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Editorial

From a defence and security point of view, mid-2024 continued to be overshadowed by the continuing conflicts in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East – especially the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War (February 2022 to date) and the Israeli–Hammas War (October 2023 to date). In Southern Africa, however, the focus remains on the continuing deployment of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC). As argued in the previous issue, the geo-strategic shift of the regional organisation from Mozambique to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in mid-December 2023 coincided with the withdrawal of the United Nations peacekeeping mission from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) – which is set to take place in stages until the end of 2024. While it is generally accepted that the MONUSCO mission failed to achieve any notable gains in terms of creating enduring peace and stability in the country after a period of 20 years, it remains unclear how both the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and SAMIDRC will fill the current security and defence vacuum created in the eastern DRC. Amidst an ever-deteriorating tactical situation, the SAMIDRC contingent continues to face considerable challenges relating to its mandate, force structure, equipment, and logistical provisions. Moreover, the SAMIDRC force has suffered even further casualties and operational setbacks throughout the last few months, which even included a serious case of alleged “fragging” among the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) contingent. While the security situation in the mineral-rich eastern DRC continues to deteriorate with concomitant risks triggering a wider regional conflict in Central Africa, it is further worthy to note the recent press allegations that both Rwanda and Uganda are actively supporting the well-armed M23 rebels that are destabilising the region.

These conflicts, and others, will continue to have substantial geopolitical implications, not only making their immediate regions unstable and volatile, but also having no clear resolutions in sight. While these conflicts will continue to stimulate debate in academic and military circles, they also provide a unique opportunity within defence and security spheres to explore topics, such as doctrinal developments, force structure and design, military operations, defence policy, and alliances.

In this issue of *Scientia Militaria*, Volume 52, Issue 2, 2024, 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 Chris Pfeiffer, an independent scholar, discusses the evolution of the Directorate Military Intelligence (DMI) of the South African Defence Force (SADF) between 1961 and 1971. It shows that, after South Africa had left the Commonwealth in 1961, the SADF had to develop its own intelligence capacity, as the British intelligence services had ceased intelligence provision to South Africa. The SADF also had limited experience in the field of intelligence as far as personnel, training, and structures were concerned. Moreover, DMI had no mandate, occupied an insubordinate position in the higher military hierarchy, and no national legislation or departmental prescripts existed to direct its functions. Certain DMI functions also continuously migrated to other structures in the defence force, which hampered its development. Towards the end of the decade, DMI was temporarily disbanded, and its functions taken over by a newly created Bureau of State Security (BOSS). Despite these limitations, the DMI evolved into a comprehensive autonomous intelligence organisation over a period of ten years, directed by national legislation, and legitimised as one of the three principal intelligence organisations in South Africa. Pfeiffer's article shows that DMI performed the main intelligence functions as is globally accepted from the role of an intelligence organisation, viz. collection, analysis, counterintelligence, and covert action.

In his article, Ernst Heydenrych, from the Boston City Campus & Business School in Cape Town, argues that the Department of Defence and the SANDF have been plagued by defence procurement irregularities since the inception of democracy. Moreover, several scholars have expressed doubts over the ability of certain oversight mechanisms to undertake proper supervision of the military, and of defence procurement specifically. Heydenrych's article evaluates the ability of Parliament, the Military Ombud, the Auditor-General of South Africa, and the Public Protector to extract accountability from the Department of Defence for its defence procurement activities. Heydenrych then discusses how these four mechanisms constitute the basis for evaluating whether a renewed approach to oversight, in the form of combined assurance, might allow for extracting greater accountability from the military for its non-compliance with the regulatory frameworks of South African defence procurement.

The article by Louis Venter, Marietjie Oelofse, and Johan Van Zyl, from the University of the Free State and War Museum of the Boer Republics respectively, shows that the British forces that served in South Africa during the Second Anglo-Boer War (also known as the South African War) of 1899–1902, were an amalgam of several types of soldiers. These men came from varying geographic and socio-economic backgrounds, and also had very different reasons for enlisting. The article discusses the composition of the British forces during the war, and adopts a military and socio-historical approach to understand who served in South Africa, and why. To this end, the different types of British soldiers are considered as separate (but ultimately intertwined) groupings, including regular (or career) soldiers, British volunteers, colonial volunteers, and “non-white” combatants. In doing so, Venter *et al.*'s article represents a wide-viewed perspective of the British military system during the late Victorian era.

In their article, Travis Morris, Tara Kulkarni, Yangmo Ku, and Megan Liptak, from Norwich University in Vermont, United States, discuss how the oldest private military college in the United States aims to prepare future military and civilian leaders to navigate

leadership and educational challenges successfully. They argue that one method of preparing leaders is through academic centres, and show that this task is accomplished by formally establishing research centres that exist outside of regular academic programming at Norwich University. The centres are uniquely positioned to understand the priorities of the US Reserve Officer Training Corps Cadet Command and the US Department of Defense to prepare future junior military leaders to be prepared for twenty-first-century security challenges. The authors specifically focus on how experiential learning, leadership laboratories, and research at Norwich University prepare cadets to be effective junior military leaders.

The article by Danic Parenteau, from the Royal Military College Saint-Jean in Quebec, Canada, attempts to answer the fundamental question: why do future officers of the armed forces need to receive a university education? In other words, which reasons justify the professional requirement to hold a university degree for candidates to this profession? The author argues that this fundamental question still deserves academic attention, as university education is a condition for recruitment for most Western armed forces, and still forms an integral part of the training and education programme offered to naval and officer cadets attending military academies today. Parenteau shows seven distinct but somewhat interrelated reasons in support of this professional requirement. The article focuses exclusively on generalist officers, and leaves aside the case of specialists, such as medical officers, legal officers, or engineers, as these military occupations already have their own specific professional requirements in terms of university education. In addition, the article also does not report on the case of officers promoted from the ranks, for whom there is usually no such qualification requirement.

In the final article, Dong-ha Seo, from the Korean Military Academy in Seoul, Republic of Korea, discusses how to build military cadets' ability to fight against disinformation in a post-truth age. The article shows that disinformation – often called “fake news” – seeks to shape or change perceptions of information users. Seo argues that the understanding of disinformation by military cadets is crucial because sowing distrust and doubt among members is dangerous, and even fatal to the armed forces. This places great emphasis on mutual trust as its core value. During their years at the military academy, cadets should improve their ability to discern truths before acquiring skills relevant to counter a disinformation campaign. Seo argues that the best way to enhance cadets' ability to discern truths – even in a media-saturated age – is to participate in deep reading, especially reading imaginative literature that fosters inventive as well as critical thinking. The article thus argues that the grasping of human frailty through deep reading can help to develop an ability to discern truths.

The final three articles were first presented at the 8th edition of the International Symposium of Military Academies that was held in Doha, Qatar in October 2023. We thank Prof Ian Parenteau from RMC Saint-Jean, Canada for sourcing the contributions.

A selection of book reviews conclude this issue of *Scientia Militaria*.

The Editors

Evert Kleyhans  & Anri Delpont 

SCIENTIA MILITARIA

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The Establishment of the Directorate Military Intelligence upon South Africa's Exit from the Commonwealth 1961–1971: In Pursuit of Recognition

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Abstract

After South Africa had left the Commonwealth in 1961, the South African Defence Force had to develop its own intelligence capacity, as the British intelligence services ceased intelligence provision to South Africa. The Defence Force had limited experience in the field of intelligence as far as personnel, training and structures were concerned. It had no mandate, an insubordinate position in the higher military hierarchy, and no national legislation or departmental prescripts existed to direct its functions. Certain of its functions continuously migrated to other structures in the Defence Force, which hampered its development. Towards the end of the decade, the organisation was temporarily disbanded, and its functions taken over by a newly created Bureau of State Security.

Despite these limitations, the Directorate Military Intelligence evolved into a comprehensive autonomous intelligence organisation over a period of ten years, directed by national legislation, and legitimised as one of the three principal intelligence organisations in South Africa. It performed the main intelligence functions as is globally accepted from the role of an intelligence organisation, viz. collection, analyses, counter-intelligence, and covert action.

This article will provide a narrative, based mainly on primary archival sources, of the evolution of Directorate Military Intelligence between 1961 and 1971 despite the developmental challenges it faced.

Keywords: Intelligence, Covert Collection, Foreign Intelligence Services, Analysis, BOSS, Psychological Operations, National Legislation.

Background and Context

The Union Defence Act of 1912, which provided for the creation of the Union Defence Force (UDF), did not make provision for a military intelligence function. After the creation of the UDF in 1912, the British War Office mainly conducted its military intelligence function. In his book, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, Ian van der Waag however declares that small capacity existed to conduct intelligence on internal security, and that it only concentrated on industrial strikes and unrest on the part of the black

population.² Kevin O'Brien, in his book, *The South African Intelligence Services*, states that a Department of Military Intelligence as well as an Intelligence Records Bureau was founded in 1940. The former was inefficient, whilst the latter unsuccessfully attempted to analyse information received from various state departments. The Records Bureau also liaised with other Commonwealth countries.³ The UDF, and its successor in 1957, the South African Defence Force (SADF), mainly relied on the intelligence services of the United Kingdom for the provision of military intelligence to the UDF and the SADF.

The South African (SA) withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961 thus had a major negative effect on the military intelligence capability of the SADF. After 1961, the United Kingdom ceased intelligence provision to South Africa, and the exit from the Commonwealth thus exposed the inability of the SADF to execute its own military intelligence function independently.⁴ Until that time, the SADF received most of its intelligence from the United Kingdom (UK) intelligence services. The small intelligence section (IS) – re-designated to its more familiar name of Directorate Military Intelligence (DMI) in 1962 – consisted of only five officers and eight non-commissioned officers.⁵ Its principal responsibility was the dissemination of intelligence received from the United Kingdom within the SADF. By 1971, however, the Military Intelligence Division was an autonomous entity within the SADF, commanded by a lieutenant general reporting directly to the Commandant General of the SADF (CG SADF). Military Intelligence was by national legislation also instituted as one of the principal intelligence organisations in the Republic of South Africa, alongside the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) and the Security Branch of the South African Police. What is of interest – and also the central theme of this article – are the factors and influences that directed the development of the DMI over this ten-year period to an autonomous national intelligence organisation.

Historiography

Historiography on SA military intelligence, especially during the 1960s, is limited. Literature on the organisational structure of the DMI as well as its mandate, role, and functions – specifically its principal functions of intelligence, counter-intelligence (CI), collection, and foreign relations – is limited. No historical study has ever been done on the development of military intelligence in South Africa between 1961 and 1971. The lack of a developmental study of the DMI between 1961 and 1971 constitutes a shortfall in the SA military historiography, which the study on which this article is based, aimed to address. This article therefore provides a narrative on the development of the DMI in the first decade after 1961 with an emphasis on the following:

- The detrimental effect of the absence of departmental and political guidelines on the DMI;
- The role of an intelligence organisation and the organisational development of the DMI;
- The absence of intelligence coordination at national level;
- The establishment of the BOSS and subsequent disbandment of the DMI;
- The Potgieter Commission: Finality on the role of the DMI.

The historical data used in this article comprised primary resources in the Department of Defence Archives that were declassified on request according to the *Promotion of Access to Information Act (No. 2 of 2000)*. Interviewees consented to the use of information supplied by them.

Political Dynamics

By 1961, no national legislation or SADF prescripts existed to guide the execution of military intelligence in South Africa or to mandate the SADF to execute this function. The Union Defence Act of 1912, which provided for the creation of the UDF, did not make provision for a military intelligence function. In his book, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, Ian van der Waag declares that, prior to 1961, a small capacity did exist to conduct intelligence on internal security but that it concentrated on industrial strikes and unrest amongst the black population.⁶ Kevin O'Brien, in his book, *The South African Intelligence Services*, states that a DMI was founded in 1940, as well as an Intelligence Records Bureau. The former was, however, not efficient whilst the latter – ineffectively – attempted to analyse information received from various state departments.⁷

After 1961, hardly any legislation existed to guide the SADF to develop and direct its intelligence capability. Between 1960 and 1970, 11 defence and/or defence amendment acts were passed. None of these addressed the mandate and execution of intelligence. The *Defence Act (No. 13 of 1912)* was still in force, and did not make provision for intelligence activities.⁸

Over the same period (i.e. 1960–1970), five Defence White Papers and Department of Defence Planning documents were published. Apart from a description of the strategic environment, the command status of the head of the DMI and minor intelligence training methods, none of the White Papers referred to intelligence matters, such as its mandate, structure, and responsibilities. The purpose of the Review of Defence and Armaments Production: Period 1960–1970 was to provide background on the strategic environment within which the SADF found itself during the 1960s. The review served as a planning document for arms production and procurement, as well as the organisational, manpower and financial design of the SADF for the period between 1960 and 1970.⁹ The White Paper on Defence 1964–1965 makes no mention of any intelligence or matters that may influence or direct the DMI.¹⁰ Published in 1967, the White Paper on Defence 1965–1967 only makes provision for the upgrading of the head of the DMI to the position of director, directly responsible to the CG SADF.¹¹ The last White Paper, the White Paper on Defence and Armament Production, April 1969, only provided for the South African Army College at Voortrekkerhoogte to offer training in intelligence, field security, as well as nuclear, biological and chemical warfare.¹²

Until 1966, provision was made for a Secretary for Defence (SecDef) as head of the Department of Defence. The post of SecDef was, however, abolished on 17 October 1966, after a board of enquiry found duplication in the functions of the SecDef and the office of the CG SADF. The SecDef was replaced by the Comptroller, who by mandate, only had financial control over the SADF.¹³ Deon Fourie, former head of the Department of

Strategic Studies at the University of South Africa, confirms that, after an investigation ordered by the Minister of Defence, the position of SecDef was discontinued in 1966. All its functions were transferred to the CG SADF who consequently performed the function of accounting officer for the Department of Defence.¹⁴ During the period up to 1970, no political oversight or direction thus existed concerning the conduct of intelligence.

By 1968, the DMI had however only played a limited role in the political dynamics of South Africa as a result of this lack of a clear mandate, procedural guidelines, or political prescripts. This role was played firstly in the provision of intelligence to other role players in the security community and, secondly in support of South African foreign policy.

Political influence on the SADF and the DMI is not the focus of this article. It is, however, relevant to assess which influence the SADF had on the DMI. During the decade of the 1960s, South Africa was marred by a series of incidents that influenced the internal security situation. These events included the Sharpeville massacre on 21 March 1960 and sabotage attacks on electrical infrastructure. The SADF and the DMI were not responsible for protecting the internal security situation, but political intelligence was provided by the DMI to the South African Police, as will be discussed later in this article. The DMI was however to a larger extent involved in the execution of foreign policy by the SA government. This involvement is addressed in the section on special liaison with foreign governments.

Organisational Development

The question may be posed as to what constitutes the essential and accepted tasks of an intelligence organisation. The views of accepted intelligence matter experts were considered. Four main functions reflect the responsibilities of an intelligence service: collection, analysis, CI and covert operations. The organisational development of DMI will be analysed against these functions.

The works of Sherman Kent, Mark Lowenthal and Abraham Shulsky were taken into account for this purpose. Kent served on the staff of the Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of the United States (US) Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). He was instrumental in setting up the US intelligence doctrine, and later served in the History Department of Yale University.¹⁵ Lowenthal taught at Columbia University as well as at the George Washington University on matters such as the role of intelligence in US foreign policy and the history of US intelligence.¹⁶ Shulsky served on the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the US President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. He has written various articles on intelligence and US national security matters.¹⁷

Although intelligence terminology applied by the three authors differs, their explanations indicate that intelligence comprises the four main functions as mentioned above:

- **Collection** – also referred to as “intelligence collection”, is the gathering of raw data that, once analysed, can be applied for conclusions and advice to policymakers. Collection includes a variety of methods or techniques, such as human intelligence collection, espionage, photographic or imagery sources,

signal interceptions, open sources, and foreign relations through liaison with foreign defence forces.

- **Analysis** – refers to the process whereby all collected information or raw data are considered and compiled into what is referred to as an “intelligence product”. The intelligence product may take on various forms including:
 - **basic intelligence**, which is in essence a summary of the general background and characteristics of a country;
 - **current intelligence**, which is needed by policymakers or military decision-makers; and
 - **intelligence analysis**, which is advice to policymakers to plan and formulate strategic and long-term policy.

Analysis thus deals with issues affecting world security and/or issues threatening the security of the state.

- **Counter-intelligence (CI)** – involves measures that are implemented to protect own intelligence capabilities and military assets from foreign and unauthorised access and exploitation. These measures can be defensive or offensive by nature:
 - **Defensive** measures – usually in the form of policy prescripts – are means to prevent unauthorised access to personnel, information, equipment, and communications.
 - **Offensive** measures are operations against persons suspected of performing acts of espionage or the planning of subversive activities against the interest of the organisation, infiltration of foreign intelligence services (FIS), and deception to mislead hostile forces in terms of own military capabilities;
- **Covert action** – is classified as actions by a government to alter the political, military, economic and social order of a foreign government, with the emphasis on the secret or covert nature of the action. Types of covert action can be described as propaganda where information is directed against a target population by paramilitary operations with the aim of manipulating the constitutional stability of a foreign state. Whether covert action is executed through passive means, such as propaganda, or by using force, defence forces or intelligence organisations will be tasked to carry out such operations. Instead of restricting themselves to intelligence advice for the execution of policy, intelligence organisations are, by implication, tasked with the execution of national policy.

Early Development of Wide-Ranging Collection Capabilities

An effective capacity for intelligence collection was developed through various collection methods. Prior to 1961, the SADF and the UDF had already deployed military attachés (MAs) abroad. Representation was, however, restricted to France, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. At the end of 1961, Colonel MJ Uys, the Chief Intelligence Officer and head of the IS, recommended the expansion of MAs to include Canada, Italy, Switzerland, and West Germany.¹⁸ Uys motivated his request for the need to expand the overt collection capability of the SADF by referring to the isolation of South

Africa following the exit of the country from the Commonwealth. By 1967, the SADF had extended their military representation to eight countries, viz. Australia, Canada, Italy, France, Portugal, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), the United Kingdom, and the United States.¹⁹ The MAs were provided with clear guidelines in terms of what to report on regarding their host countries and the armed forces of the host country. Most important were military operations and exercises as well as personalities in the host defence force. Other responsibilities included:

- Technical intelligence on the military capability of the armed forces of the host country;
- The influence of political developments in the host country;
- The economic situation in the host country and its influence on its armed forces;
- Relations with other foreign MAs, and the stance of the latter towards South Africa.²⁰

In addition to Uys's motivation in 1961 for the expansion of MAs abroad, he also motivated for the placement of trained intelligence officers – so-called “military intelligence information officers” (MIIOs) – overseas to conduct overt collection. The purpose of the MIIOs was to assist MAs who were over-burdened with their MA responsibilities, which entailed the maintenance and furthering of military relations between the SADF and their host defence forces.²¹ MIIOs in France and the United Kingdom were declared officials at the respective SA diplomatic missions, and served as the intelligence liaison officers between the DMI and the intelligence organisations of their host countries.²²

Information on the scope of covert collection immediately after 1961 is limited. By 1964, the tasks of the production section at the DMI were indicated as –

- Recruitment, training, and deployment of agents;
- Liaison with deployed agents;
- Covert collection of militaries, as well as political and economic information;
- Rendering of technical assistance to agents.²³

By 1967, a specific covert collection section was considered, whose function was described as the covert collection of information, which could not be collected by any other means.²⁴

It was only towards mid-1968 that the DMI structured an independent directorate providing for all the different collection methods to determine the military threat against South Africa and South West Africa (Namibia) at the time. It would appear that, although the structure was recommended and approved, various proposed foreign offices were already operational, and covert collectors deployed. Five were already operational, viz. Lisbon (staffed within the SA Embassy), London, Paris, and two undercover elsewhere in France and West Germany. Three offices in Belgium, Holland and London operated independently. A **liaison section** interacted with friendly FISs and MAs abroad. An **electronic collection and telecommunication section** was in a developmental phase, although a restricted capability already existed at the time. Where these collection activities included covert actions and the placement of covert DMI personnel abroad, it was in

collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) or with their consent. The representatives were also declared in the countries of deployment with the FISs with whom they liaised.²⁵

The placement of military representatives on secondment to the DFA should be viewed against the background of the strategic position of South Africa in the early 1960s. During this period, Portugal, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and South Africa collectively viewed themselves as being threatened by the rise of African nationalism, the threat of liberation movements, and a shift in international opinion against European colonialism, including in Africa. Of concern to Portugal, specifically, were their two African colonies in Southern Africa: Angola and Mozambique. These areas were in South Africa's area of strategic interest, and instability in the two countries was viewed as a direct threat to stability in South Africa.²⁶

South Africa therefore deemed it important to establish an intelligence collection and liaison capability across the region, subsequently concentrating its regional military foreign relations on the placement of military representatives in Luanda, Angola, and Lourenço Marques (Maputo). Representatives from the SADF were seconded to the DFA for deployment as vice consuls (VCs), as Angola and Mozambique were Portuguese colonies, and South Africa thus had consular representation in these two countries, but not at embassy level.²⁷ The VCs liaised directly with the armed and intelligence services in their host countries. Their main responsibility was the provision of intelligence to the DMI, collected through liaison with the local Portuguese intelligence agencies. Their method of collection was overt and through liaison with well-placed sources of intelligence. They were not mandated to engage in covert collection and the recruitment and handling of covert agents.²⁸

In the early 1960s, the General Staff of the SADF concluded that the DMI had to investigate the conduct of electronic warfare (EW) functions. In 1964, the decision was taken that the army would execute electronic collection, whilst the DMI would be responsible for the crypto and data analysis of the electronically collected data.²⁹ By 1965, the telecommunication section of the DMI was tasked with –

- The coding and de-coding of secret handwriting;
- Communications with agents, and other intelligence organisations within the SADF and the SAP;
- Interception of electronic communications;
- Crypto-coding and decoding;
- Technical research.³⁰

In his book, *A Spook's Progress*, Maritz Spaarwater indicates that, on joining the DMI in 1968, his task was the transcription of intercepted radio broadcasts between Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Lusaka (Zambia) of Radio Freedom broadcasts of the African National Congress (ANC) and Radio Free Africa of the Pan Africanist Congress.³¹ By 1969, the mandate of the DMI was broadened to include electronic collection activities in conjunction with the SADF Officers Commanding Maritime Security, Joint Combat

Forces, and the Air Force. Portuguese-speaking national conscripts were deployed to electronic collection stations in Rundu and Katima Mulilo in northern SWA (Namibia).³²

Comprehensive Analysis Capability

Over the period 1961 to 1971, the DMI compiled a wide array of intelligence products (publications). The DMI annual report of March 1966 displayed a range of intelligence activities for 1965, especially strategic and operational intelligence reports, as depicted in Table 1 below:³³

Table 1: Strategic and operational intelligence reports for 1965.

