannie's case, the harder he worked, the luckier he became.

He explains the difference between conventional military operations and those against the insurgent and often refers to the lessons detailed by General "Pop" Fraser in his writings on this subject.

His experiences in dealings with representatives of the media are outlined against the propaganda and semantic onslaught which was directed against South Africa at the time. He recognises in these efforts of his opponents the words of Sun Tzu : "Break the will of the enemy to fight and you accomplish the true objective of war. Prevail if possible without armed conflict".

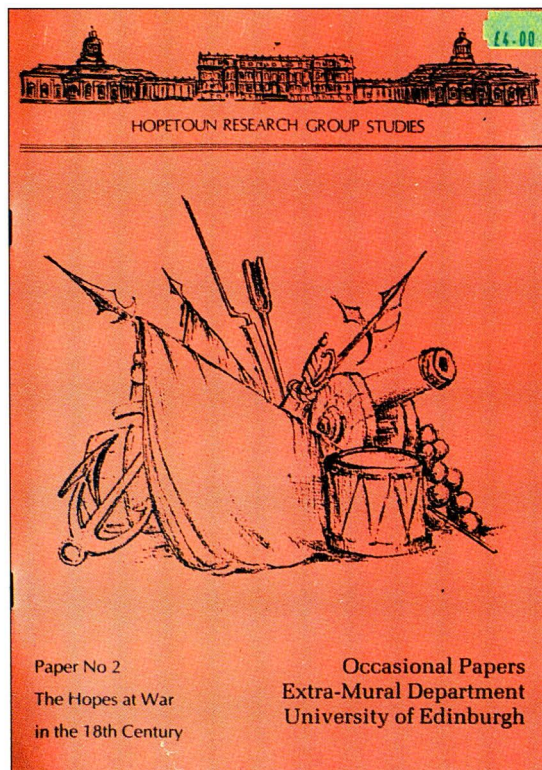
The role played by Geldenhuys in the drawn out diplomatic negotiations which ultimately led to the independence of Namibia was not small. He describes these negotiations in considerable detail though in a somewhat self-effacing manner. The "linkage" of the implementation of United Nations Resolution 435 and a Cuban withdrawal from Angola was undoubtedly the invaluable military input to the talks. He says :

"It is easier to make war than to make peace".

The book is illustrated with some excellent photographs and the maps are most effective - particularly those which so clearly compare distances and areas in the Southern/Central African theatre with those in Europe. Also striking is the map comparing the battlefields of 1987 with a rugby field. This without incorporating any of the current political clichés like "levelling the playing field" or "moving the goal posts"!

This is in all respects a most readable book which tells a story of interest and value to all who seek the truth of South Africa's recent military history. It is written by one who knows this history.

Lieutenant General J.R. Dutton (rtd), Lyttelton Manor.



THE HOPES AT WAR IN THE 18TH CENTURY

Marie Melvin, Charles P. Rawcliffe
and Flora C. Welch

Hopetoun Research Group Studies :
Paper No 2

104 pages not illustrated
031-557 1800 £4-00

The publication under review is a prosopographical study of those members of a Scottish family - the Hopes of Craighall and the cadet branches of Hopetoun and Craigiehall - who served in the British armed forces during the