Type of report	Number	Client (where indicated)
Military Intelligence		
Order of Battle (ORBAT) of various African states	Not specified	SADF
Strategic and tactical intelligence studies	Eight in African countries	
Intelligence appreciations	Seven	
Target intelligence reports	50	SA Air Force
Intelligence reports and intelligence summaries	Few hundred	Inter-departmental Intelligence Co-ordination Division (IICD)
Political Intelligence		
Intelligence papers	228	
Appreciation of political subversion in South Africa	One	
Appreciation of communist activities in Africa	Two	
Completion of subversive “Omnibus” of 3 425 personalities involved in political and subversive activities against South Africa		
Synopsis of 285 political, subversive, and international organisations engaged in activities against South Africa		
Political and subversive reports	4 562	IICD, South African Police (SAP), FIS, and government departments
Overt collection of weekly summaries of political and subversive information	Weekly	Government departments

Type of report	Number	Client (where indicated)
Military Economic Intelligence		
Assessments on e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effect of UK sanctions on Rhodesia (Zimbabwe); • Sustainability of the Portuguese economy; • Implications of Zambian mine strikes. 	Weekly in the form of bulletins and special reports	Government departments
Counter-Intelligence (CI) and Military Security (MS)		
Security vetting of DMI applicants	182	
Field security surveys at units and formations	249	

A Cumbersome Start to Counter-Intelligence

During the 1960s, offensive CI (the investigation of acts of espionage, subversion and sabotage) was accepted as the responsibility of the DMI. Military security, defensive measures to protect SADF personnel, equipment and information by means of policies, instructions, and security surveys of military units from unauthorised access, were accepted as the responsibility of the army, the air force, and the navy. Although the distinction between CI and MS was well-defined, the execution of it however continuously changed up to the early 1970s.

Furthermore, during the founding of the initial IS in 1961, its responsibilities, related to security and intelligence, were already ill-defined. The IS had to structure its MS and CI responsibilities without any precedent as basis, and carried out its security function as it defined the MS and CI. With regard to MS, the IS concentrated on security education and awareness within the SADF and, as a CI function, carried out clandestine infiltration tests of military bases to evaluate its level of security measures and to recruit informants. These actions, however, led to negative perceptions towards the DMI, as commanders perceived the actions as attempts to expose incompetent execution of their commands. The MS component also caused a discrepancy in responsibilities as it investigated security breaches and possible acts of espionage, subversion, and sabotage, which were the responsibility of the CI component. Counter-intelligence was also responsible for the recruitment and handling of informants within and outside the SADF, to collect security-related information within the broad population and subversive organisations and FISs. These were, however, the responsibility of covert collection.³⁴

During September 1963, the SAP indicated that it could no longer conduct security screenings of uniformed and civilian members of the SADF. The DMI hence accepted

responsibility for its own vetting in the SADF, although the SAP would remain a source of information in the vetting process.³⁵ By August 1964, the DMI had an approved vetting structure of 58 personnel under the MS Section.³⁶

Between 1964 and 1968, CI was subject to various changes in structure and responsibilities. These mainly related to an extension of offensive CI measures by the DMI and the extension of the MS function to the army, the air force, and the navy. By 1968, CI was reorganised into a structure that would remain unchanged until 1976. Only minor structural adjustments were made, and the description of certain responsibilities was affected. Due to the negative connotation, MS investigations were only conducted on request by officers commanding units and not unannounced by the DMI. The conduct of counter-espionage operations was executed only in consultation with the SAP. Later in 1964, a security committee was founded under chairmanship of the Director Counter-Intelligence, consisting of representatives of the army, the air force, the navy, the Quartermaster General, the Chief of Administration, the Military Psychological Institute, Civil Protection, and the Comptroller of the SADF to coordinate security policy within the SADF.³⁷

In November 1968, the first CI regional office was opened in Cape Town. It was responsible for security vetting, MS advisory tasks, and security investigations in the Western Cape Command area.³⁸ In the same year, CI recognised the necessity of covert and clandestine investigations that were not possible due to the task being carried out by uniformed members of the CI investigations section. The founding of covert field offices was approved by the CG SADF, and would enable CI investigators to operate in civilian clothes, use civilian registered vehicles, and have no contact with the CI headquarters, except on command level.³⁹

Limited Commencement of Covert Action in Support of the State

When considering the historical data of the 1960s, it is difficult to categorise clearly the different collection activities as performed by the DMI. The reason for this was that, at times, the covert (or clandestine) and overt nature of the activities was ill-defined, and tended to overlap. An example was the placement of VCs in Angola and Mozambique. Their task, overt intelligence collection, could arguably also be categorised as covert action as they were operating in a covert manner as DFA personnel.

For the purpose of covert action, two intelligence activities will be discussed as they conform to the definition of covert action as discussed in this article.

Psychological Operations within the SADF and South African Population

During 1964, the DMI commenced with planning for the execution of psychological operations (PsyOps) on the premise that South Africa no longer existed in a status of peace, but was subject to a communist-inspired psychological onslaught that manifested in the form of negative media reports against not only South Africa, but also against the SADF. The CG SADF authorised the formation of a PsyOps section within the DMI, with the purpose of countering these media onslaughts by specialised psychological operations to strengthen the preparedness of the SADF. The functions of PsyOps were stipulated as –

- Determination of the psychological onslaught against South Africa with specific reference to the SADF;
- The planning and execution of PsyOps;
- Liaison with relevant authorities.⁴⁰

Early in 1965, in conjunction with the National Bureau of Educational and Social Research, a programme was developed for the implementation of the PsyOps function. The programme would consist of three activities: a psychological analysis/PsyOps intelligence group; a research group; and an action group.

- The responsibility of the **analysis–intelligence group** was the determination of the scope of propaganda against – or in support of – South Africa, and the compilation of reports for the action group. The propaganda analysis was based on scrutinising all internal and external newspapers, radio broadcasts, and printed media.
- The **research group** formulated projects and programmes for the execution of PsyOps. Already in the 1960s, the programmes included aspects, such as training of SADF personnel to resist interrogation, indoctrination, and brainwashing, as well as indoctrination and programmes against certain target groups. Specialised PsyOps were developed in conjunction with the SADF Institute for Aviation Medicine.
- The **action group** was responsible for the execution of programmes developed by the research group, by a decentralised system of implementation and execution.

These programmes were not restricted to implementation within the SADF only, but were also directed at the SA population. Various operations were also executed with other state departments to determine the psychological preparedness of the populace, and to institute programmes to strengthen its mental preparedness.⁴¹

Special Liaison with Foreign Governments

Since the early 1960s, DMI engaged in various intelligence operations and relations not only with FISs, but also with the political leadership of certain countries. These operations were carried out in conjunction with the DFA and in support of SA foreign policy and national interest. The founding of this function within the organisational structure of the DMI, as in the case of covert collection, developed from the above-mentioned action group who described its aim in 1964 as the ‘conduct of special military intelligence operations’ and its tasks as ‘the planning, and specifically execution of these operations, as well as liaison with relevant institutions’.⁴² The rationale for these operations was the increasing international isolation of South Africa after 1961 due to its internal political policy and incessant changing foreign policy. This changing foreign policy was dictated by the marginalised international position of South Africa and the willingness of other isolationist states towards which South Africa necessarily tended, or countries who viewed South Africa as a means for the execution of their own foreign policy.⁴³ Various projects were already conducted in the 1960s.

In October 1965, Brigadier PM Retief, who succeeded Uys in December 1961, had a meeting with Pres. Francois Tombalbaye of Chad on request of the latter and arranged through Jean Mauriceau-Beaupré of the French intelligence service, the *Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage* (SDECE), with whom the DMI maintained excellent relations. At the time, Chad took a pro-Western and anti-communist stance, and the country had the potential for the deployment of a listening post for South Africa. During their meeting, Retief and Tombalbaye agreed on economic cooperation, resulting in the provision of geological equipment and training support from South Africa.⁴⁴ Tombalbaye indicated his willingness to engage in close relations with South Africa, but said that such contact should be executed with caution and in a discrete manner so as not to influence Chadian relations with other African states. As the discussions took place with an SA military delegation in the person of Retief from the DMI, Tombalbaye requested that his intentions be directed to the SA Prime Minister.⁴⁵

Strong military relations developed with Pres. Omar Bongo of Gabon who, together with the Ivory Coast, shared strong views against the pro-communist stance of Nigeria and thus sympathised with the Biafran cause. After the Biafran Civil War, the DMI coordinated the donation of T6 training aircraft used for pilot training and surveillance by South Africa, followed up with a commitment by Botha for additional aircraft following requests by Bongo, mediated through Brig. Gen. Fritz Loots. On advice of the DMI and through the excellent relations it maintained with Pres. Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, assistance (unspecified) was provided by South Africa to Kofi Busia, a presidential candidate in the 1969 Ghanaian presidential election, which the latter subsequently won, resulting in a pro-South African stance by Ghana during the tenure of Busia.⁴⁶

Absence of a National Intelligence Coordination Structure

During the first seven years after 1961, the DMI was responsible for the conduct of political and economic intelligence, a responsibility for which the SADF and its intelligence component were not trained. No national intelligence service existed. Also of concern was the lack of a coordinated national intelligence mechanism to render intelligence advice at national level.

As early as 1962, Retief noted his concern that the DMI was not sufficiently staffed and equipped to address intelligence in terms of –

- The economic and industrial potential of African states in particular;
- Certain other foreign states concerning their intent towards South Africa;
- The scientific and technological capabilities of foreign states, not only pertaining to the threat this held for South Africa, but also because South Africa was acquiring military equipment and arms from these states.⁴⁷

By the end 1961, the DMI recommended the founding of an Interdepartmental Intelligence Bureau (IDIB). The aim of the IDIB, consisting of relevant state departments, was to address deficiencies in the national intelligence effort. The proposed IDIB would comprise the secretaries of the prime minister and the participating departments, the CG SADF, and

the commissioner of the SAP. The IDIC would also exercise control over the collection and evaluation of information as well as the dissemination of intelligence. The development of intelligence sources in Africa would be a priority, as well as advising Cabinet on intelligence matters. The recommendations of the DMI were not approved. By 1964, however – and not on the initiative of the DMI – two committees were founded with the aim to coordinate intelligence between the different intelligence-related state departments. A State Security Committee (SSCom) was formed consisting of the Secretary of the DFA, the CG SADF (presented by the DMI), and the Commissioner of the SAP. The SSCom was responsible for evaluating and reporting on aspects threatening state security. In concert with the responsibilities of the SSCom, were initiatives by the SADF to address the potential revolutionary climate in South Africa. In 1965, Exercise Pandora was conducted at the South African Military College in Pretoria. The aim of the exercise, in which the DMI played the leading role, was to coordinate the responsibilities of the SADF, the SAP, and other state departments in countering the internal revolutionary threat. As the onslaught was deemed to be 80 per cent political in nature, all departments ought to have been involved. Structures were instituted to manage and execute a national counter-revolutionary strategy under the auspices of a National Security Council consisting of the prime minister, various departmental ministers, including the Minister of Defence, and the CG SADF.⁴⁸

In February 1968, Loots concluded that it was clear that all these initiatives were ineffective and cumbersome, and he subsequently recommended the founding of a centralised national intelligence mechanism as the structures failed to coordinate interdepartmental intelligence cooperation. He compiled a memorandum to the CG SADF propagating the creation of a central national co-ordinating mechanism to manage all intelligence activities within South Africa. Loots based the necessity of such a mechanism on two arguments:

- Firstly, it was held that government lacked a comprehensive overview of the threat against South Africa, including the military threat; thus, that government was unable to compile a strategy to counter any threat effectively;
- Secondly, the escalation of an unconventional threat internally, such as protest actions and sabotage, necessitated a national coordinated counter-strategy.

Loots therefore propagated a national coordinating mechanism, and not a new central intelligence organisation, as all the elements to conduct intelligence already existed among relevant state departments. The departments Loots referred to were –

- The DFA for the collection and evaluation of political intelligence;
- The SAP for internal security; and
- The DMI for the collection and evaluation of military intelligence.

As was the case with the recommendations of Retief in 1964, these recommendations of Loots were disapproved.⁴⁹

DMI Ostensibly an Autonomous Intelligence Organisation

Despite the lack of departmental prescripts and national legislation to mandate its intelligence functions, the compulsory execution of non-military-related intelligence tasks and ineffective intelligence coordination, by 1968, the DMI appeared to be an effective intelligence organisation, performing all the functions of an intelligence service.

Training of intelligence personnel was conducted at the South African Army College in subjects such as field intelligence; CI; psychological warfare; photo interpretation; sabotage, interrogation and linguistic training; technical intelligence; as well as signal intelligence.⁵⁰ Certain specialised courses, such as agent handling and training for covert deployments abroad, were conducted in the Alphen Building in central Pretoria, the headquarters of the DMI.⁵¹

By 1965, the strength of the DMI was approved at 260, although the actual strength was only 173.⁵² In 1968, civilian members were provided the opportunity to militarise, which 19 members accepted, ranging from the rank level of lieutenant to colonel.⁵³ Between 1968 and 1970, various policy frameworks were developed for fair labour practises for civilian members within a military environment in terms of remuneration, military training, and promotion opportunities.⁵⁴ In 1969, the DMI recruited 11 conscripts as –

- Translators of Portuguese, French, German, and Russian documents;
- Qualified drafters for the compilation of maps;
- Telecommunications technicians;
- Administrative personnel;
- Graduates in the fields of political science, economy, international politics, and geography.⁵⁵

By decree of the Minister of Defence, the DMI was allotted the status of an independent corps on 1 January 1968, named the South African Military Intelligence Corps (SAMIC).⁵⁶

Although the DMI appeared by 1968 to be an established intelligence organisation, events later in the year however drastically changed this situation, and would usher in two years of uncertainty for the DMI. These events were the establishment of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) in 1968, which led to the disbandment of the DMI and the introduction of the Potgieter Report instituted by Prime Minister BJ Vorster in September 1969 into the security and intelligence establishment in South Africa.

Emergence of the BOSS and the Disbandment of the DMI

The emergence of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) as well as the temporary disbandment and re-instatement of the DMI – after its brief incorporation within the BOSS structure – occurred between October 1968 and April 1969. Although this relatively short period had no significant impact on the long-term operation of the DMI, it remains important in the context of the subsequent demarcation of responsibilities and relations of the DMI and the BOSS. Central to these developments was Hendrik van den Berg, former head of the Security Branch of the SAP and newly appointed head of the BOSS, as well as Prime Minister Vorster, and Minister of Defence, PW Botha.

The CG SADF convened a Supreme Command Council (SCC) meeting during October 1968 with the specific aim to brief the SCC on the envisaged new BOSS that would be founded and headed by Van den Berg, and the appointment of Loots as the deputy head of the BOSS. The DMI within the SADF would be dissolved, and most of its functions and personnel transferred to the BOSS. With the exception of the CI function, which was transferred to the Chief of Defence Staff within the SADF, the DMI was officially disbanded on 30 October 1968.⁵⁷ Events however followed that would lead to the exit of the former DMI elements from BOSS and the re-instatement of the DMI by April 1969, merely six months later. The main reasons for the reinstatement of DMI were:

- Opposition by the SCC of the SADF;
- An indication by the transferred DMI component that the envisaged coordinated intelligence approach was not effective;
- Most importantly, poor relations and confrontations between Botha, who harboured serious reservations about the new intelligence compensation, and Van den Berg.

The problems raised by Botha were threefold:

- Firstly, Botha accused Van den Berg of poor relations with Loots and excluding the transferred DMI elements at BOSS meetings.
- Secondly, the practice of Van den Berg serving as the prime minister's security advisor was in principle unsound, and a conflict of interest, and the BOSS could not be allotted internal policing functions without proper legislation directing its mandate.⁵⁸
- Lastly, Van den Berg's intent with the newly instituted BOSS, which included a declaration by Van den Berg of his intent with the BOSS, his own allocated powers as head of the BOSS, and his role as security advisor to the prime minister.⁵⁹

On 24 February 1969, Van den Berg – in his capacity as the security advisor to the Prime Minister – forwarded his intent as head of the BOSS in a directive entitled 'Funksionering van die Buro vir Staatsveiligheid' (Functioning of the Bureau of State Security) to the CG SADF.⁶⁰ According to the directive, the BOSS would act as the central intelligence organisation, and would advise relevant departments on matters of intelligence and CI concern. Van den Berg would be –

- Responsible only to the prime minister;
- Mandated to task any department on intelligence matters;
- Have extended powers to coordinate and evaluate intelligence of national, security, and military nature.

State departments were expected to second members, acceptable to Van den Berg himself, to the BOSS. Further –

- A National Intelligence Appreciation (NIAP) would be created for the SADF and the relevant state departments for the compilation of their own departmental strategies.

- The NIAP would be the exclusive responsibility and mandate of the BOSS.
- The BOSS would control, coordinate, and execute all CI, espionage, and security activities in South Africa, although in cooperation with departments.
- The BOSS would have unhindered access to departments who would be expected to report all security matters systematically to the BOSS who would advise departments on suggested courses of action.
- Psychological warfare and propaganda operations would be planned, controlled, and executed by the BOSS in cooperation with applicable state departments.
- State departments could conduct their own tactical and departmental intelligence, with the provision that matters related to security and intelligence had to be forwarded to the BOSS.⁶¹

Van den Berg's intent drew immediate and alarmed response from the CG SADF.

On request of the CG SADF, Brig. H de V du Toit, former deputy to Loots, was requested to comment on the stated intent of Van den Berg.⁶² On 11 March 1969, Du Toit commented that the main task of the BOSS – which included intelligence as well as security – was unsound, and against international intelligence practices:

- Security implied a policing function with specific training and expertise, and as such should be relegated to the SAP;
- The BOSS could not fulfil the role as overarching intelligence organisation whilst at the same time executing the full spectrum of intelligence activities;
- Military intelligence by the SADF could not be relegated to tactical level, as this would deprive the DMI of performing strategic intelligence as one of its main responsibilities was to advise the CG SADF on the external threat against South Africa;
- The entire intent was further flawed by ambiguities, such as unclear distinction between security and safety, liaison officers who manage the interest of their departments, and the potential subjectivity and discretion of the security advisor, who in this case was Van den Berg;
- Lastly, Du Toit also referred to the personal power that would be allotted to Van den Berg as security advisor to the prime minister. This would result in Van den Berg having unhindered access, a mandate and authoritative control over the wide spectrum of SA intelligence departments, as well as the choice of departmental seconded personnel according to his personal preference.⁶³

Based on Du Toit's comments, Botha wasted no time, and unilaterally withdrew the DMI component from BOSS, and on 17 April 1969, informed Vorster accordingly.⁶⁴ Following the decision by Botha, the CG SANDF re-instated the DMI under the SADF on 21 April 1969.⁶⁵ In April 1969, after consultations between himself, the ministers of defence and police, the CG SADF, and Van den Berg, Vorster issued a directive confirming the re-instatement of the DMI.⁶⁶

The withdrawal of the DMI from BOSS did not have any effect on the functioning and status of the BOSS. On 7 May 1969, Vorster issued a directive regarding the state

security dispensation for South Africa. The directive provided for the appointment of a national security advisor for the prime minister and the establishment of a central national intelligence service, directed by the national security advisor. The DMI was mandated to conduct political, economic, industrial, and geographical intelligence, but only when required for analysis of a military threat against the state. The BOSS was mandated as the national central intelligence organisation, and would be responsible for:

- The formulation of intelligence policy;
- The coordination of intelligence activities within the different intelligence-related state departments;
- The investigation of all aspects threatening the security of the state;
- The provision of advice to the prime minister and relevant state departments regarding such a threat.⁶⁷

Despite its withdrawal from the BOSS, its re-instatement as an autonomous intelligence organisation within the SADF, as well as the directive by Vorster authorising its role and mandate, the DMI would, nevertheless, again be the subject of investigation. It would appear that Vorster, after the founding of the BOSS and the re-establishment of the DMI, continued to harbour reservations concerning the division of intelligence responsibilities within South Africa.

The Potgieter Report: Finality in the Role of the DMI

On 15 September 1969, Vorster appointed Justice HJ Potgieter to investigate the security of the state with specific reference to the role of the different intelligence organisations within South Africa. The findings of the investigation, detailed in the report by the Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to Security of the State (“the Potgieter Report”), stipulated the division of responsibilities of the intelligence services.⁶⁸ Potgieter was tasked to determine whether the state departments involved in intelligence matters regarding the security of the state functioned properly and in a co-ordinated manner, and to advise on any aspect concerning the security of the state and the necessity to amend legislation regarding the newly founded BOSS.⁶⁹

The Potgieter Commission acknowledged the DMI as a legitimate organisation within South Africa dealing with aspects regarding the security of the state. The Commission determined that the DMI had to be mandated to address, apart from the military, also political, economic, educational and psychological intelligence, and subversive aspects, as well as terrorism, sabotage, and espionage. Most importantly, however, Potgieter emphasised that the SADF, based on the conduct of intelligence since 1961, acted within its mandate by being responsible for the safeguarding of South Africa. He concluded that, as there was no national coordinating organisation, structure, or central intelligence organisation, it was reasonable and acceptable that the SADF had to take this national intelligence responsibility upon itself. It was acceptable that political, economic, and social intelligence fell within the intelligence responsibility of the DMI due to the overlapping of these aspects and the influence it had on national threat assessments.⁷⁰

Potgieter confirmed that the BOSS, as structured and mandated at the time, had to act as the central intelligence organisation for the state and as structure for the central evaluation of national intelligence in conjunction with other intelligence departments. The BOSS was the only intelligence organisation mandated to collect covert information, both internally and externally, except for the SADF, who could do so during times of war. The BOSS was obliged to provide state departments with collected information that fell within their area of responsibility, while state departments had to provide the BOSS with information that fell within the mandate of the latter.⁷¹ The recommendations of the Potgieter Report were promulgated in the *Security Intelligence and State Security Council Act (No. 64 of 1972)*.⁷²

Following the Potgieter Report, Du Toit demarcated the responsibilities of the DMI and his views on the scope of intelligence and liaison between the BOSS and the DMI. The latter would include political, economic, industrial, technical, scientific, social, psychological, geographical, and tactical intelligence. It would be the task of the DMI to compile a military analysis, considering and including strategic and tactical aspects, and to advise the SADF Defence Staff Council (DSC). Du Toit concluded by summarising the main responsibilities of the DMI as –

- Advising the DSC on the military threat against South Africa, and on a counter-strategy;
- Furnishing the services with strategic intelligence for operational planning;
- Coordinating the military intelligence function within the SADF.

On 29 November 1971, the DMI was renamed Military Intelligence Division (MID), and the military intelligence and CI functions were amalgamated under the MID. Du Toit replaced Loots, was promoted to Major General, and appointed in the new post of Director General Military Intelligence (DGMI).⁷³

During the decade 1960–1970, the DMI developed and structured itself according to the four main functions of an intelligence organisation as discussed previously, namely collection, analysis, CI, and covert operations. Most of the collection methods were already instituted by the DMI during the first decade after 1961 following collection of information through a network of SADF MAs and MIOs in Africa and abroad. The DMI supported the DFA in the advancement of SA foreign policy in Africa, although electronic and clandestine collection methods were applied in the developing stage. Analysis was the military intelligence function that developed most rapidly during the first decade after 1961. The reason might have been the effective recruitment system of the DMI whereby a substantial number of graduated members were recruited. These graduated members contributed not only to military intelligence, but also to the analyses of economic and political intelligence that were the responsibility of the DMI due to the absence of a national intelligence service. The CI function was subject to and hampered by continuous changes during the first decade after 1961, mainly due to ongoing adjustments in the structure of a developing SADF during this first decade. The responsibility of CI continuously migrated between the DMI and alternative structures within the rest of the SADF. Discrepancies also existed in terms of what was considered offensive and defensive responsibilities. During this first decade, the CI function – although distinguishing between

offensive and defensive – consisted primarily of defensive policies and regulations. During the 1960s, the DMI – although to a limited extent – already became involved in covert action as a direct result of strategic and political priorities of the state. Special liaison with foreign countries, in conjunction with the DFA, and the conduct of psychological operations amongst their own populations as well as against internal and foreign entities and persons acting against the state, all had political motives.

The successful evolution of the DMI to an autonomous organisation in 10 years can be attributed to various factors but the following are considered the most important ones:

- The dynamic personalities and leader qualities of its initial officers commanding, especially Retief with his ability to understand the core essentials of the intelligence function;
- An effective strategy in personnel acquisition and recruitment strategy within the SADF of experienced and academically qualified personnel from universities or elsewhere in the civil service;
- A well-established foreign intelligence network that enabled liaison with foreign intelligence services and efficient collection of information data as an imperative basis for intelligence analysis.

Conclusion

Directly after its founding in 1961, the DMI was faced with various challenges. It was understaffed, lacked experience, and had no real knowledge of the conduct of intelligence or the role of an intelligence organisation. None of its members had any official intelligence training, especially on strategic level. In the absence of a civilian intelligence organisation, at least until 1968, the DMI conducted economic, political, and socio-economic intelligence, responsibilities that are not the primary functions of a military intelligence organisation.

During the decade 1961–1970, the DMI recommended on two occasions – in 1962 and again in 1968 – the founding of an organisation to conduct non-military-related intelligence as well as the coordination of intelligence-related activities of other national departments, and the compilation of a single intelligence analysis for consideration at national political level. Neither of these recommendations was approved, although an inter-departmental committee was established, albeit mostly ineffective, to consider intelligence matters.

A total lack of political guidelines and intelligence legislation characterised this period. None of various defence white papers addressed intelligence matters; the post of SecDef, which would normally provide political guidelines, was dissolved; and no intelligence legislation was promulgated.

The establishment of the BOSS in 1968 led to the temporary disbandment of the DMI, an occurrence that however had no major effect on the DMI. By 1971, the DMI was recognised as one of the official intelligence organisations within the SA intelligence community by the Potgieter Commission appointed by Prime Minister Vorster. By this time, the DMI had already successfully operationalised various intelligence functions.

Most of the collection methods, namely electronic, human and covert collection were already instituted during this period through a network of overt and covert collectors and the establishment of an electronic warfare capability. Analysis was the intelligence function that developed the most rapidly within the first decade after 1961. Shortly after 1961, the DMI already submitted operational, strategic, political, military, and economic intelligence. The CI function was subject to continuous changes during this period, mainly due to continuous changes in the structure of a developing SADF and the continuous migration of the CI responsibility between the DMI and structures within the rest of the SADF. In 1971, the CI organisation was however confirmed as a DMI responsibility. Covert action operations already existed in the form of psychological programmes against a hostile media and liaison with foreign governments in support of the DFA.

Despite the challenges of the first decade of its existence, by 1971, the DMI had established itself as a recognised organisation performing the four main functions of an intelligence organisation, as stated at the outset of this article.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Chris Pfeiffer was a career soldier who spent 38 years of his career at Defence Intelligence of the SA National Defence Force. Most of posts were in intelligence analysis, training, and foreign relations where he spent time in Chile and Spain. His interests cover South African history, ancient civilisations as well as African political history where the thesis of his Masters in Security Studies addressed security sector reform in South Sudan after cessation from Sudan. This article is an extract of his D Phil thesis on *The political and strategic influences on the development of military intelligence in the SADF: 1961 – 1990*.
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Re-evaluating Oversight of South African Defence Procurement: Can Combined Assurance Help Extract Full Accountability from the Department of Defence?

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Abstract

The Department of Defence and the South African National Defence Force have been plagued by defence procurement irregularities since the inception of democracy. As a result, several scholars have questioned the ability of certain oversight mechanisms to conduct proper oversight of the military, and of defence procurement specifically. The study on which this article reports therefore aimed to evaluate the ability of Parliament, the Military Ombud, the Auditor-General of South Africa, and the Public Protector to extract accountability from the Department of Defence for its defence procurement activities. Discussion of these four mechanisms will constitute the basis for evaluating whether a renewed approach to oversight, in the form of combined assurance, might be able to allow for extracting greater accountability from the military for its non-compliance with the regulatory frameworks of South African defence procurement.

Keywords: Department of Defence, South African National Defence Force, Defence Procurement, Combined Assurance, Oversight, Accountability.

Introduction

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has been plagued by defence procurement irregularities since the inception of democracy. Well-known examples include the Strategic Defence Procurement Package (SDPP) or “Arms Deal”,⁷⁵ the upgrade of 1 Military Hospital,⁷⁶ the procurement of the immune booster Interferon from the Republic of Cuba,⁷⁷ and the non-delivery of deliverables under Project Hoefyster (well into its second decade of existence).⁷⁸ Irregularities are often accompanied by allegations of fraud and corruption,⁷⁹ and remain highly publicised in the South African media.⁸⁰ It is also an environment well known for its lack of transparency.⁸¹ It is, therefore, common knowledge that South African defence procurement remains within a state of chaos, and that there is an urgent need for proper oversight, transparency, and consequence management (accountability) in the Department of Defence (DoD).

Several scholars have cast doubt over the ability of certain oversight mechanisms to do

proper oversight of the military,⁸² and of defence procurement specifically.⁸³ Scholars also highlight gaps in oversight over the various mechanisms.⁸⁴ Accordingly, the study reported here aimed to evaluate the ability of four oversight mechanisms to extract accountability from the DoD for its defence procurement activities.⁸⁵ This evaluation will inform a discussion of the following questions:

- What is the meaning of the concept of accountability?
- What is the meaning of “full” accountability?
- Can any oversight mechanism really extract “full” accountability from the DoD?
- Is it still effective to view oversight mechanisms as separate from one another?

Would a holistic and collaborative approach to military oversight by these various mechanisms not perhaps present one with an opportunity to reconsider their role and help address the balancing exercise often required within the context of defence procurement due to national security concerns?

These questions are answered by considering the impact of national security within the context of defence procurement, and its link with the concepts of oversight and accountability. The study consequently evaluated the ability of Parliament, the Military Ombud, the Auditor-General of South Africa (Auditor-General), and the Public Protector to exercise oversight of defence procurement. Finally, the article focuses on the concept of combined assurance, and how it can assist in re-evaluating oversight of defence procurement to understand the relationship between different oversight mechanisms better. This evaluation is summarised in the schematic diagram in Figure 1 below for ease of reference.

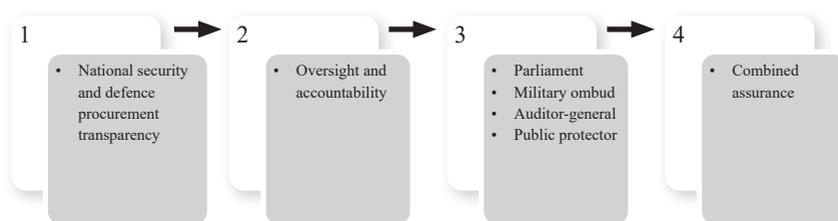


Figure 1: Schematic diagram summarising evaluation of oversight of defence procurement.

National security and defence procurement transparency

National security and secrecy serve legitimate interests. The state has a duty to secure its borders, ensure internal and external safety of its interests, and safeguard its sovereignty.⁸⁶ For this reason, the state or military normally classifies information where disclosure thereof could:

- Boost efforts of foreign enemies to attack the state;
- Reduce the fighting capability of the armed forces of a state; or
- Enable the military of a foreign state to gain the technological upper hand.⁸⁷

Information regarding details of advanced system design and operational characteristics of weapon systems or details of plans for military operations are also presumed secret.⁸⁸

Notwithstanding the above, defence procurement transparency is deemed highly problematic, as national security exceptions allow military and security issues ‘to be treated as a special case with special privileges’.⁸⁹ Secrecy is often used as a ‘blanket justification’ to avoid scrutiny of security issues – it can hide corruption, and generally ‘inhibits the ability of parliament, civil society and the public to hold the executive to account’.⁹⁰

Audit and other relevant information relating to *military procurement*, working hours, personnel allocations, salaries, *acquisitions* and *asset management* should, however, be provided on an appropriate and routine basis to allow for appropriate oversight and military transparency.⁹¹ Where the state and/or military is not transparent, oversight mechanisms must step in, which indicates that the link between military transparency⁹² and accountability cannot be ignored.

Oversight and Accountability

Oversight

The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines oversight as ‘systems or actions to control an activity and make sure that it is done correctly and legally’.⁹³ Within the context of legislative oversight, Pelizzo and Stapenhurst write:

Regardless of whether oversight is viewed as a sort of *ex post* review of the government policies and programs or whether it is viewed instead as a supervision of government activities that can be performed both *ex post* and *ex ante*, scholars have generally agreed on the fact that *effective oversight is good for the proper functioning of a democratic political system*.⁹⁴ [author’s italics]

Effective oversight holds two benefits for the political system. First, it can contribute to improving the quality of the policies or programmes initiated by government.⁹⁵ Second, legislative oversight ensures that government policies have greater legitimacy.⁹⁶ The purpose of oversight, therefore, is to ensure that the government’s ‘policies, plans, programs, and projects’⁹⁷ are ‘achieving expected results; represent good value for money; and are in compliance with applicable policies, laws, regulations, and ethical standards’.⁹⁸

Accountability

Accountability is not a ‘straightforward’⁹⁹ concept, as it depends on ‘time, context, cultural orientation or ideological persuasion’.¹⁰⁰ Bovens acknowledges that, while accountability can be seen as both a broad and a narrow concept, it is better to adopt a narrower and sociological view.¹⁰¹ This is because accountability is not a ‘political catchword’; it is rather a set of ‘concrete practices of account giving’.¹⁰²

Accountability can thus be seen to encompass three broad stages:

- First, the actor is obliged to inform the forum (an oversight mechanism) about the conduct of the actor, providing information about its tasks, decisions, and conduct.¹⁰³
- Second, the forum must have an opportunity to question the actor about the accuracy and/or legitimacy of the information provided to the forum and the conduct of the actor.¹⁰⁴
- Third, the forum should be able to ‘pass judgment on the conduct of the actor’.¹⁰⁵

The first two stages refer to the connection between accountability and answerability. The third stage refers to sanction. While it has been a point of discussion whether sanctions ‘is a constitutive element of accountability’, I concur with Bovens that it should be seen as such. The possible imposition of sanctions on actors ‘makes the difference between non-committal provision of information and being held to account’.¹⁰⁶

In this article, I therefore treat the first two stages as one element of the concept of accountability, and consider the ability of specific forums to obtain answers (“answerability”) from the DoD. Sanction shall be the second element.

In addition, the meaning of “accountability” within the defence context requires a different approach considering national security limitations and the secrecy of information. “Full” accountability goes beyond ordinary accountability (answerability and sanction). It specifically means that no DoD conduct is beyond reproach or excluded from oversight mechanisms. Accountability may be important, but it is “full” accountability that must flow from military oversight.

“Full” Accountability Must Flow from Oversight

According to Klaus, accountability can only occur once there are serious transparency mechanisms (or forums), as well as laws that are ‘truly, timely and coherently applied by government legal systems’ to keep direct and indirect perpetrators (or actors) responsible for their actions.¹⁰⁷ Oversight can only lead to effective transparency when it can ensure effective accountability. To achieve effective accountability, the public or forum(s) responsible for extracting accountability must be able to sanction the offending party or remedy the contravening behaviour.¹⁰⁸ Oversight alone would be insufficient, as it would merely allow for information to enter the public domain. Instead, the forum(s) charged with doing oversight should have at its disposal remedies to force an actor to correct its irregular behaviour. The forums should also not be limited in their access to information. In testing whether a specific forum can extract “full” accountability from the DoD (and SANDF) in terms of defence procurement, I analysed the regulatory framework of different forums to determine whether their oversight encapsulates both answerability and sanction and the general limitations placed on their power.

Evaluating the State of Oversight Forums of South African Defence Procurement

General

Several forums are charged with exercising oversight of defence procurement. Parliament and the Auditor-General, by virtue of their mandates discussed below, are responsible for oversight of defence procurement on an annual basis. On the other hand, the Military Ombud and Public Protector exercise oversight of defence procurement if and when their mandates allow for it.¹⁰⁹ In addition, the Internal Audit Division (IAD) of the DoD, located within the Defence Secretariat, serves as an internal transparency mechanism. I classify it as such because the IAD, at least conceptually, ‘cannot strictly be viewed as an oversight structure’ as an ‘organisation cannot do oversight of itself’.¹¹⁰ Finally, the Defence Inspectorate, located within the SANDF, serves as the Audit Authority of the DoD, and is also responsible for oversight of defence procurement.¹¹¹ The current study however only focused on those mechanisms external to the DoD and thus did not consider the IAD and Defence Inspectorate.

Parliament

Mandate and oversight tools

Sections 42(3) and 55(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (“Constitution”) assign Parliament oversight powers. Accordingly, Parliament has adopted an “oversight and accountability model”, which established ‘mechanisms to fulfil its oversight and accountability mandates in terms of the Constitution and under the rules established by the two Houses, individually and jointly’.¹¹²

Parliamentary oversight primarily occurs by means of five broad tools, namely parliamentary debates; parliamentary questions; special inquiries; oversight visits and study tours; and external audits.¹¹³ Two oversight bodies, which incorporate different elements of these five tools, are the Joint Standing Committee on Defence (JSCD) and the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans (PCDMV).

The JSCD deals with classified and sensitive military information with the potential to affect national security, and must ensure the executive is accountable to Parliament. The committee tends to focus on higher-order defence issues, such as the defence budget, defence policy, *defence procurement*, human resources, and military deployments.¹¹⁴ The PCDMV, a committee of the National Assembly, is required to consider legislation tabled in Parliament, and plays a general oversight role regarding the structure, functioning and policy of the DoD. It also reviews the annual DoD budget, holds budgetary hearings prior to the budget debate, and endeavours to ensure an alignment between the planning and budgetary priorities of the DoD.¹¹⁵

With regard to the overall utilisation of each of the five tools, Janse van Rensburg completed a thorough analysis of the first four parliamentary sessions (1994–2014).¹¹⁶ Janse van Rensburg and other scholars subsequently highlighted a decline in effective

parliamentary oversight of the DoD, especially during the Zuma presidency (2009–2018).¹¹⁷ This required an analysis of parliamentary oversight during the fifth and sixth parliamentary sessions as well. In the discussion below, I aim to provide a succinct overview of parliamentary oversight of defence procurement for the periods 1994–2014 and 2015–2022.

Parliamentary Oversight: 1994–2014

Four of the five tools of parliamentary oversight showed a decline in oversight during this period.¹¹⁸ First, there were only two defence-related parliamentary debates during the third and fourth Parliaments.¹¹⁹ There was a general decline in the activity of the JSCD, offset, in part, by increased activity on the part of the PCDMV. Both committees also showed a sudden decline in activity in 2012 and 2013. Second, during the first four Parliaments, there were 2 045 parliamentary questions. Several questions however went unanswered. During the fourth Parliament, questions were primarily posed by opposition Members of Parliament (MPs), and from 2007–2008 onwards, questions which had previously been answered in detail, became classified, as they were deemed to relate to ‘operational matters’.¹²⁰ Third, special defence inquiries were ‘a highly underutilised oversight tool’.¹²¹ Finally, there were five official study tours between 1994 and 2014, but none took place during the fourth Parliament.¹²² There was, nonetheless, an increase in the use of local oversight visits from 2009 onwards.¹²³ Janse van Rensburg however deemed committee reports in this regard to be so problematic that he still found a clear reduction in efficiency of this tool. Only the fifth tool, external audit, showed ‘the most significant areas of growth in terms of defence oversight between 1994 and 2014’.¹²⁴ Reliance on audit reports by the Auditor-General became fully entrenched during the fourth Parliament. The only concern Janse van Rensburg highlights regarding this tool is the limited engagement between the Auditor-General and the JCS and PCDMV committees regarding the annual report reviews, as well as the fact that the Auditor-General did not entertain requests for special audits.

Within the context of defence procurement, Janse van Rensburg also raises several concerns.¹²⁵ Defence procurement oversight initially had a positive start, and the JSCD and PCDMV held several procurement-related meetings between 1998 and 2004. The events of the SDPP¹²⁶ had however become a point of contention between MPs, and signalled a turning point in effective parliamentary oversight. One MP commented:

[V]ery little information was forthcoming regarding the procurement process. There was a sense of defensiveness regarding the procurement process and the chairperson at the time stifled transparency in this regard and possibly conspired with members of the executive to provide as little details as possible on the SDPP.¹²⁷

This indicates a decline in defence procurement oversight from the second Parliament onwards.

Janse van Rensburg nonetheless notes that an effort was made to improve parliamentary oversight, particularly through the promulgation of the National Conventional Arms Control Act (No. 41 of 2002). Despite its enactment,¹²⁸ there was nevertheless limited engagement with the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC) during the third and fourth Parliaments. This can largely be attributed to the committees whose responsibility it is to request the presence of the NCACC before it in the first place. Accordingly, Janse van Rensburg writes:

[W]hile mechanisms exist for parliamentary oversight of defence procurement, the handling of the 1999 SDPP, as well as a continued inability to regularly engage with the NCACC, *highlight major concerns in Parliament's capacity to effectively oversee defence procurement.*¹²⁹
[author's italics]

Finally, research indicates a general lack of engagement at committee level on defence procurement during the fourth Parliament. Instead of proactively engaging with defence procurement matters, the committees seemed to engage reactively only after a controversy surrounding a specific procurement contract would come to light. Janse van Rensburg concludes that oversight of defence procurement shows a 'downwards trajectory'¹³⁰ for the period 1994–2014.

Parliamentary oversight: 2015–2022

The five tools of parliamentary oversight showed improvement over this period.¹³¹ At plenary level, defence matters remained non-prioritised, with only a limited number of dedicated defence debates during the fifth and sixth Parliaments. There was however considerable improvement at committee level. Between 2015 and 2022, the PCDMV held an average of 22 meetings per annum, while the JSCD increased its average of 7 meetings per annum between 2015 and 2019, to an average of 19 per annum between 2020 and 2022.

In terms of parliamentary questions, 616 questions are indicated on the website of the Parliamentary Monitoring Group.¹³² While this is a reduced number compared to the number of questions posed between 1994 and 2014,¹³³ all but one of the questions¹³⁴ received an answer. This is a positive development. Of concern was that the preference for written as opposed to oral questions have remained in the fifth and sixth Parliaments (up to 2022), which is on a par with Janse van Rensburg's findings for the third and fourth Parliaments. The Minister of Defence also continued to reply to certain questions that the information could not be provided due to confidentiality or national security. The Minister nevertheless indicated that, in certain instances, the information could be provided in a closed session of the JSCD. While this might have limited information entering the public domain, it at least enabled the JSCD to scrutinise the actions of the department. Finally, former Minister of Defence, Thandi Modise,¹³⁵ seemed more inclined to provide in-depth replies to questions than her predecessor, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula.¹³⁶ There are thus both positive and negative developments regarding the usage of this oversight tool, with the positive developments providing room for hope.

The third tool, special defence inquiries, also showed significant improvement from 2019 onwards, especially within the context of the JSCD. In 2020, the JSCD held a mini-symposium where it invited several experts to speak on the future force design of the SANDF, and heard from external experts in 2022 regarding SANDF succession planning. The JSCD also established a task team, and was prepared to hear from a whistle-blower regarding allegations against the former Minister of Defence, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, as raised by General Bantu Holomisa from the United Democratic Movement party.

Regarding the fourth tool of parliamentary oversight, study tours remained highly problematic, with zero tours during the fifth Parliament, and none up to 2022 in the sixth Parliament.¹³⁷ On the other hand, oversight visits improved, with the JSCD undertaking 6 visits and the PCDMV 14 visits over the period 2015–2022.

The fifth tool, external audit, also showed further improvement during this period. The Auditor-General's reports remain the primary external audit opinion utilised by both the JSCD and PCDMV, with the Auditor-General providing annual briefings to both committees on the DoD audit outcomes. There were also instances of ad hoc briefings to the PCDMV. For example, in 2021, the Auditor-General briefed the committee on certain findings in relation to the procurement of Interferon from Cuba, and the Auditor-General provided input on Project Thusano during a meeting in 2022.

Finally, parliamentary oversight of defence procurement improved significantly.¹³⁸ This is particularly true within the context of the PCDMV, the committee that scrutinises the defence budget, which ultimately allocates finances for defence procurement.¹³⁹ The PCDMV conducted oversight of Projects Thusano, Hoefyster, Hotel, and Biro, and held several meetings regarding the procurement of Interferon from Cuba. The committee held a meeting on the ongoing upgrades at 1 Military Hospital, and the SANDF was required to answer questions regarding its fleet management policy and the various procurement challenges it faced in relation to food rations and fuel in November 2022. Finally, the PCDMV had briefings regarding SANDF procurement and/or supply chain management concerns in 2016 and 2021. The JSCD also conducted oversight of defence procurement, with several meetings being held regarding the upgrade of 1 Military Hospital, as well as a meeting, which scrutinised issues concerning Projects Hoefyster, Hotel, and Biro.

Based on the above, there was general improvement in parliamentary oversight over the period 2015–2022. There was also an upwards trajectory in oversight of defence procurement in the fifth and especially sixth Parliaments. This is a positive development that will go a long way in countering the lack of defence procurement oversight, which transpired specifically between 2009 and 2014.

The Consequence Management “Gap” between Parliament and the DoD

From 2019 onwards, the PCDMV increased their focus on consequence management.¹⁴⁰ This led to the DoD being questioned on numerous occasions, as well as being requested to furnish the committee with explanations for why it failed to deal with identified irregularities timeously. In May 2022, the Secretary for Defence actually confessed:

[T]he issue of *consequence management gave her sleepless nights*. She said she had been brought to the DoD to implement control measures, to act, and assist. *However, all this time she had only been working on historical cases on a daily basis.*¹⁴¹ [author's italics]

Despite the upwards trajectory in oversight, there is not a similar trajectory in terms of consequence management and accountability from the DoD yet. This conclusion can partly be explained by the fact that Parliament only recently started the process of reversing its previous lack of oversight during the third and fourth Parliaments. It will, therefore, take some time before the increase in oversight results in improved consequence management and accountability by the DoD. Acceptance by the DoD is however required. The department consistently fails to deal with identified irregularities, problems, and challenges. In a briefing to the PCDMV on 8 June 2022, it was highlighted that there appears to be a 'poor appreciation' of the responsibility, which the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) (No. 1 of 1999) places on both the Secretary for Defence as accounting officer 'and by default, on management'.¹⁴² Furthermore, the Supply Chain Management system had the highest number of findings from the IAD and the Auditor-General; and the highest number of unresolved findings.

Similarly, the Auditor-General has raised concerns regarding failure by the DoD to comply with her recommended remedial action. In a report dated 30 September 2022, the Auditor-General noted, '[s]ince the [Material Irregularity (MI)] process was implemented at the DoD, we notified the Secretary of Defence [...] of five MIs.'¹⁴³ At the time, the Auditor-General nevertheless noted that four of the five MIs remained resolved. The Auditor-General believes that the complex internal accountability arrangements of the DoD (as defined in the Defence Act, No. 42 of 2002) contribute to this state of affairs. In addition, the Minister of Defence stated on 23 May 2023 that the DoD received nine MIs from the Auditor-General for the financial year 2022–2023.¹⁴⁴ In this regard, the DoD is listed in the Auditor-General's 2022–2023 Report on National and Provincial Audit Outcomes as one of the departments, which are 'typically slow to respond to our findings and to improve the control environment'.¹⁴⁵ This is deeply concerning, and in my mind, indicates that the DoD is either unwilling or incapable of getting its affairs in order.

Accountability as Answerability and Sanction

The analysis of parliamentary oversight, as well as the discussion on consequence management above, illustrates a clear improvement in answerability, the first element of accountability.¹⁴⁶ The DoD increasingly faces questions on its decisions and actions and is required to explain themselves. What appears to be absent however is sanction, the second element of accountability, which in this context refers specifically to consequence management.

Regarding sanction, it is important to note that the Minister of Defence is an MP, which binds her to the rules of Parliament. She is also the executive authority of the DoD. In accordance with sections 14(1)(a)–(b) and 17(1)(a) of the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliaments and Provincial Legislatures Act (No. 4 of 2004), where DoD

staff fail to provide a committee with sufficient answers or fail to appear before the committee, the committee can ask the Minister to appear before it. Should the Minister fail to appear, a portfolio committee has the power to “summons” the Minister. Failure to comply with the summons could result in an offence, which may lead to a fine or imprisonment not exceeding 12 months. This indicates that Parliament has “teeth”, and that sanction mechanisms are in place.

Highly problematic, however, is that a senior parliamentary legal advisor informed the Portfolio Committee on Tourism on 15 November 2022, who wanted to summon the Minister of Tourism, that ‘the process of summoning anybody to come before Parliament is an *extraordinary action*. It is *not something that Parliament does often*.’¹⁴⁷ The sanction mechanism therefore does not currently appear to contribute to ensuring greater accountability on the part of actors such as the DoD.

This argument should, nonetheless, not be construed to mean that Parliament cannot ensure accountability on the part of the DoD, or that accountability is decreasing or is still as problematic as before 2015. The analysis above has shown a clear improvement in Parliament holding the DoD accountable. But, ‘if one examines this improved accountability closer, then it is primarily a case of improved answerability’.¹⁴⁸ Parliamentary procedures are successful in terms of answerability, but not sanction.

The Military Ombud

Mandate – Does It Include Oversight of Defence Procurement?

Section 4 of the Military Ombud Act (No. 4 of 2012), sets out the mandate of the Ombud, and provides that the Ombud must investigate complaints lodged in writing by:

- (a) A member of the armed forces regarding his or her conditions of service;
- (b) A former member of the armed forces regarding his or her conditions of service;
- (c) A member of the public where it concerns the conduct of a member of the armed forces; or
- (d) A person acting on behalf of a member of the armed forces.

Furthermore, section 6(7)(c) empowers the Ombud to refer a complaint after some form of investigation. Section 7(1) bars the Ombud from investigating certain matters, while section 7(2) allows the Ombud a discretion to refuse to investigate a matter if certain criteria are met.

These provisions read together indicate that the Ombud decides, based on discretionary powers, whether to investigate a particular matter. It is also possible, in accordance with section 7(2)(e), for the Ombud to decline to assume jurisdiction if another institution is already investigating the matter. In this regard, the Ombud has entered into memorandums of agreement (MOAs) with various institutions to ensure cooperation, expertise, and non-duplication of matters.¹⁴⁹

It is not readily apparent, however, from a reading of section 4(a)–(d) whether the mandate of the Ombud includes oversight of defence procurement. The Act also does not mention procurement in any of its provisions. Analysis of section 4(c) could nevertheless provide an answer, and more than one meaning can be ascribed to the text, which has not been defined.¹⁵⁰ “[M]ember of the public”, for example, could refer to a natural or juristic person.¹⁵¹ Regulation 1 of the Military Ombud Complaints Regulations 2015,¹⁵² further defines “official conduct” to mean ‘any act or omission committed by a member of the Defence Force in execution of his or her duties, including that of a member deployed to another state’.

If one applies a holistic reading to the discretionary powers of the Ombud under section 7(2), and its mandate under section 4(c) coupled with the definitions in regulation 1, it seems possible for the Ombud to assume jurisdiction and investigate defence procurement matters.¹⁵³ In fact, a redacted document¹⁵⁴ received from the Office of the Ombud shows three instances where it has in the past done oversight of procurement as it related to the defence value chain, and all three complaints emanated from members of the public.¹⁵⁵

Remedial Powers and Institutional Challenges

Despite the Ombud being able to exercise oversight of defence procurement, section 6(7)(b) and (8) of the Military Ombud Act provides that the Ombud makes recommendations to the Minister, whose mandate it is to implement the recommendations. These recommendations are non-binding on the Minister.¹⁵⁶ In addition, the ability of the Ombud to carry out its mandate is affected by several challenges, including:

- A lack of institutional independence;¹⁵⁷
- A shortfall regarding compensation of employees; and
- A slow turnaround in the finalisation of its investigations due to slow response rates by services and divisions. At 4 May 2023, the Ombud was also functioning on a minimal strength of 63 posts as against the 89 approved posts.¹⁵⁸

Answerability but not Sanction

While the Ombud may possess the ability to exercise oversight of defence procurement, it is not readily apparent to me which provisions of the Military Ombud Act serve as the empowering provisions for the exercise of this oversight power. The focus is therefore on a holistic reading of the Act and regulations. The findings by the Ombud are nevertheless not binding on the Minister of Defence, and the Ombud faces concerning challenges. The Military Ombud is thus an oversight mechanism capable of extracting accountability from the DoD in terms of its first element only, namely answerability.

The Auditor-General of South Africa

The Auditor-General conducts an external audit of the DoD annually and reports to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA), a parliamentary portfolio committee. SCOPA assesses the efficiency of the state finances, and determines whether DoD expenditure is in line with its budget.¹⁵⁹

The discussion above has shown a clear improvement in Parliament's reliance on the Auditor-General's reports, as well as increased cooperation between the two institutions. The effectiveness of the Auditor-General as an oversight mechanism was significantly improved through the Public Audit Amendment Act (No. 5 of 2018), which expanded the mandate of the Auditor-General under section 5 of the Public Audit Act (No. 25 of 2004).

The Auditor-General now has the power to issue departments with an MI. Section 1 of the Act provides that an MI –

[M]eans any noncompliance with, or contravention of, legislation, fraud, theft or a breach of a fiduciary duty identified during an audit performed under this Act that *resulted in or is likely to result in a material financial loss, the misuse or loss of a material public resource or substantial harm to a public section institution or the general public.* [author's italics]

Section 5(1A) and (1B) allow the Auditor-General to refer MIs to relevant public bodies for further investigation, recommend actions to resolve the MIs, take binding remedial action against an institution for refusal to implement her recommendations, and issue a certificate of debt for failure to implement remedial action where a financial loss was involved.¹⁶⁰ This expanded mandate allows the Auditor-General to extract accountability from departments in terms of both its elements, that is, answerability and sanction. The mandate further provides the Auditor-General with substantial power to deal with irregularities, including defence procurement-related irregularities, fraud, and corruption.

An example of the utilisation of this expanded mandate regarding the DoD, was the investigation¹⁶¹ by the Auditor-General into the procurement of Interferon from Cuba.¹⁶² In this instance, the DoD purchased 970 895 vials of the immune booster Interferon for its forces deployed during the Covid-19 pandemic at an approximate cost of R260 million. By 31 March 2022, the department had however only paid R33,5 million.¹⁶³ The Auditor-General found that:

- The department had failed to comply with the import regulations for unregistered medicine as required by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA);
- There were shortcomings in the procurement processes followed; and
- There was insufficient record-keeping for the transportation and warehousing of the immune boosters.

The non-compliance by the DoD would also likely 'result in a material financial loss of R260 342 813' as SAHPRA had only authorised the use of 10 vials. The Auditor-General issued the department with an MI on 13 August 2021 and invited a written submission from the accounting officer. In the 2021–2022 Annual Report of the DoD, the Auditor-General indicated that she did not receive adequate responses from the accounting officer on actions taken to resolve the MI.¹⁶⁴ The Auditor-General however referred to the report by the Public Protector on Interferon (discussed below) in the 2022–2023 DoD Annual Report, noting that the remedial action recommended and the accounting officer's actions in line with that remedial action meant that the Auditor-General viewed the MI as resolved.¹⁶⁵

The discussion of the number of MIs issued to the DoD as well as the expanded mandate of Auditor-General makes the Auditor-General one of the most effective oversight structures of the DoD, both in general and in relation to defence procurement.

The Public Protector

The Public Protector is one of the institutions established under Chapter 9 of the Constitution, and is regulated by the Public Protector Act (No. 23 of 1994), which gives effect to section 182 of the Constitution. The mandate and investigative powers of the Public Protector are set out in both the Act and in the Rules Relating to Investigations by the Public Protector and Matters Incidental Thereto, 2018 (Public Protector Rules, 2018).¹⁶⁶

Section 6(3) of the Public Protector Act provides that:

The Public Protector may refuse to investigate a matter reported to him or her, if the person ostensibly prejudiced in the matter is –

- (a) an officer or employee in the service of the State or is a person to whom the provisions of the Public Service Act, 1994 [...], are applicable and has, in connection with such matter, not taken all reasonable steps to exhaust the remedies conferred upon him or her in terms of the said Public Service Act, 1994; or
- (b) prejudiced by conduct referred to in subsections (4) and (5) and has not taken all reasonable steps to exhaust his or her legal remedies in connection with such matter.¹⁶⁷

Rule 11(1) then provides:

The Public Protector shall, if he or she refuses to investigate a complaint [...], in writing inform the complainant of –

- (a) the decision;
- (b) the grounds on which the decision is based; [and]
- (c) the remedy available to the complainant in terms of sub-rule (2).

In addition, section 7(1)(a) of the Public Protector Act states that the Public Protector shall –

*[H]ave the power, on his or her own initiative or on receipt of a complaint or an allegation or on the ground of information that has come to his or her knowledge ..., to conduct a preliminary investigation for the purpose of determining the merits of the complaint, allegation or information and the manner in which the matter concerned should be dealt with.*¹⁶⁸
[author's italics]

Read together, these provisions seemingly provide the Public Protector with discretion, and he or she is, therefore, not compelled to investigate a matter. Nonetheless, the Constitutional Court judgment in *Economic Freedom Fighters v Speaker of the National*

*Assembly; Democratic Alliance v Speaker of the National Assembly*¹⁶⁹ expanded the mandate of the Public Protector. The Court unanimously confirmed the legally binding effect of the Public Protector’s remedial action,¹⁷⁰ which would mean that a party affected by a finding of the Public Protector must comply with his or her recommended remedial action. As in the case of the expanded mandate of the Auditor-General, the Public Protector can extract accountability from an actor in terms of both its elements (answerability and sanction).

The current Public Protector recently utilised her expanded mandate in relation to the DoD when she launched an investigation into the procurement of the drug Interferon from Cuba in 2021. The Public Protector confirmed that she launched ‘an own-initiative investigation’ on 17 February 2021, while also receiving a separate complaint on the matter on 19 February 2021 from Democratic Alliance MP Kobus Marais.¹⁷¹ She released her report¹⁷² in 2022, which found that the DoD did not follow a proper procurement process. Specifically, the DoD contravened –

[S]ections 195(1)(a)(b) and (f) and 217 of the Constitution, Treasury Regulations 16A3, 16A3.2, 16A6.2(b) and 16.A6.4, the DOD Policy “*Process and Procedures for procurement and sales in respect of commercial goods and services*”. [...] The conduct of the DOD [...] constitutes improper conduct as envisaged in section 182(1) of the Constitution and maladministration as envisaged in section 6(4)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Public Protector Act.¹⁷³

Recognising the binding nature of her findings, the Public Protector’s remedial action included, inter alia, that:

- The President and Minister of Defence ‘[t]ake cognisance of the findings of maladministration and improper conduct’ as required under section 202(1) and (2) of the Constitution;
- The Secretary for Defence as accounting officer ‘[w]ithin sixty (60) days from the date of this report, initiate an investigation [...] and take appropriate action [...] against the DOD officials involved in the irregular procurement’; and
- The Chief of the SANDF (CSANDF) ‘render the necessary assistance’ to the Secretary to ensure effective implementation and fulfilment of the duties of the Secretary, with the CSANDF required to ‘adhere to all the delegated lawful instructions received’ from the Secretary ‘in terms of section 10 of the Defence Act relating to disciplinary action or departmental investigations on this matter’.¹⁷⁴

As mentioned above, the Auditor-General notes in the 2022–2023 DoD Annual Report:

[T]he accounting officer referred certain remedial actions from the acting public protector to the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) [...] On 4 July 2023, the SIU advised me that the investigation into this matter has commenced and that should the investigation identify any losses that have been incurred, these will be recovered through the civil litigation proceedings in the special tribunal for the appropriate relief.

The above illustrates that the Public Protector can exercise oversight of defence procurement, and her remedial action is binding. The only inherent limitation of this office is that she is not compelled to investigate all instances of alleged irregularities within the DoD. Instead, it depends on whether she exercises her choice to launch an own-initiative investigation, or receives a request to investigate as required under the Public Protector Act.¹⁷⁵

Can any Oversight Mechanisms extract “Full” Accountability?

The discussion above revealed two important findings. First, the Military Ombud and Parliament are capable of getting the DoD to answer for its actions, with Parliament showing considerable improvement from 2015, but especially from 2019, onwards. The primary focus of Parliament on answerability however means that the first two mechanisms primarily succeed in terms of answerability. Second, the Auditor-General and Public Protector are also capable of extracting answerability, while their expanded mandates mean that they can also sanction the DoD when its actions contravene procurement laws and rules. The latter two mechanisms can therefore ensure both answerability and sanction (accountability).

“Full” accountability however goes beyond answerability and sanction. Closer analysis reveals that the oversight mechanisms are often limited in their ability to exercise oversight given national security and secrecy concerns. Oversight mechanisms do not always have access to all relevant information, meaning that, even if the mechanism can extract answers and issue sanctions, their lack of access to all audit and other relevant information means that they are not necessarily positioned to “see” the whole picture.

For example, in relation to the Special Defence Account (SDA),¹⁷⁶ the Auditor-General repeated the following statement in the DoDs Annual Reports for 2018–2019 to 2022–2023:

I was unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding sensitive projects expenditure and related investments due to the sensitivity of the environment and the circumstances under which the related transactions were incurred and recorded.¹⁷⁷

This limitation is, nonetheless, deemed reasonable, with the DoD stating on 15 March 2023, that the Auditor-General ‘had full access to 99.3% of the Department’s spending’.¹⁷⁸

An important question then is whether this is satisfactory. Should it not be possible, indeed mandatory, for each mechanism to have access to all relevant information so that each mechanism can extract “full” accountability on its own?

Ideally, one would want the answer to be yes. The Military Ombud can however only extract answerability due to the limitations of its regulatory framework. Similarly, Parliament appears unprepared to move over into the realm of sanction. Parliament and its committees however do have a very broad mandate,¹⁷⁹ while the Military Ombud, the Auditor-General, and the Public Protector do not have *carte blanche* access to DoD

information. The time has thus come to reconsider the relationship between each of these oversight mechanisms. A different view of accountability and how to extract “full” accountability is required, which could assist in understanding the impact of national security and secrecy better and to enable a flexible system in which there is an appropriate balance between national security and defence procurement transparency. This is where a system of combined assurance becomes relevant.

Combined assurance

Combined assurance is a financial term applicable to corporate governance.¹⁸⁰ It was found that assurance providers often work in silos, which inhibits proper risk assessment. Combined assurance addresses the risk gap, seeing that –

[IT] incorporates and optimises all assurance services and functions so that, taken as a whole, these enable an effective control environment; support the integrity of information used for internal decision-making by management, the governing body and its committees; and support the integrity of the organization’s external reports.¹⁸¹

Through combining efforts, risk assessment could be improved. This approach could also assist the SANDF, a deeply hierarchical institution where everything is done in silos in line with the concept of command and control.¹⁸² It is not hard to imagine that oversight mechanisms often function similarly. Each often carries out its task in a vacuum and face obstacles in obtaining access to information. There should nevertheless be a connecting point between the mechanisms. There should, for example, be a mechanism that can take over from where the oversight duties of the Auditor-General stop – some mechanism that can “see” the information the Auditor-General cannot see. Combined assurance within the military context could allow such “full” assurance. This however raises a question: is there not already some kind of combined assurance system in place within the military context? While the answer may be yes, the operation of such a system is questionable.

First, there are four primary oversight mechanisms in place. Second, the Auditor-General – referring to the Public Protector’s report on Interferon and deeming the MI resolved on this basis – certainly supports the notion that one mechanism can rely on the work done by another, and the mechanisms can support each other in oversight responsibilities. Third, Parliament has a broad oversight mandate, and committee meetings can be closed to the public if sensitive information is being discussed.¹⁸³ The Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence is also mandated to do oversight of the “covert space”, with these meetings always closed to the public.¹⁸⁴ The accounting officer of the DoD specifically highlighted the existence of this committee, especially in relation to the SDA, where the Auditor-General has continuously highlighted constraints in gaining access to auditing information.¹⁸⁵ Parliament, therefore, has the ability to gain access to a broad scope of DoD information, albeit within a closed space at certain times. This means, at least theoretically, that Parliament can extract “full” accountability, and step in at times when other oversight mechanisms may face certain limitations.

Analysis in the current study however showed that Parliament primarily focuses on answerability, and much remains to be done in terms of its ability to sanction. The proper functioning of the Portfolio Committee on Intelligence is also questionable, seeing that the DoD stated in March 2023 that there is no consensus yet among the ‘Portfolio Committee [...], on how to manage the possible risk of completeness and accountability within the covert space’, and, at that stage, a date still had to be determined for further discussions on how to manage risk in area.¹⁸⁶ In addition, the regulatory frameworks, mandates and purposes of the Military Ombud, the Auditor-General and the Public Protector ultimately differ, regardless of their ability to sanction or not.

In view of the gaps in the current system, military oversight mechanisms require renewed focus, and consequence management should be seen as a group effort. The only way to extract “full” accountability from the DoD in relation to defence procurement, is to look beyond the individual oversight responsibilities of each mechanism. Indeed, I propose a new and multi-dimensional view of oversight in which the extraction of “full” accountability is achieved through combined effort. This is discussed below.

Moving Beyond Individual Oversight Responsibilities

The Ability of the System to Extract Full Accountability

Combined assurance requires one to focus on the system itself, not on its individual elements. Procurement is after all an administrative process. In this administrative process, we are not concerned with whether an individual element complied with good governance and the applicable regulatory framework; instead, one asks whether the elements together were able to ensure a fair and impartial administrative process. The same argument should apply to oversight of defence procurement. Instead of focusing on the ability of an individual mechanism to extract full accountability, one should ask whether all the mechanisms working in unison are able to achieve the target. This approach is practically illustrated by means of the schematic diagram in Figure 2 below.

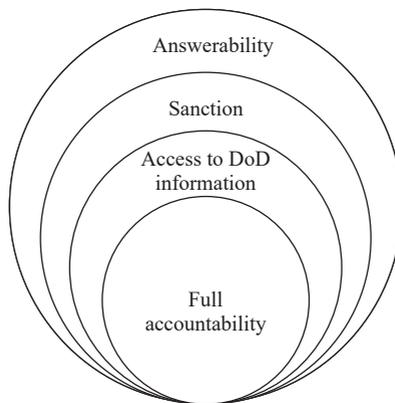


Figure 2: Combined assurance within the context of defence procurement.

Oversight of defence procurement should be viewed as a three-dimensional system. The first dimension is answerability. All four mechanisms discussed in this article contribute at this level. The second dimension is sanction, to which Parliament, the Auditor-General and the Public Protector in theory contribute, although in practice, primarily only the latter two contribute. Finally, the third dimension is whether one or more mechanism could gain access to information which either falls within the “covert space” or is classified, i.e. oversight gaps, which exist due to national security and secrecy. If so, then the work done by each of the mechanisms – if put together – leads to the system extracting full accountability from the DoD for its defence procurement actions.

This three-dimensional system will succeed under the following conditions. First, Parliament addresses, at the earliest opportunity, shortcomings in the functionality of the Portfolio Committee on Intelligence, and reconsider its position regarding the use of summons under sections 14(1)(a)–(b) and 17(1)(a) of the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliaments and Provincial Legislatures Act. Second, all four mechanisms should consider areas of complementarity and, as the Auditor-General did when she referred to the remedial action of the Public Protector relating to Interferon, refer to work done by another or determine whether the other mechanism has the ability to cover an information gap, which it cannot.

Notwithstanding the above, an argument can be made that the existence of multiple oversight mechanisms implies a tension between them, especially if there is more than one exercising oversight over the same issue. This was, for example, seen with the procurement of Interferon.¹⁸⁷ In this article, however, I argue that it is not an issue of tension; rather, it is one of a mechanism passing the baton to the next one, which can continue with oversight from where the previous mechanism was justifiably required to stop. This nevertheless raises the issue of overlap and duplication.

The Concern of Overlap and Duplication

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines overlap as ‘[a]n occurrence or instance of overlapping; the point at or degree by which one edge or thing overlaps another; an overlapping thing’,¹⁸⁸ and duplication as ‘[t]he action of doubling. The making anything twice as many or as much; the repetition of an action or thing’.¹⁸⁹ The two concepts should not be conflated based on these two definitions, and I do not view them as synonymous. In the current context, “overlap” means that two mechanisms primarily investigate an issue from two different perspectives, touching – to a limited extent – on the same or similar aspects. On the other hand, “duplication” means two mechanisms do the exact same thing. In line with this understanding, overlap per se is not problematic, but duplication is. Two different mechanisms should not be investigating a matter based on the same investigative question, regulatory framework, or area of compliance.

The multi-mechanism investigation into the procurement of Interferon supports this conclusion. The Auditor-General flagged certain shortcomings in the procurement processes followed, but primarily focused her initial investigation on the DoD’s lack of compliance with the Medicines and Related Substances Act (No. 101 of 1965), its failure to

obtain approval for importation from SAHPRA,¹⁹⁰ and issuing the department with an MI under section 5 of the Public Audit Act. On the other hand, the investigation by the Public Protector focused on the regulatory framework set out in the Constitution, the PFMA, the DoD's own internal policies, and maladministration under section 6(4)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Public Protector Act. While there was overlap to the extent that both mechanisms investigated the same irregularity, identified shortcomings, and issued certain remedial actions, there was no duplication, as they utilised two different regulatory frameworks aimed at different dimensions of compliance. While duplication should be avoided as far as possible, overlap is not problematic if it occurs in the correct manner, and duplication can be prevented through MOAs, such as those entered into by the Military Ombud.¹⁹¹

If mechanisms exercise oversight over the same issue, but rely on different regulatory frameworks and their investigations merely overlap, combined assurance therefore emerges, not merely duplication. This ensures the extraction of "full" accountability from the DoD.

Conclusion

Defence procurement is a 'key activity of the modern state that allows it to defend its sovereignty and ensure its survival'.¹⁹² '[L]arge defence projects [...] and secrecy allow opportunities for corruption.'¹⁹³ To prevent fraud, corruption, and procurement irregularities, and to ensure fiscal responsibility on the part of the DoD, the department must be held accountable when it has transgressed. As discussed throughout this contribution, the DoD is however not being held accountable in the full sense of the word. In fact, the current accountability structures in place possess varying powers and capabilities. Parliament and the Military Ombud primarily extract answerability from the DoD while the Auditor-General and the Public Protector can extract answerability as well as sanction the DoD. The latter two mechanisms also appear more willing than Parliament to use its sanction powers. At the same time, some of the mechanisms exercise oversight of the same irregularities, while simultaneously facing challenges in gaining access to DoD information, especially information pertaining to the covert space and the SDA.

The above can, nonetheless, be addressed through a well-functioning system of combined assurance. Despite Parliament primarily extracting answerability only, it has committees in place that can gain access to information not necessarily available to the Military Ombud, the Auditor-General and/or the Public Protector. To address the pros and cons of each mechanism, the different mechanisms should therefore not be viewed as individual elements; instead, they are all cogs feeding into the same wheel of "full accountability". A system of combined assurance ultimately limits the pressure on an individual element, as a single mechanism, such as the Auditor-General for example, is not per se required to extract answerability, impose sanctions, and have access to all DoD information. A single mechanism is not deemed to have failed in the exercise of extracting accountability simply because it could not gain access to all relevant DoD information or because it could only address an irregularity to a certain extent. Instead, one should ask whether the whole system, having worked together, was able to cover all necessary areas and ensure both transparency of and accountability for DoD actions. Extracting "full accountability" is

achieved through all the different mechanisms working together, passing the baton from one to the other until the task of oversight is complete.

A holistic and collaborative approach to military oversight by these various mechanisms will therefore help address the balancing exercise often required within the context of defence procurement due to national security concerns. For this system to function optimally, the four mechanisms should however strengthen their cooperation and avoid duplication. Parliament should also address the shortcomings in the functionality of the Portfolio Committee on Intelligence and reconsider its position regarding the use of summons under sections 14(1)(a)–(b) and 17(1)(a) of the Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliaments and Provincial Legislatures Act.

ENDNOTES

- ⁷⁴ Dr Ernst Heydenrych is an Academic & Quality Manager in the Faculty of Law at Boston City Campus and Business School. This contribution flows from research conducted by the author for his LLD dissertation titled *An Analysis of Defence Procurement in South Africa*, Stellenbosch University (2023). The article summarises the author's fifth chapter and develops the research presented in the dissertation further. The author wishes to thank Prof Geo Quinot and Lt Col (Prof) Michelle Nel, his doctoral supervisors, for their guidance and support.
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- ⁸³ Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 204–209; Heinecken, *South Africa's Post-Apartheid Military*, 73.
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- ⁸⁵ Note that this contribution does not address processes internal to the DOD (the South African National Defence Force) or Armscor. The DOD and Armscor certainly have internal procedures in place included in various Department of Defence Instructions, Joint Defence Publications and other internal policies that aim to regulate defence procurement and defence expenditure. However, the scope of this contribution does not permit discussion and analysis of these processes as well.
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- ⁹⁰ Perlo-Freeman & Solmirano, *Why Arms Procurement Go Wrong*, 1.
- ⁹¹ Klaus, 'Transforming Armed Forces through Military Transparency', 108.
- ⁹² For the difference between military transparency and secrecy, see Klaus, 'Transforming Armed Forces through Military Transparency', 106–110.
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- ¹⁰⁴ Bovens, 'Analysing and Assessing Accountability', 451.
- ¹⁰⁵ Bovens, 'Analysing and Assessing Accountability', 451.
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- ¹⁰⁹ This is clarified below.
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- ¹¹⁴ Heinecken, *South Africa's Post-Apartheid Military*, 70.
- ¹¹⁵ Heinecken, *South Africa's Post-Apartheid Military*, 70–71.
- ¹¹⁶ Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 12–245.
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- ¹¹⁸ For this discussion, see Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 196–205.
- ¹¹⁹ There were six dedicated debates during the first Parliament, and regular debates during the second. See Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 196.
- ¹²⁰ Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 200.
- ¹²¹ Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 202.
- ¹²² Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 202–203.
- ¹²³ Three visits from 1998 to 2004, and 13 visits from 2004 to 2014 (three by the JSCD and 10 by the PCDMV). See Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 202–203.
- ¹²⁴ Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 204.
- ¹²⁵ For this discussion, see Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 208–209; Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 279–280.

- ¹²⁶ I discussed the SDPP in considerable detail in my dissertation. See Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 217–230.
- ¹²⁷ Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 208.
- ¹²⁸ Section 23(1)(b)–(c) of the National Conventional Arms Control Act 41 of 2002 requires the National Conventional Arms Control Committee to submit quarterly and annual reports to Parliament.
- ¹²⁹ Emphasis added. Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 208.
- ¹³⁰ Janse van Rensburg, *Twenty Years of Democracy*, 209.
- ¹³¹ For this discussion, see Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 282–288.
- ¹³² Through use of the “questions and replies” tab, the number of questions and replies for each year was manually counted. See Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), ‘Questions and Replies’, 2023. <https://pmg.org.za/question_replies/> [Accessed on 17 October 2023]. See also an additional document on the 2015 tab, labelled ‘23 March 2015 – Questions Asked to Minister of Defence & Military Veterans’.
- ¹³³ Considering that 2015–2022 is also a considerably shorter period than 1994–2014, the number of questions will increase over the remainder of the Parliamentary term.
- ¹³⁴ Question NW2014 of 2018 did not receive an answer. See PMG, ‘11 September 2018 - NW2014’, 11 September 2018. <<https://pmg.org.za/committee-question/9908/>> [Accessed on 17 October 2023].
- ¹³⁵ Minister Thandi Modise served as Minister of Defence and Military Veterans from 5 August 2021 until 19 June 2024.
- ¹³⁶ Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 284–285.
- ¹³⁷ Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 286. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic can, however, not be ignored regarding the period 2020–2022.
- ¹³⁸ For this discussion, see Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 288–290.
- ¹³⁹ The link between defence procurement and the defence budget cannot be ignored. It is not possible to fully grasp defence procurement if one does not understand what the defence budget is or the ultimate process it encapsulates.
- ¹⁴⁰ See Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 293.
- ¹⁴¹ PMG, ‘Progress by DOD on Cases of Fraud and Corruption and Consequence Management; Committee’s Annual Report and Performance Plan’, 25 May 2022. <<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/35057/>> [Accessed on 23 October 2023].
- ¹⁴² PMG, ‘Project Thusano: DOD Response to AGSA Findings; DOD Audit Committee and Internal Audit Division on Challenges and Monitoring of Internal Audit Action Plan; with Deputy Minister’, 8 June 2022. <<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/35176/>> [Accessed on 17 October 2023].
- ¹⁴³ Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA), *Material Irregularities in National and Provincial Government* (Pretoria, 30 September 2022), 20.
- ¹⁴⁴ South African Government, ‘Minister Thandi Modise: Defence and Military Veterans Dept Budget Vote 2023/24’, 23 May 2023. <<https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-thandi-modise-defence-and-military-veterans-dept-budget-vote-202324-23-may-2023>> [Accessed on 17 October 2023].
- ¹⁴⁵ AGSA, *Consolidated General Report on National and Provincial Audit Outcomes 2022/2023* (Pretoria, 27 November 2023), 69.

- ¹⁴⁶ For this discussion, see Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 296–297.
- ¹⁴⁷ Emphasis added. PMG, ‘Minister Lindiwe Sisulu Non-compliance with Committee Summons’, 15 November 2022. <<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/36013/>> [Accessed on 17 October 2023].
- ¹⁴⁸ Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 297.
- ¹⁴⁹ Military Ombud, ‘Annual Activity Report 2021/2022’, 2022. <https://static.pmg.org.za/Office_of_the_Military_Ombud_Annual_Activity_Report_FY202122.pdf> [Accessed on 18 October 2023].
- ¹⁵⁰ Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 300.
- ¹⁵¹ This appears to be in line with the definition of “person” in section 2 of the Interpretation Act 33 of 1957.
- ¹⁵² GN R 611 in *Government Gazette* 39375 of 6 November 2015.
- ¹⁵³ For example at the instance of a disgruntled bidder, whether a company or individual.
- ¹⁵⁴ A redacted document is one that has been edited ‘to remove sensitive or private information before sharing it’. See R Heinrich, ‘What Does Redacted Mean in Law?’, *One Legal*, 11 August 2023. <<https://www.onelegal.com/blog/what-does-redacted-mean-in-law/>> [Accessed on 22 August 2024].
- ¹⁵⁵ Document on file with the author.
- ¹⁵⁶ This was confirmed in *Lambede v Minister of Defence and Military Veterans* 2021 ZAGPPHC 858 para 41; *Dauids v Minister of Defence and Military Veterans*; *Miles v Minister of Defence and Military Veterans* 2023 ZAGPPHC 160 paras 62–63.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Khosa v Minister of Defence and Military Veterans* 2020 2 SACR 461 (GP) para 139.
- ¹⁵⁸ Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 300–301.
- ¹⁵⁹ Heinecken, *South Africa’s Post-Apartheid Military*, 71.
- ¹⁶⁰ At the time of writing this article, the Auditor-General had not yet issued this specific sanction. However, this is not regarded as proof that the Auditor-General’s new powers are ineffective. The amendment only came into force in 2019. Based on the MIs issued to various departments, one might well see this sanction issued very soon.
- ¹⁶¹ AGSA, *Second Special Report on the Financial Management of Government’s Covid-19 Initiatives*, 2021.
- ¹⁶² Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 237–246, 303–305.
- ¹⁶³ DOD, *Annual Report for the FY2021/2022*, 164. <[https://nationalgovernment.co.za/departments/annual/408/2022-department-of-defence-\(DOD\)-annual-report.pdf](https://nationalgovernment.co.za/departments/annual/408/2022-department-of-defence-(DOD)-annual-report.pdf)> [Accessed on 24 August 2024].
- ¹⁶⁴ DOD, *Annual Report for the FY2021/2022*, 165.
- ¹⁶⁵ DOD, *Annual Report for the FY2022/2023*, 195–196. <[https://nationalgovernment.co.za/departments/annual/461/2023-department-of-defence-\(DOD\)-annual-report.pdf](https://nationalgovernment.co.za/departments/annual/461/2023-department-of-defence-(DOD)-annual-report.pdf)> [Accessed on 24 August 2024].
- ¹⁶⁶ GN R 945 in *Government Gazette* 41903 of 14 September 2018.
- ¹⁶⁷ See also rule 9(1) of the Public Protector Rules, 2018.
- ¹⁶⁸ Emphasis added. See also rule 20(1) and (2) of the Public Protector Rules, 2018.
- ¹⁶⁹ 2016 ZACC 11.
- ¹⁷⁰ Para 76.

- ¹⁷¹ S Tshikalange, ‘Public Protector Finds Procurement of Cuban Covid-19 Drug was “Improper”’, *BusinessDay*, 21 October 2022. <<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/2022-10-01-public-protector-finds-procurement-of-cuban-covid-19-drug-was-improper/>> [Accessed on 20 October 2023].
- ¹⁷² Public Protector, *Report on an Investigation into Allegations of Maladministration and Irregularities Associated with the Procurement of Unauthorised Medicines from Cuba by the Department of Defence* (Report No. 34 of 2022/23). <https://www.pprotect.org/sites/default/files/legislation_report/SANDF%20%28Cuba%29%20-%20Final.pdf> [Accessed on 24 August 2024].
- ¹⁷³ Public Protector, *Interferon Report*, 126.
- ¹⁷⁴ Public Protector, *Interferon Report*, 126–128.
- ¹⁷⁵ Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 308.
- ¹⁷⁶ Established under section 1 of the Defence Special Account Act 6 of 1974.
- ¹⁷⁷ DOD, *Annual Report for the FY2018/2019*, 200 <https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202002/DOD-annual-report-fy2018-19-final-web-layout.pdf> [Accessed on 24 August 2024]; DOD, *Annual Report for the FY2019/2020*, 219 <https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202104/DOD-annual-report-2019-20.pdf> [Accessed on 24 August 2024]; DOD *Annual Report for the FY2020/2021*, 179 <https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202110/defenceannualreport2021.pdf> [Accessed on 24 August 2024]; DOD, *Annual Report for the FY2021/2022*, 156, DOD, *Annual Report for the FY2022/2023*, 180.
- ¹⁷⁸ PMG, ‘DOD Responses to AGSA Status of Records Review and Material Irregularities; with Deputy Minister’, 15 March 2023. <<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/36568/>> [Accessed on 24 October 2023].
- ¹⁷⁹ See the discussion below.
- ¹⁸⁰ S Zhou, R Simnett & H Hoang, ‘Evaluating Combined Assurance as a New Credibility Enhancement Technique’, *Auditing: A Journal of Practice and Theory*, 38, 2 (2019), 235; J Forte & K Barac, ‘Combined Assurance: A Systematic Process’, *Southern African Journal of Accountability and Auditing*, 17, 2 (2015), 71; Galvanize, ‘What is Combined Assurance?’, 14 August 2019. <<https://www.wegalvanize.com/risk/combined-assurance/>> [Accessed on 24 October 2023].
- ¹⁸¹ Galvanize, ‘What is Combined Assurance’.
- ¹⁸² Heydenrych, *An Analysis of Defence Procurement*, 58, 321.
- ¹⁸³ See rule 184 of the Rules of the National Assembly (9th ed.), 2016. <https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Rules/NA/2016-09-28_NA_RULES.pdf> [Accessed on 8 November 2023]. An example was the PCDMV who held a closed meeting on 7 September 2022. See PMG, ‘AGSA Audit Findings/Outcomes and Investigation Reports’, 7 September 2022. <<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/35499/>> [Accessed on 8 November 2023].
- ¹⁸⁴ See the website of the PMG at <<https://pmg.org.za/committee/84/>> [Accessed on 8 November 2023].
- ¹⁸⁵ DOD, *Annual Report for the FY2019/2020*, 215.
- ¹⁸⁶ Emphasis added. PMG, ‘DOD Responses to AGSA Status’.
- ¹⁸⁷ See also Ministerial Task Team, *The South African Biography of Heberon*.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘Overlap’. <<https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=overlap>> [Accessed on 7 November 2023].

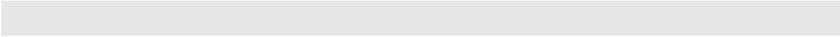
¹⁸⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'Duplication'. <<https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=duplication>> [Accessed on 7 November 2023].

¹⁹⁰ AGSA, *Second Special Report*, 2021, 127–128.

¹⁹¹ See the discussion of the Military Ombud's mandate above.

¹⁹² Uttley, 'Defence Procurement', 72.

¹⁹³ K Hartley, 'Defence Budgets', in Galbreath & Deni, 53.



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The Composition of the Imperial British Forces in the Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902: A Military and Socio-Historical Overview

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Abstract

The British forces that served during the Anglo-Boer War (also known as the South African War) of 1899–1902 were an amalgam of several different types of soldiers. These men came from varying geographic and socio-economic backgrounds, and had different reasons for enlisting. This article discusses the composition of the British forces during the war, and adopts a military and socio-historical approach to understand who served in South Africa and why. To this end, the different types of British soldiers are looked at as separate (but ultimately intertwined) groupings, including regular (or career) soldiers, British volunteers, colonial volunteers, and “non-white” combatants. This represents a wide-viewed perspective of the British military system during the late-Victorian era.

Keywords: Anglo-Boer War, South African War, British Empire, British Army, British Soldiers, Australian Soldiers, Canadian Soldiers, New Zealand Soldiers.

During the Anglo-Boer War (also known as the South African War) of 1899–1902, approximately 448 000 men from across the Anglosphere served in South Africa with the Imperial British forces. These men were not all English, they did not wear red uniforms, and the majority did not speak with a Queen’s English accent. That much is easy, but the question regarding who the British soldiers that fought during the Anglo-Boer War were, is indeed very complex to answer. The men who served with the British forces in South Africa came from divergent cultural, geographic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. They served in units that were organised, recruited, and led differently, and they had varying reasons for enlisting, including patriotism, peer pressure, and pay. They were thus not a homogenous unit, and understanding the composition of the British forces in South Africa requires an understanding of both the late-Victorian British Army from a military-historical perspective, as well as an understanding of the socio-historical dynamics of the British Empire and its subjects at the turn of the century.

Although the Anglo-Boer War is a well-researched topic, there is a lack of comprehensive, wide-viewed analyses of the make-up of the British forces. The first analyses of this topic appeared very shortly after the end of the war. *The Times History of the War in South Africa, 1899–1902*,¹⁹⁷ and the semi-official *History of the War in South Africa, 1899–1902*¹⁹⁸ both included descriptions of the British Army in South Africa from a purely military viewpoint. The same period saw the publication of the most detailed and compartmentalised analysis of each British regiment that served in J Stirling's works, *Our Regiments in South Africa, 1899–1902*¹⁹⁹ and *The Colonials in South Africa, 1899–1902*.²⁰⁰ These are invaluable sources, but again they focus on the topic purely from a military-historical perspective.

After the publication of these sources, there followed several silent decades where little or no new research into the British Army in the Anglo-Boer War appeared. The 1970s saw a revival of interest in the subject with R Price's groundbreaking work, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War 1899–1902*,²⁰¹ which looked partly at the social background and motivations of the men who enlisted. The succeeding decades saw a steady stream of new research discussing the composition of the British forces. Noteworthy histories of the Regular British Army included J Haswell's, *The British Army: A Concise History*,²⁰² and E Spiers' *The Late Victorian Army*.²⁰³ These have both military and socio-historical elements, but consider the British Army during the Victorian era as a whole as opposed to during the Anglo-Boer War specifically.

There also appeared a plethora of research focusing on specific groups of soldiers during the war, notably S Miller's *Volunteers on the Veld: Britain's Citizen Soldiers and the South African War, 1899–1902*.²⁰⁴ There also appeared several publications that describe the composition of the colonial forces, including a chapter by Miller, Wilcox and McGibbon, "The Empire Marches – Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Soldiers in the Boer War" in *Ashes and Blood: The British Army in South Africa, 1795–1914*.²⁰⁵ Most of these types of works focus on the contribution of one colony to the war effort. The last few decades have also witnessed the emergence of research on the role of "non-white"²⁰⁶ combatants within the British forces, notably P Warwick's *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902*²⁰⁷ and A Wessels' *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902: White Man's War, Black Man's War, Traumatic War*.²⁰⁸ G Benneyworth, in his book, *Work or Starve: Black Concentration Camps and Forced Labour Camps in South Africa, 1901–1902*,²⁰⁹ also expanded on the role of forced labour for black people during the war.

Clearly, there exists a great deal of research on the subject, but available research is fractured into numerous specific works, or focuses solely on one historiographical viewpoint. This article aims to provide a wide-angled overview of the composition of the British forces in South Africa during the Anglo-Boer War with specific reference to the military and social aspects thereof. For this purpose, the researchers discuss three main research questions:

- How were the British forces structured during the Anglo-Boer War?
- Who were the men who served with the British forces?
- What were their social relations with each other?

The British forces in South Africa were an amalgam of three main types of soldiers, namely the **regular soldiers** (regulars), **volunteer soldiers** (volunteers), and the **colonial soldiers** (colonials). These different “types” had different skill sets that were more or less functionally applicable to the South African (SA) conditions of warfare. This article focuses on the above-mentioned three types of British soldiers as separate but intertwined sub-sections. Except for these three main types of soldiers, the article also briefly discusses the use of non-whites in a combatant role within the British forces.

It is important to note that serving in the British Army, before and during the Anglo-Boer War, was voluntary, as there was no form of compulsory military service at the time in the United Kingdom or the British Empire.²¹⁰ The term “South Africa” is used throughout this article as a geographical concept, as South Africa as a political entity did not exist until unification in 1910.

Regular Soldiers

The Regular British Army was the permanent defence force of the British Empire. Despite the size and complexity of the Empire, it did not require a very large standing army. The Regular Army units were predominantly stationed in the United Kingdom itself, with overseas deployment mostly to India, with smaller permanent forces in Malta, Egypt and South Africa. According to the *History of the War in South Africa, 1899–1902*, the Regular Army on 9 October 1899 consisted of 227 992 officers, non-commissioned officers and men.²¹¹ This was comparatively tiny compared to the armies in Europe at the time. In 1899, the Army consisted of 9 per cent cavalry, 17 per cent artillery, and 66 per cent infantry, with the rest made up of Royal Engineers, transport, medical, and administrative staff.²¹²

In peacetime, the Regular Army struggled to attract sufficient numbers of good quality recruits. Regular Army privates were predominantly recruited from the working class, with the unemployed and labourers constituting the majority. On the eve of the war, less than 10 per cent of recruits were from the middle and professional classes.²¹³ Men enlisted in the Army to ease unemployment, to find “easy” work that also paid on Sundays, or to escape their domestic settings.²¹⁴ In the 1890s, an Army chaplain wrote that he knew a man who enlisted for the sole reason of receiving a military funeral. Another, he reported, enlisted because he wanted to learn how to read.²¹⁵ According to Farwell, the regulars were recruited from the ‘poorest, least intelligent, and least skilled’.²¹⁶ Haswell states that many soldiers were ‘ignorant’, ‘unintelligent’ and ‘physically of a low standard’.²¹⁷

Because the standard of men that enlisted was relatively low, discipline in the Army had to be strict. Regular soldiers were to be wholly reliant on their officers, who were predominantly made up from the ranks of the upper classes.²¹⁸ Between regular privates and their officers, there existed a wide social and cultural gulf. Farwell states that both officers and men ‘shared the dangers of campaigns, but little else; they lived in different worlds’.²¹⁹ This gulf was not as apparent within the British and colonial volunteer units.

Since the 1870s “Cardwell reforms”, the Army consisted of 66 regiments, each associated with a district, and each regiment consisting of two battalions.²²⁰ Each regimental district

had its own regimental headquarters, which served as depots for supplies, as well as training and housing facilities. Each battalion had a set number of majors, captains, lieutenants and second lieutenants; thus, meaning that promotion was by default, with everyone moving up one space when an officer died or retired.²²¹

As a result of the bad reputation of the Regular Army privates for rowdiness and drunkenness, the public treated “Tommy” (the colloquial name for British regulars) with disrespect and looked down on them because of their behaviour and manners.²²² When war broke out, however, public opinion shifted quickly, and British soldiers were treated as heroes of the Empire.²²³ This phenomenon is highlighted in Rudyard Kipling’s poem, *Tommy*, which – like many of Kipling’s poems – was written from the perspective of a regular soldier:

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
They gave a drunk civilian room, but ‘adn’t none for me;
They sent me to the gallery or round the music-’alls,
But when it comes to fightin’, Lord! they’ll shove me in the stalls!
For it’s Tommy this, an’ Tommy that, an’ “Tommy, wait outside”;
But it’s “Special train for Atkins” when the trooper’s on the tide
The troopship’s on the tide, my boys, the troopship’s on the tide,
O it’s “Special train for Atkins” when the trooper’s on the tide.²²⁴

Despite being complemented by the lowest classes, the Regular Army had proved itself capable of fighting (and winning) wars. The expansion of the British Empire over the preceding century was largely down to its army and the deprivations that the men were willing to endure during campaigns. In every year of Queen Victoria’s reign (1837–1901), the British Army saw active service in wars and conflicts.²²⁵ However, although the Regular Army had been very successful in the preceding decades, their victories were predominantly against non-Western peoples who were not equipped or trained according to modern military standards.²²⁶

The relative success of the Army during the late nineteenth century led to a false belief among the British military and political authorities that the Army was in a strong position when entering the war in South Africa. British confidence in the war effort sprung from an overestimation of their own strength. Farwell describes the power of the British Army in the 1890s as ‘uncontested and thus untested’.²²⁷ *The Times History of the War in South Africa* stated later:

Anxiety as to the military issue there was none. Few even believed that the Boers would make any serious or prolonged resistance to the overwhelming advance of the great army that was being launched against them.²²⁸

Overconfidence was not just limited to the military authorities, but was also widely present among the ranks of the regular soldiers who came to South Africa during the initial months of the war. During this period, British regulars were very eager to engage in battle with the Boers. ‘I guarantee that some of the men are literally spoiling for a fight’, a Private in the 1st Battalion, Border Regiment wrote in his diary, whilst another recalled that his fellow

soldiers in the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment were ‘going crazy’ to have a ‘smack at the enemy’.²²⁹ However eager, some Tommies were unsure how they would face up to the challenges of battle. On the day before the battle of Magersfontein (11 December 1899), a lieutenant in the Gordon Highlanders noted his reservations in a letter home about the coming battle, ‘[t]omorrow the big fight begins’, he reflected, ‘no one knows what will happen, but we will do our best ... give my love to all, it may be the last time’.²³⁰

The British soldiers, as well as the authorities in Whitehall and Pall Mall, were given a rude awakening during Black Week²³¹ in December 1899. Spiers states that the overconfidence of the British forces going into the war was a decisive element that led to the events of December 1899.²³² Wessels has stressed the strategic errors that the British forces made during this period of the war, and Breytenbach has highlighted the ingenuity of the Boer leaders in the placing of their defensive positions.²³³

The defeats during the battles of Black Week caused much concern for both the tactical errors on the battlefield, as well as the training and preparedness of the Regular Army. The debate among historians on the extent of the unpreparedness of the Regular Army for the war in South Africa is still ongoing. The earlier literature was especially scathing of the Regular Army’s performance during the first months of the war. The editor of the very influential *The Times History of the War in South Africa*, Leo Amery, stated that his explicit object in writing *The Times History* was to ‘alert the public to the deficiencies in the Army’s performance’.²³⁴ Contemporary literature has done much to rebalance the record, and both Spiers and Jones have shown that the Army was not as static as have been promulgated in the past.²³⁵ Although it was a slow and cumbersome process, the British Army was capable of adapting to the requirements of campaigning in South Africa. Counter-guerrilla tactics – such as the scorched earth policy,²³⁶ building of blockhouse fortifications and implementation of large “drives” to capture or destroy Boer commandos – proved effective enough in the end to secure a final, albeit expensive and wasteful, victory in 1902.²³⁷

British Volunteers

After Black Week (i.e. 10–15 December 1899), the British commanders decided to call upon volunteer soldiers to support the Regular Army in South Africa. Thousands of British men answered the call to arms. Men volunteered to serve in South Africa for different reasons, including the pay, patriotism, and peer pressure.²³⁸ To be a soldier of the Queen meant fulfilling a manly Christian ideal, and according to Hill, an Imperial soldier was seen as a man of character, who was capable of heroic deeds that other men wanted to emulate.²³⁹ This was typically illustrated in the letters of the British soldiers. One such example was Captain FD Price, who, during the sea journey to South Africa, wrote in a letter to his father that he ‘felt a proud man’:

I had many reasons for being so; but the first and foremost of all was that I knew I had your love and sympathy and sanction to do what was dearest to my heart, to serve my Queen and country and in doing so I trust I will have, in some measure, proved myself a worthy son of the kindest of fathers.²⁴⁰

For the purposes of this article, the term “volunteer” is used in its broader sense, because in the case of the Anglo-Boer War, volunteers included the active service companies, militia, City of London Imperial Volunteers (CIV), Mounted Infantry, and the Imperial Yeomanry. Active service companies were volunteers who were attached to regular regiments, and were recruited from their local regimental districts.²⁴¹ They mainly performed supporting roles for their regular units. The militia were volunteers who predominantly filled the garrisons in the United Kingdom for the main purpose of home defence while the regulars were on active duty.²⁴² The CIV was a celebrated unit that was formed as an independent fighting force, with its own artillery section and mounted infantry section, and sponsored by the City of London. The Imperial Yeomanry consisted of several battalions of volunteers that were raised during the war. Some Imperial Yeomanry units were created and sponsored by individuals, such as Lumsden’s Horse (raised by Colonel DM Lumsden) and Paget’s Horse (raised by George Paget).²⁴³ According to Price, these privately raised volunteer units were the ‘result of the patriotic initiative’ by the men who raised them.²⁴⁴

In total, the militia, Imperial Yeomanry, and other volunteers supplied more than 100 000 men for the war effort in South Africa.²⁴⁵ The militia contributed 4 500 officers and men, while another 75 000 militiamen were transferred directly into the Regular Army. Twenty thousand soldiers fought as members of volunteer service companies or the CIV.²⁴⁶ The volunteers were men of various professions. The men of the CIV, for example, had an average age of 24, an average height of 5 feet 8 inches (173 cm), almost 90 per cent were members of the Church of England, and came from various professions and occupations, including barristers, students, bank clerks, insurance brokers, accountants, timber merchants, plumbers, tailors, salesmen, tax surveyors, engine drivers, glass workers and even piano makers.²⁴⁷ This diversity was reflected in the chorus of Harold Hardy and Stephen Richardson’s song *The British Volunteer*, sung in the music halls during the war:

A something in the City – a shopman or a clerk,
A fellow with a pen behind his ear,
A journalist, a lawyer, or an idler in the Park,
Is the ready-when-he’s-wanted Volunteer.²⁴⁸

The militia were predominantly recruited from the lower classes, mostly labourers, while the Imperial Yeomanry had units raised from the middle and working class. As the war dragged on and the lure of excitement vanished, the Imperial Yeomanry were made up of more and more working-class recruits who joined to ease unemployment.²⁴⁹ In October 1901, Lieutenant Arthur Carrey, described the new Imperial Yeomanry recruits under his command as the ‘scum’ of London. ‘These new men’, he wrote in a letter to his mother, ‘are terrible chaps & it is dreadfully trying to your temper ... some of them are hopeless, dirty, lazy & always gambling.’²⁵⁰

During the war, nearly one third of volunteers were rejected on the grounds of physical unfitness.²⁵¹ Although recruiting was a problem for the British Army, as evidenced by the large intake of unemployed men, it was never so dire as to force them to accept undernourished or sickly men.²⁵² Medical examinations were inconsistent but, according to Spiers, they were ‘never a simple formality’.²⁵³

During the initial period of the war, volunteers were regarded as inferior soldiers compared to the regulars, and often did back-up duty instead of fighting. ‘We are treated in the Yeomanry’, complained a Yeomanry Lieutenant in May 1900, ‘like convicts & no consideration whatever [sic] is shown us ... we probably never shall go in real battles.’²⁵⁴ As the guerrilla war dragged on, the better-skilled volunteers became increasingly useful for irregular warfare because they were less reliant on the guidance of officers.²⁵⁵

The regular Tommies largely disliked the volunteers, mainly because of pay and media attention.²⁵⁶ There was an unnaturally large disparity in pay, with a regular who had been in South Africa for less than a year, receiving only 1/- per day (the “Queen’s shilling” as they called it), as opposed to the volunteers who received much more. In March 1901, a lance corporal noted that they received 5/- per day and wrote that he was ‘not at all surprised’ that there was ‘a lot of jealousy’ between the regulars and the Yeomanry.²⁵⁷

Regulars also felt that the volunteers were being celebrated as heroes back in Britain when they were doing more work. Indignation was especially felt towards the CIV, who were much celebrated in the newspapers. Lance Corporal Syd Critten of the Imperial Yeomanry recorded that they tore out parts of newspapers where the exploits of the CIVs were reported, and burnt them. He wrote in a letter, ‘they have not done one half as much as other troops, and have left the hardest part to be done.’²⁵⁸

Colonial Volunteers

Despite the wide array of colonies that the British Empire had across the globe, mainly men from the Anglosphere took part as soldiers during the Anglo-Boer War, and the majority of the British colonies did not deliver fighting men to the war effort. The Anglosphere comprised Australia, Canada, New Zealand and, in South Africa, the Cape and Natal colonies. Soldiers from these colonies were referred to as “colonials”. Like the volunteers from Britain, colonials only came to South Africa in large numbers after the British defeats of Black Week. In total, approximately 30 000 soldiers volunteered from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, with more than 50 000 who volunteered from the SA colonies.²⁵⁹ Of the approximately 80 000 colonial volunteers, 3 080 were killed or died of wounds or disease during the war, and 3 333 were wounded.²⁶⁰

A sense of duty towards the British Empire was certainly a major reason why many soldiers volunteered to fight in South Africa. According to Miller, the predominant reason why young men from the British colonies enlisted to fight in South Africa was to take part in ‘Christian manliness and empire building’.²⁶¹ This is clearly illustrated in a letter by a young Canadian volunteer on board the *SS Milwaukie* en route to South Africa. In a letter to his old school principal shortly after departing Canada, Corporal WH Snyder (2nd Canadian Contingent) recorded his feelings:

I hope once again in the future to meet you all, but if it is my lot to offer my unworthy life for my Queen and country, I promise, God helping me, to die like a soldier and a man.²⁶²

Generally, colonials were more independent than the British Tommies in the field of operations and were less reliant on their officers. Many English officers felt that this colonial laissez-faire way was undermining the strict military hierarchy to which they were used.²⁶³ Likewise, English officers often looked upon colonials with contempt. “Too Brabanty” (referring to the colonial unit Brabant’s Horse) was even used as a term of scorn for British soldiers who were ‘too much like colonials’.²⁶⁴ General Douglas Haig described the Mounted Infantry as a ‘colonial scallywag corpse’, who were composed of ‘ruffians’ who knew ‘nothing about their duties’.²⁶⁵ As the war dragged on and the advantages of colonials became obvious, many English officers changed their opinions. Commanding a blockhouse in March 1902, a lieutenant in the Imperial Yeomanry said that he would not accept English recruits if he could get colonials, commenting, ‘[a] Dutchman’ is worth six Englishmen.²⁶⁶

South African Colonies

The majority of colonial volunteers came from the SA colonies of the Cape and Natal. According to Carver, 52 000 men volunteered from the SA colonies.²⁶⁷ During the initial period of the war, there were SA volunteers who fought alongside their British and other colonial counterparts during the sieges, relief efforts, and invasions of the Boer republics. Examples of these included such celebrated units as the Cape Mounted Riflemen, the Imperial Light Horse, and the Natal Carbineers.²⁶⁸

The guerrilla phase²⁶⁹ of the war saw the formation of a different type of SA volunteer force in the form of local units, which consisted of colonials who served to protect and patrol their districts against Boer attacks. These units could be considered as irregular, as they rarely took part in active military operations alongside the other British forces in South Africa, and were not necessarily formulated along such strict military lines. Many of these units were formed in response to the growing threat from Boer invasions into the Cape. Among these units were the so-called “Town Guards”, who were raised as defensive forces for their local towns or districts. In 1901, Alfred Milner²⁷⁰ wrote to Joseph Chamberlain²⁷¹ stating that 12 000 colonials had volunteered as Town Guards.²⁷² Like the CIV and the Yeomanry from Britain, the Town Guards were a mixed bag of recruits, as illustrated by a local poet who described a parade of Town Guards in a Cape Town newspaper:

The serried line looked very fine, from Office boy to boss,
Lawyer and client, manager, clerks, chiefs of departments haughty,
Youths in their teens, roughs in jeans and elderly men of forty.²⁷³

Australia

Australia contributed the largest number of soldiers from the British colonies outside of South Africa. In 1899, Australia consisted of six semi-autonomous colonies, and only after federation in 1901, did Australia become a single self-governing state. At the start of the war, the Australian soldiers therefore came from the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania. Australians

generally regarded themselves not only as Australians but also as British, and when they referred to “home”, it often meant Britain. According to Wilcox, ‘[f]or most Australians, the British government was ‘the Imperial government’, the British Army simply ‘the Army’, its soldiers ‘regulars’ or ‘Tommy’ just as they were known in Britain.’²⁷⁴

At the outbreak of the war, thousands of Australians volunteered to serve in South Africa, and by the end of the war, one out of every fifty Australians of fighting age had volunteered for service in South Africa.²⁷⁵ Despite the eagerness of the Australians to participate, there was hesitancy on the side of the British commanders at the start of the war. Australian soldiers were untested in battle, while the British Army had a wealth of experience in fighting and winning wars. After the initial military failures of Black Week, the British commanders however realised the need for Australians, who were more adept at riding, shooting, and living off the land than the regulars or volunteers from Britain.²⁷⁶

A contingent of the New South Wales Lancers, who happened to be training in England, were the first overseas colonials to set foot in South Africa, having departed on 10 October and landing on 2 November 1899.²⁷⁷ In Cape Town, the Lancers were addressed by the Mayor of Cape Town as ‘fellow colonists’, displaying something of the solidarity felt by many in the Imperial Anglosphere at the time.²⁷⁸

Of the six Australian colonies, New South Wales contributed the largest number of men, with 6 945 officers and soldiers, as well as 6 104 horses, coming to South Africa. In addition –

- Victoria contributed 3 757 men of all ranks in the First and Second Victoria Mounted Rifles and the Victoria Mounted Infantry.²⁷⁹
- Queensland deployed 143 officers, 2 756 men (called “roughriders”) and 3 085 horses to South Africa.²⁸⁰
- South Australia supplied 78 officers, 1 450 men and 1,524 horses.
- West Australia sent 63 officers, 1 160 men, 1 044 horses.
- Tasmania added another 35 officers, 827 men and 725 horses.²⁸¹

The Anglo-Boer War was, interestingly, also the first war in which Australian soldiers received the Victoria Cross, with Trooper John Hutton Bisbee of the Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen being the first to receive the decoration.²⁸²

Canada

After Australia, Canada contributed the second largest number of volunteers from overseas colonies. Canada was unique in the Anglosphere because, like South Africa, it had a large population of non-English speakers. The French-speaking Quebecois made up a large proportion of the Canadian population. Support for the British war effort and also the majority of volunteer soldiers came from the English-speaking population of Canada.²⁸³ Canadian soldiers predominantly volunteered from the urban service sector workforce, with a disproportionate number being members of the Church of England and British-born (the 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles, for example, consisted of 56 per cent British-born members).²⁸⁴ Canadian soldiers wore maple leaf insignia on their helmets, and all of the

Francophone volunteers fought in one company, which had multilingual officers. In total, Canada contributed over 7 300 volunteers for service in South Africa, with 270 of them losing their lives (more than half due to illness and disease).²⁸⁵

New Zealand

Like Canada and Australia, New Zealand contributed its share of colonial volunteers to the British war effort, with the first contingent already setting sail on 21 October, and arriving in South Africa on 23 November 1899. In total, New Zealand sent 10 contingents, which totalled 342 officers and 6 171 men for service in South Africa, as well as 6 600 horses.²⁸⁶ Many men were eager to volunteer and, like Australia and Canada, the war coincided with a peak in Imperial patriotism. In the words of the Premier, Richard Seddon, New Zealand would fight for ‘one flag, one queen, one tongue, and for one country – Britain’.²⁸⁷

Like the other colonials, New Zealanders were generally adept at the irregular type of warfare being waged in South Africa. They were more skilled in the use of horses, living off the veld, scouting, and firing a gun than the typical volunteer from Britain was. Only one New Zealander, William James Hardham, was awarded a Victoria Cross during the conflict, but the New Zealanders were praised as ‘co-operative, dependable, resourceful, and determined’ soldiers.²⁸⁸ In total, 228 volunteers from New Zealand died during the Anglo-Boer War, mostly from disease.²⁸⁹

“Non-Whites” in British Service

At the start of the war, British politicians declared that so-called “non-whites” (including black and coloured men) would not participate in a combatant role during the war.²⁹⁰ This policy was, however, not followed through, and thousands of non-whites did serve in a military capacity within the British forces. These men were never officially part of the British Army per se, but they were part of the British forces because they were armed by the British and served British military purposes. This article identifies two fundamentally different types of non-white combatants, namely those armed to serve in a forward military capacity, and those who were armed in a defensive capacity.

In a defensive capacity, many non-white groups were armed in order to defend against Boer incursions into their territory. In the Cape Colony, several units were formed to defend local towns and districts from the Boer “invasions” into the colony. Examples of these units include the Border Scouts, the Bushmanland Borderers, and the Namaqualand Border Scouts. These units predominantly consisted of Cape Coloured men. In 1901, the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, Gordon Sprigg, reported that there were 28 000 Cape colonial whites and 6 000 “natives” in service.²⁹¹ One of the first instances of the British forces arming black Africans in a defensive capacity was during the siege of Mafeking, where Colonel Baden Powell armed 300 Batswana to assist with defending against Boer attacks.²⁹² In 1900, a force of 3 000 Basotho was formed as a frontier guard to defend against Boer incursions into Basutoland.²⁹³ In the Transkei and Natal, as many as 4 000 Xhosas and 12 000 Zulus were armed to help protect from Boer invasions.²⁹⁴

The arming of black men in a forward or offensive role was more prevalent during the latter stages of the guerrilla warfare period, when the British used armed black men both as blockhouse guards and as combatants in semi-independent irregular units.²⁹⁵ In the former Boer republics, black units – such as the infamous “Winburg black commando” – participated in the scorched earth policy, helping to burn down Boer farms and kill livestock.²⁹⁶ This contributed to much bitterness after the war had ended. There were certainly many irregular black units that served in a semi-autonomous capacity to search and hunt down Boer commandos. In a letter in May 1901, Lieutenant Lachlan Gordon-Duff of the 1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders described such an irregular group of armed black men as follows:

They were a weird crew, some on foot, others mounted on donkeys or ponies, all with guns, (some our own rifles), also Mausers, Martini’s, flintlocks and other strange weapons, and all had knobkerries and assegeis [sic].²⁹⁷

It is difficult to determine with any level of accuracy how many black people were armed by the British during the war. Herbert Kitchener²⁹⁸ testified that 7 114 black people were armed by the British.²⁹⁹ These figures are however questionable, as Wessels points out that there were possibly as many as 25 000 armed black and coloured men who were involved as blockhouse guards alone. Furthermore, he points out that an estimated 45 000 armed black men accompanied the British columns.³⁰⁰ Even during the war, in 1902, British opposition politician David Lloyd George proclaimed in the House of Commons that there were 30 000 armed black men in the British military service.³⁰¹

It is impossible to know how many black men died serving within the British forces, but this is estimated as high as 12 000.³⁰² Black people served on the British side mainly for the pay, with many blacks receiving a higher pay than they did before the war, and remarkably, a higher pay than many white British regulars.³⁰³ Many black people believed that British rule would be accompanied by a more liberal government and granting of more rights, as was enjoyed by non-whites in the Cape Colony. These hopes were quashed, however, when the terms of surrender, signed on 31 May 1902, declared that no new political rights were to be conferred upon black people until self-government had been restored to the former Boer republics.³⁰⁴

Thousands of Indians also served with the British forces in South Africa, generally in an unarmed capacity, and most famously as members of the Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps, which was partly organised by Mahatma Gandhi.³⁰⁵ As many as 9 000 Indians were imported from the sub-continent to serve in non-combatant roles within the British forces.³⁰⁶ The roles of these men included work as horse-carers, stretcher-bearers, and personal servants to cavalry officers, amongst others.³⁰⁷

Conclusion

The question – “who were the British soldiers that fought during the Anglo-Boer War?” – does not have a straightforward answer. The British forces, which served in South

Africa, were composed of three very different types of soldiers, namely regular soldiers, British volunteers, and colonial volunteers. These men had varying backgrounds and motivations for enlisting. The Regular Army was mostly made up of career soldiers with a working-class background who served for the economic advantages. The volunteers served because of patriotism, peer pressure, and pay. In the same breath, many men from the colonies volunteered to serve out of a sense of duty towards the British Empire. Apart from these three “types” of soldiers that made up the British forces, there were also tens of thousands of “non-whites” who served during the war. These men served in either a defensive role or a forward role, and as many as 70 000 or more were armed by the British.

It is thus clear that, during the Anglo-Boer War, the British forces did not comprise a homogenous group; indeed, far from it. A blanket description of either the military or the human make-up of a force – almost half a million men strong – which served in South Africa, is impossible without adopting both a military and socio-historical perspective.

Firstly, from a military-historical perspective, the British forces were not uniformly organised. The Regular Army had a standard organisational structure in training and a sharp division between ranks, especially between officers and men. The volunteer and colonial forces, on the other hand, were organised more loosely, and had a relatively limited standard of uniformity in terms of structure and less clear divisions between ranks.

Secondly, from a socio-historical perspective, the British Army was not a homogenous group in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds, as soldiers came from almost all backgrounds and careers. This is reflected in their reasons for enlisting, where many men enlisted for the pay as opposed to others who enlisted to serve their Queen and country out of a sense of duty. There was also a certain level of dislike between the different types of soldiers, which might not have been crippling, but that was certainly present.

It is thus impossible to understand the composition of the British forces during the Anglo-Boer War without considering both the military-historical and socio-historical facets of the British military system. Indeed, this article argues that studying one without consideration of the other would inherently yield an incomplete understanding of the whole.

ENDNOTES

- ¹⁹⁴ Louis Venter is a research fellow at the Department of History at the University of the Free State (UFS). He is also a researcher and head librarian at the War Museum of the Boer Republics in Bloemfontein.
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- ¹⁹⁶ Dr Johan Van Zyl is the head of the Human Sciences Division at the War Museum of the Boer Republics. He is also associated with the University of the Free State as a research fellow in the Department of History.
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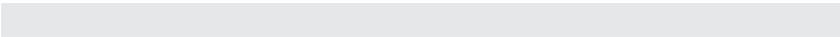
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Amplifying Education: A Case Study in Advancing Academic Centres at Norwich University

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Abstract

Norwich University, the oldest private military college in the United States, aims to prepare future military and civilian leaders to navigate leadership and educational challenges successfully. One method of preparing leaders is through academic centres. Drawing on seven years of data from the John and Mary Frances Patton Peace and War Center and six years at the Center for Global Resilience and Security at Norwich University, this article shows how this task is accomplished by formally establishing research centres that exist outside of regular academic programming. The centres are uniquely positioned to understand the priorities of the US Reserve Officer Training Corps Cadet Command and the US Department of Defense to prepare future junior military leaders to be prepared for twenty-first-century security challenges. Particular attention is given to how experiential learning, leadership laboratories, and research have prepared cadets to be effective junior military leaders. For each core area, we apply Bloom's hierarchical models to maximise cognitive, affective, and sensory learning objectives. Examples are provided to elucidate the paradigm and outlined objectives further. The article concludes by highlighting the impact of centres across the Norwich community.

Keywords: Experiential Learning, Leadership, Academic Centres, Student Research, Norwich University

Relevant International Symposium of Military Academies (ISOMA) 2023 sub-themes:

- Academic programmes and the development of military knowledge and skills
- The reality and challenges of the quality of education in military academies: experiences and lessons learned

Introduction

The role of a nation's military is constantly evolving. In the West, introspections and an accounting of failures – both professional and ethical – following World War II, the Korean and Vietnam wars, the Cold War, and the Global War on Terrorism catalysed education and training programmes in the American military.³¹² As the theatres of engagement extended beyond air, water, and sea, to space and cyber, involving old and new threat actors with

information and artificial intelligence weaponised in innovative ways, modern military education has been forced to adapt. Junior military officers are a crucial component of national security. The Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) on college campuses has thus become a cornerstone of American military education. Today, many officers in the United States earn a commission through ROTC in all military branches of service from over 1 000 colleges. In fact, the ROTC has commissioned over 600 000 men and women in the Army alone. Senior military colleges (SMCs) in the United States have significantly shaped ROTC over the past century.¹ Norwich University was the first institution to pioneer this type of military education.

Norwich University is the oldest private military academy in the United States, with a heritage of practical education dating back to its founder in 1819, Captain Alden Partridge, a pragmatic educator who fell out with the staid administration at West Point.³¹³ Norwich University is a complex educational institution that offers a transformative educational experience for its campus-based undergraduate students and rigorous online programming for distance learners.² It is a nationally recognised, innovative³¹⁴ higher education institution and SMC, known for developing leaders for the military, government, and the private sector that have reached the highest levels in all sectors. As an accredited institution of higher learning, Norwich also draws on the guidance and best practices of organisations, such as the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) and the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR). Norwich develops leaders to design, build, maintain, and defend the United States to meet the needs of the US Department of Defense.

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- 1 The Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) began with President Woodrow Wilson signing the *National Defense Act of 1919* to formalise this type of commission. Military training at a civilian institution however began in 1819 at Norwich University.
 - 2 At Norwich University, the “citizen-soldier” model of education, which was envisioned by Founding Father, Captain Alden Partridge, provided an innovative programme for military training while attending institutions of higher education. The nation benefited because of the dual advantage of having trained military leaders on notice as needed, while when not serving the students would be able to pursue civilian occupations. The Partridge prototype therefore led to the launch of several American academic institutions, which operated similarly. Two hundred years later, Norwich University celebrates its commitment to the Partridge approach to experiential learning by educating both Corps of Cadets, many of whom who are sponsored by the ROTC, and civilian students inside and outside of the classroom through high-impact practices. Besides Norwich, five other SMCs in the United States continue to play a key role in advancing leadership principles for the next century of the ROTC. Historically, the United States SMC system conceptualised and advanced ROTC. Support for SMCs is identified in 10 US Code § 2111a. The six colleges are Texas A&M University, Norwich University, the Virginia Military Institute, the Citadel, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and the University of North Georgia. They remain committed to producing educated citizen-soldiers of character that inspire others for a lifetime of commitment and service to the nation.

Each future junior military officer needs to go beyond the traditional classroom instruction in a specific domain, as well as beyond the specialised training offered in the service branch to which they belong. Each future officer must be a critical thinker, have tested leadership experiences, and be prepared to lead across multinational and cultural environments. Understanding how differences in academic experiences affect interpersonal interactions, social influence, leadership, problem-solving skills, and other social phenomena – both within and across groups – is essential in a complete military education. An example comes from the US Department of Defense and the ROTC Cadet Command who have directed that cultural competence be a strategic learning objective.³¹⁵ It is critical to design diverse academic experiences for our future military leaders to interact effectively with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds to become cross-culturally intelligent and agile to perform the complex range of missions it faces daily with multinational partners.^{316,317}

The educational paradigm that involves preparing future leaders to seek solutions to complex global challenges and lead collaboratively across an interconnected world is however not as integrated into undergraduate military curricula as one might expect. Some programmes may have components of key skills, such as learning to build and foster strong partnerships, developing skills in operational planning, adapting to uncertainty, and maintaining communications in challenging situations. A systematic approach to ensuring access for all students is however lacking. As a key partner in helping military professionals gain proficiency across broad academic experiences, Norwich University is committed to advancing leadership and education across all these areas of competency. Specifically, Norwich University initiated Research Centers of Excellence to serve as sandboxes where complex global issues may be tackled in discipline-agnostic ways. These centres also train undergraduate students to become modern military professionals by addressing the various competencies discussed previously. Bloom's taxonomy serves as the guiding anchor to help students improve proficiency in each domain.

Bloom's taxonomy is a framework used in education to define and classify learning objectives into various levels of complexity and specificity. It was first proposed by Benjamin Bloom in 1956, and has since been revised and expanded by other researchers.³¹⁸ The framework is widely used by educators to design and assess learning objectives, and it has been applied to a variety of educational contexts, including higher education, K-12, and military education.

In this article, the focus is specifically on two Norwich Research Centers of Excellence, namely the Peace and War Center (PAWC) and the Center for Global Resilience and Security (CGRS). Both focus on critical issues related to national and international security, and help future junior military officers gain key skills that go beyond their disciplinary and service training using the Bloom's taxonomy framework. It is common for both military and civilian colleges to have research centres, such as the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, the Adams Center for Military History at Virginia Military Institute, and the Sigur Center for Asian Studies at George Washington University. Nevertheless, the PAWC and CGRS at Norwich University have produced significantly meaningful outcomes, as detailed in the subsequent sections.

Norwich University Academic Centres: Background

The mission of the Peace and War Center (PAWC) at Norwich University is to advance interdisciplinary knowledge for students, scholars, and practitioners on the relationship between peace and warfare at local, national, and global level. The mission of the PAWC relates to the strategic plan of the university in the areas of academic enhancement, leadership, service, internationalisation, and innovation. PAWC inspires educational enhancement and leadership development and advances a visible national reputation on issues related to peace and war.

The PAWC functions as a combination of think-tank and action organisation, much in the mould of Alden Partridge, the founder of Norwich University. His educational legacy is grounded in conceiving and doing; thus, serving academic enhancement and leadership development. To that end, war and peace are often understood simply in relation to the presence or absence of violence. The PAWC addresses the full panoply of issues related to the study of war and peace to encourage scholarship and leadership in all facets. The last several decades of research and experience illuminated the need that leaders and practitioners who engage across a broad array of issues are essential to developing ways to manage and ameliorate violence and peace.

The Center for Global Resilience and Security (CGRS) at Norwich University is an interdisciplinary research centre that seeks to promote global security and resilience through research, education, service, and outreach. Research at this centre focuses on the intersections of water, energy, infrastructure, and climate change using a national security lens, and integrating disciplines, such as engineering, science, mathematics, computing, the humanities, political science, international relations, and others. The research seeks to identify strategies to enhance resilience and mitigate risk. Through collaborations with academic institutions, government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and private sector partners, CGRS seeks to inform policy and promote sustainable solutions to complex problems and global challenges.

The programming at CGRS ranges from local to global initiatives. On the local scale, the CGRS founded the Dog River Conservancy to develop curriculum and outreach models in support of regional land and water stewardship. CGRS also hosts the biennial Resilient Vermont conference, a forum that brings together community leaders, neighbours and groups that are working to strengthen the resilience of Vermont to climate change and other challenges.

Bloom's Taxonomy: Overview

Bloom's taxonomy, outlined in Table 1 below, is comprised of six levels of cognitive complexity, arranged from lower- to higher-order thinking skills: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. These levels represent a hierarchy of learning objectives, with each level building upon the previous one. The taxonomy can be used to design and assess learning outcomes, as well as to evaluate and improve the quality of instruction. Several seminal studies have used Bloom's taxonomy in their research; thus, advancing how these learning objectives are incorporated effectively in educational settings. Two studies are highlighted here:

- Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) *A Taxonomy for Learning* presents a comprehensive revision of the original taxonomy, which has become a widely used framework for educators to design and assess learning objectives.³¹⁹
- Krathwohl's (2002) overview of the taxonomy, 'A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy', provides a detailed account of the revision process and its implications for educators.³²⁰

Bloom's taxonomy has been applied to educating service members. In military education, the taxonomy has been used to develop leadership potential in cadets, enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and assess learning outcomes in graduate military education.³²¹

Table 1: Bloom's taxonomy

<p>Remember: Retrieving, recognizing, and recalling knowledge from memory.</p>
<p>Understand: Constructing meaning through interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining.</p>
<p>Apply: Carrying out or using a procedure for executing or implementing.</p>
<p>Analyze: Breaking material into constituent parts, determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose through differentiating, organizing, and attributing.</p>
<p>Evaluate: Making judgments based on metrics, criteria and/or standards through checking and evaluating.</p>
<p>Create: Putting data together into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing.</p>

It is important to note some criticism^{322,323} of Bloom's taxonomy where the hierarchical structure of learning is challenged, such as in the division of learning into lower and higher tiers. By using activities where students can naturally progress and even jump across levels, centres at Norwich University have maintained the essence of the taxonomy, while adapting it to the students' individual differences and learning styles.

PAWC and CGRS Activities and Bloom's Taxonomy

The activities of the Peace and War Center and the Center for Global Resilience and Security can be correlated to various levels of Bloom's taxonomy (see Table 1). The programming at each centre is designed to help students recall or acquire as relevant:

- Knowledge of the historical, political, and cultural contexts across a broad spectrum of academic programming and experiences;
- Development and application of critical thinking skills;
- Analysis and evaluation of inputs, assumptions, variables, and uncertainties as they engage in complex problem solving; and
- Creation of new frameworks, prototypes, and partnerships.

Students may gain proficiencies in these levels and demonstrate these skills in different ways depending on their learning styles. These are usually identified through engagements with the staff, lecturers and mentors at the centre.

Table 2 highlights the activities at the centre with specific examples related to levels in Bloom’s taxonomy. The second column notes the highest Bloom’s taxonomy level students are expected to reach in each activity. This level is reached as a progression. For example, the highest progression students are expected to reach in the activity of “research” is *Create*. To achieve this level, students are expected to have or demonstrate proficiency across the levels of *Remember*, *Understand*, *Apply*, *Analyse*, and *Evaluate*. Based on this research, there are no centre activities that do not fit within the taxonomy; thus, reinforcing the validity and reliability of Bloom’s work.

Table 2: Centre activities and Bloom’s taxonomy

Centre Activity	Description	PAWC and CGRS examples **PAWC in bold **Joint – in italics
Research	Conducts interdisciplinary research on peace, war, and security issues, environmental security, climate change, resilience, including conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and military operations. Involves understanding subject matter, remembering key specifics, applying their understanding to analyse existing knowledge, evaluating its relevance and significance, and creating new knowledge through research.	VPW ³²⁴ JPWS ³²⁵ NATO SPSP ³²⁶ Schultz Fellowship , CGRS student fellows, senior research fellows, energy resilience, <i>Environmental Security Initiative</i>
Education	Provides educational programmes and resources on war and peace and on resilience and security. Involves remembering and understanding key concepts, theories, and practices. Students are also engaged in analysis to deepen their understanding of the subject matter.	<i>CGRS and PAWC Speakers Series</i> , energy resilience education, academic resilience collaborative (ARC) webinars, ³²⁷ Dog River Conservancy (DRC) ³²⁸

Centre Activity	Description	PAWC and CGRS examples **PAWC in bold **Joint – in italics
Experiential learning	Creates environments where students can experience the information, concepts, or theory in an active real-world laboratory and go through the progression of understand, remember, apply, analyse, evaluate and create artefacts that demonstrate competency in new subject areas.	Olmsted FSPAC, PAWC Fellows, DRC engagements IW Simulation, IFPSP³²⁹ BISE³³⁰ WBE initiative, NATO Simulation, Arctic Simulation
Publications	Produces scholarly publications, including books, articles, and reports, on war and peace topics. Involves remembering and understanding existing knowledge, analysing, and evaluating its strengths and weaknesses, and creating new knowledge through research and writing.	JPWS, NATO SPSP,³³¹ VPW, student article on WBE,³³² ISOMA article on ES, presentations at AEHS.
Events	Hosts conferences, summits, and symposia on war and peace and resilience and security topics, bringing together scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to share knowledge and engage in discussion. Involves understanding and evaluating existing knowledge, generating new ideas and perspectives. These events create opportunities for dialogue and collaboration.	Resilient Vermont Conference, Summit, MWS, speakers series, Germany Cyber Security Conference , ESI event, AEHS, ARC series, EAN – Energy Futures Initiative working group, ES panel, SHMP working group, training for community resilience organisations, outreach through DRC and the First Lego League and in K-12 schools
Collaboration and networking	Engages with local, national, and international communities to share research findings, network, promote dialogue and understanding, and provide resources and expertise on war and peace as well as resilience and security.	<i>AEHS, Army War College³³³</i> IFPSP ISOMA³³⁴ New England Consulate Generals, STRATCOM. Fulbright, EU, EAN, SHMP

By participating in the activities at each centre noted in Table 2, students experience the progression of Bloom's levels depending on their individual starting points. The activities at the centre are designed to meet students where they are at, and to help them advance. Activities at both centres aim to provide students with foundational knowledge of content related to war and peace and to resilience, security and the environment (Bloom's *Remember*). This knowledge is offered in events, such as the annual Peace and War Summit and the Resilient Vermont Conference with opportunities to learn from leading scholars and practitioners in the field. Students are then encouraged to analyse and interpret complex issues in debriefs and after-action reviews of centre events and activities with peers, mentors, and teaching staff (Bloom's *Understand*). Students apply their understanding in multiple forms, for example by leading various operational aspects of the Olmsted Expedition, designing prototypes to sample wastewater to look for the SARS-CoV-2 in campus manholes, and conducting experiments in classrooms, laboratories, and the field (Bloom's *Apply*). Students then break down their data, experimental and research findings, notes and lessons, discussing and debating to make cohesive arguments (Bloom's *Analyze*). Once students have their arguments articulated, they evaluate their understanding and conclusions by comparing with known knowledge sets to advance the research (Bloom's *Evaluate*) and, finally, they implement the protocols, programmes, experiments, prototypes and other outcomes generating new knowledge, which they disseminate in various modalities and venues (Bloom's *Create*). While this is the traditional Bloom's progression, the activities at each centre are robustly designed and managed to adapt to students' learning styles and starting proficiencies, allowing them to jump around levels as previously noted.

As noted through the examples provided in Table 2, activities at both centres are designed to amplify students' academic experiences across the range of Bloom's taxonomy levels. In this section, further analysis will elucidate the integration of the taxonomy in the activities at the centre.

All students at both centres are required to engage in research. Examples of research are Paul Kostecki CGRS Fellows in Environmental Security, PAWC Richard S Schultz '60 Symposium Fellows, students engaged in the Arctic Triad competition, or the Olmsted Field Study. Each student involved in these activities must **remember** and **understand**. Students also absorb information as they attend various talks at the centre, symposia, summits and conferences, and reflect on their understanding and experience.

All students are also expected to **apply** their knowledge and memory of various centre activities to their academics and community engagement activities. For example, CGRS student fellows who became involved with the Dog River Conservancy learnt about land and water stewardship through a class or laboratory activity and then developed outreach models that were shared with the K-12 community. A specific example involves a physical model built in an environmental engineering classroom by a student group who learned about the oxygen sag curve that affects fish populations in the Dog River. The CGRS fellows demonstrated the model to local area high school learners and produced an explanation video to share with other environmental engineering professors who used it in their classrooms to explain the concept.

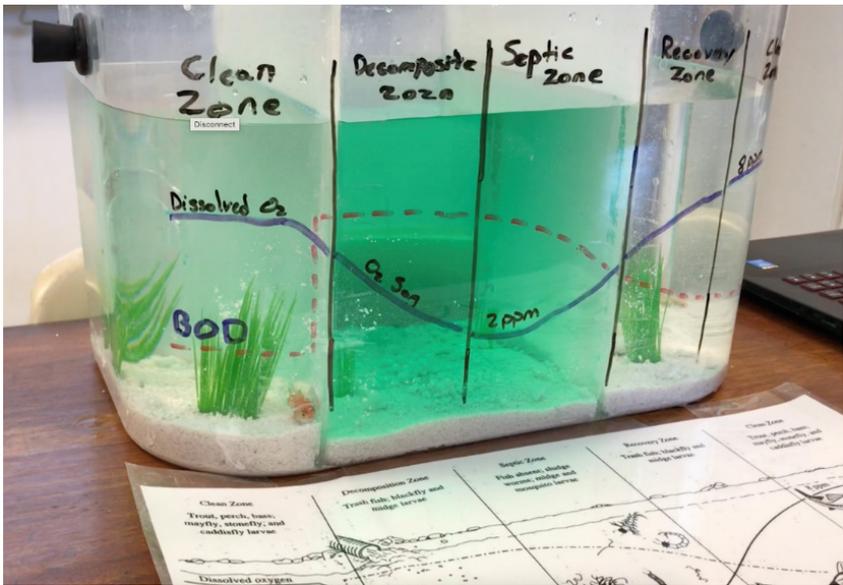


Figure 1. Students built a dissolved oxygen sag curve model to share with K-12 students taking classroom lessons into the community.

Students in research centres also **analyse** lessons learnt in various centre activities. Examples of such analysis include the PAWC Richard S Schultz '60 Symposium Fellows who work under the supervision of a faculty mentor and analyse literature and data sets to develop responses to their research questions and disseminate their findings during the annual Norwich University Military Writers' Symposium.

Student fellows are constantly **evaluating** various sources of information through centre experiences to make informed decisions and expand their education. Examples include students involved in the Olmsted Field Study, moderation duties at the Resilient Vermont conference, participating in Boston and Washington DC Policy weeks, or contributing to the Voices on Peace and War forum or other scholarly outputs. In each of these activities, students are required to evaluate the geography, politics, socio-economics and culture of a location they are visiting, evaluate writings of scholars from whom they are hearing in panels or whom they are moderating in presentations. The evaluation is often in areas of study that lie outside their academic majors, challenging them to learn about a new topic, speak to experts on a new subject matter, grapple with disciplinary contradictions, and form cohesive arguments that they articulate with clarity.

Finally, addressing Bloom's taxonomy level of *Create*, fellows in both centres are required to create new knowledge through research and new levels of understanding through reflections. For example, student fellows involved in the Academic Resilience

Collaborative summarised key ideas of webinars conducted virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic in English, and developed summaries in French, German, Spanish, and English. This effort evolved into a programme called “Language Ambassadors” where the centre highlights and programming were translated into multiple languages. Another example was CGRS student fellows involved in the wastewater-based epidemiology effort. Students built an affordable automatic sampler that could collect composite samples from campus manholes, and wrote about their design and implementation in an article that was published in an undergraduate research journal (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. An automatic sampler designed and built by students to sample campus manholes for the SARS CoV-2 virus during the pandemic.

Centre activities have had a networking effect, which fostered new activities. For instance, when the PAWC Director and Associate Director were developing the Boston Immersive Simulation Experience (BISE) in the summer of 2018, they visited Boston, and were introduced to a Norwich alumnus who worked in the Department of Public Health in Massachusetts. The alumnus, an environmental specialist, introduced the PAWC Director and Associate Director to several environmental scientists at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. This network formulated the creation of a section of environmental security at a national conference in collaboration with CGRS. In addition, the Georgian acting ambassador was invited to serve as a keynote speaker at the 2022 Peace and War Summit to address Russian current events. During his visit to Norwich, the

ambassador extended his assistance should Norwich be interested in conducting a field study on peace and conflict in Georgia. This offer led the PAWC Director and Olmsted student fellows to visit Georgia for two weeks in May 2023 to interact with national policy and academic leaders in the country.

Moreover, a unique benefit of building the two research centres at Norwich University is to develop Centre Directors and Associate Directors as multi-layered, experienced, and effective leaders in the academic and policy community. Through the above-mentioned multiple and various centre activities, lecturers and staff associated with PAWC and CGRS have been able to gain academic, policy-relevant, and international experiences while creating a wide network with national and international military leaders, policymakers, scholars, and NGO activists around the world. Without such opportunities, they would have been solely focused on academic work at Norwich. Research centres can thus work as a great laboratory for both students, staff, and professors at military colleges.

In Table 3, some specific activities at the centre are briefly described with additional details, such as impact of the activity, and the tools used to assess the impact (additional details are included in the footnotes). Table 3 highlights how the centres unite various areas of study at Norwich, and provides an academic locus to encourage convergence of effort to generate new insights. This approach enables the centre to catalyse much on the many facets of war and peace and how they can be managed, in the first instance, and strengthened in the second. The centres pull all these efforts together to benefit students and teaching staff and to build upon an obvious strength for Norwich in a coherent and structured way. By creating integrated projects and research groups on campus and reaching out to collaborate with groups off-campus, the centres connect our disparate areas of work in a way that adds to the national and international dialogue on these topics more effectively and persuasively.

Table 3: Centre examples

Centre examples	Centre activity	Frequency and iterations	Description	Estimated impact	Evaluation methodology
Olmsted Field Study in Peace and Conflict (FSPAC)	Experiential learning	Annually since 2004	The purpose of the FSPAC is to enhance cross-cultural competencies, gain global knowledge and the necessary leadership skills for Norwich students who commission in US armed forces. Programme participants will socialise, learn, collaborate, and problem solve in an experiential learning environment.	About 100 students, annual Olmsted Foundation engagement, more than 900 Facebook followers, 200 Instagram followers, newsletter email open rate 50% of subscribers	Student reflections & short statements
<i>Journal of Peace and War Studies (JPWS)</i>	Research	Annually since 2018; 4 th edition	This is an annual peer-reviewed journal published by the John and Mary Frances Patton Peace & War Center at Norwich University. JPWS aims to promote and disseminate high-quality research on war and peace throughout the international academic community. It also aims to provide policymakers in the United States and many other countries with in-depth analyses of contemporary issues and policy alternatives.	More than 400 hard copies distributed, more than 800 Facebook followers, 200 Instagram followers	Google analytics, social media analytics, hard copies distributed
Wastewater-Based Epidemiology Initiative	Education	One-year project	In 2020, with a newsletter subscriber open rate of 50%, CGRS launched its first environmental health investigation. Norwich University developed a Wastewater-Based Epidemiology (WBE) Initiative, and joined a growing effort among colleges and universities across the United States to investigate the use of wastewater for early detection of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19.	State of Vermont, Norwich University community, Norwich University Student Scholarship Celebration, Engineering Convocation, and Vermont State Engineers Meeting	Research reports and presentations

Centre examples	Centre activity	Frequency and iterations	Description	Estimated impact	Evaluation methodology
Voices on Peace & War Forum	Publication	Bi-weekly since February 2021	The authors of this forum, Voices on Peace and War (VPW), explore domestic and global issues broadly tied to the theme of peace and war. VPW features subject matter experts and students who present their opinions and arguments on critical issues related to peace and war in the international community.	More than 800 Facebook followers, 200 Instagram followers, more than 6 000 unique webpage views over one year, email open rate 50% of subscribers	Google analytics, social media analytics, email analytics
Dog River Conservancy Initiative	Education	Multi-year project since 2018	The initiative serves as a model university-led conservancy that supports dialogue on environmental stewardship, embeds art and culture into scientific inquiry and discovery, and advances conservation using a student-centric approach.	Norwich University and local community members (6,000+ population), local K-12 curriculum	Research report outs and presentations, community engagement activities, teaching packets for K-12 educators
Military Writers' Symposium	Event	Annually since 1997	The only programme of its kind at an American university, the Norwich University Military Writers' Symposium convenes authors and experts in the fields of military history, intelligence, and current affairs to offer important perspectives on pressing global concerns.	More than 100 guest speakers, more than 800 Facebook followers, 200 Instagram followers, potential YouTube viewers 2.35k, campus and local community	Event registration data, after-action reporting
Resilient Vermont Conference	Event	Bi-annually	A conference for Vermonters seeking to engage with each other, their communities, and the state at large through meaningful and interdisciplinary discussions and problem solving. Join us for this one-day event as we look to the past to plan for our future.	More than 22 speakers from the Vermont Community, 100 attendees annually, potential YouTube viewers 2.35k	Event registration data, after-action reporting

Centre examples	Centre activity	Frequency and iterations	Description	Estimated impact	Evaluation methodology
Environmental Security Initiative (ESI)	Research	Multi-year project since 2018	The Environmental Security Initiative (ESI) is a keystone collaborative effort between the Norwich University Center for Global Resilience and Security (CGRS) and the John and Mary Frances Patton Peace & War Center (PAWC) with a mission to advance research in the intersecting areas of environmental degradation and national security.	Conference participation at the Association for Environmental Health and Sciences Foundation, Norwich community	Research reports and presentations
Energy Resilience and Security Initiative	Research	Multi-year project since 2018	CGRS considers energy resilience a core component of building community resilience. It is developing energy curricula for a range of learners, from undergraduate students to senior leaders in military and industry, to produce generational change.	Renewable Energy Vermont Conference, Energy Action Network, Vermont Energy Futures Initiative, Vermont's State Hazard Mitigation Planning steering committee, US Department of Defense	Research reports and presentations, working group hosting
Norwich Humanities Initiative	Education	Multi-year initiative	The Norwich Humanities Initiative demonstrates the value and impact of integrating humanities-centred approaches to research, teaching, and learning within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and professional fields.	More than 1 500 Norwich students	Course assessment, student grades
Peace and War Summit	Event	Annually since 2018	The Peace and War Summit at Norwich University examines significant international issues with an eye at recommending viable solutions.	More than 40 guest speakers, more than 800 Facebook followers, 200 Instagram followers, potential YouTube viewers 2.35k, campus and local community	Event registration data, after-action reporting, <i>Journal of Peace and War Studies</i>

Centre examples	Centre activity	Frequency and iterations	Description	Estimated impact	Evaluation methodology
Military Writers' Symposium Associates	Collaboration and networking	Multi-year	The Military Writers' Symposium Associates are an affinity group whose members seek to support the Norwich University Military Writers' Symposium and its corresponding year-round campus experience	More than 25 fellows	Annual meeting
CGRS fellows programme	Research, education, experiential learning	Multi-year fellowship programmes	Fellowship opportunities are available to students, faculty, and external subject matter experts to complete projects of inquiry	More than 50 fellows	Research reports and presentations
PAWC fellows programme	Research Education	Multi-year fellowship programmes	Fellowship opportunities are available to students, faculty, and external subject matter experts to complete projects of inquiry	More than 25 fellows	Research reports and presentations

Students affiliated with each centre take on leadership roles in activities promoted by the centre. Students attend conferences, for example, but also assist in planning and execution. Examples in Table 3 are the Norwich University Military Writers' Symposium, the Wastewater-Based Epidemiology Initiative, and the Olmsted Field Study in Peace and Conflict (FSPAC). Through various experiences, the centres enhance academics and the overall intellectual culture of the university and build leadership capacity. Students who work with the centres have input on the projects and, thus they gain valuable experience developing and completing projects themselves and honing analytical skills to assess, review and interpret complex problems. Student-affiliated work provides the foundation to help them succeed in their chosen careers and become leaders at various levels.

Table 3 illustrates how, over the past seven years, the PAWC has positioned itself to become a leader in shaping issues related to peace and war. The journal of the centre, the *Journal of Peace and War Studies*, a biweekly forum *Voices on Peace and War*, symposia, field studies, experiential learning projects, social media platforms, and speakers series disseminate information externally, and contribute to national and international debates. External partnerships are essential to bring expertise to campus, but also to extend the expertise and ongoing scholarship already at Norwich, and develop platforms by which information can be disseminated more widely.

Over the past six years, the Center for Global Resilience and Security has grown its network of students, teaching staff, and senior fellows. Table 3 provides examples of how students have benefited from guided research mentoring, leadership roles in event organisation and planning, shared the stage as panellists and moderators of conference sessions, and earned well-deserved fellowships and internships. Examples are:

- CGRS local and statewide programming successes developed and hosted an environmental security session at a national conference focused on environmental health and sciences, and created a student fellowship programme to advance environmental security.
- During the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, CGRS also coordinated a cross-disciplinary team of students who investigated campus manholes to apply wastewater-based epidemiology as a pathway for early detection of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Teaching staff and senior fellows have been invaluable mentors to students and co-creators of new knowledge, processes, science, and models disseminated through written and oral presentations in multiple modalities and venues, to grow the fields of resilience and security.

In addition to its research and educational programmes, CGRS also offers consulting services to government agencies, NGOs, and private sector partners. For example, through the Environmental Security Initiative from 2019–2022 described in Table 3, CGRS supported the Norwich University Applied Research Institutes (NUARI) in its contract with the US Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) and Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) to develop an energy-resilience research track to include issues of cybersecurity.

Conclusion

While applying Bloom's taxonomy, this article has addressed how successful experiential learning, leadership laboratories, and research activities, initiated by the two research centres at Norwich University, have helped cadets to be effective junior military leaders. Nevertheless, it would be necessary to acknowledge that such academic centres have certainly faced their own challenges. Among those challenges have been acquiring adequate finances to support the centres and their long-term sustainment, providing release time for teaching staff from teaching courses to lead and maintain the centres, addressing the potential for competition against other academic entities, and handling some bureaucratic culture to be resistant to new approaches. Although dealing with such challenges requires wisdom and patience, the multi-dimensional advantages that the research centres have brought are remarkably precious.

By creating academic research centres, Norwich University has developed a sandbox where teaching staff, students, and community members with intersecting interests can come together and amplify educational opportunities and activities. All centre efforts integrate Bloom's taxonomy principles to ensure that undergraduate students experience a gradual progression of their educational experience. The centres have embedded avenues for students to ask questions, explore by themselves or with mentors, participate and lead, visit new places, debate with scholars, work directly in communities, reflect on their experiences, mentor their peers, gain fellowships and internships, and explore future career opportunities.

The centres intend to build a confident next generation that can both lead and follow. This is done by centre programming and activities that amplify classic educational experiences, leadership opportunities, and traditional curricular models. These centres at Norwich University challenge traditional paradigms by breaking educational silos by having students work across academic disciplines and with multi-faceted teams.

The centres promote academic enhancement via critical thought for innovative leaders accustomed to pairing theoretical concepts associated with Bloom's taxonomy via hands-on experience. These leaders will be prepared to grapple intellectually and practically with the topics of war and peace in all their dimensions. Whether Norwich graduates enter the military or civilian world after graduation, they will be confronted with challenges ranging from counterterrorism to cybersecurity to cognitive warfare to climate change. Because of the impact of globalisation and international connections, there is scarcely a career path in the world today that is not fundamentally affected by the dynamics of war and peace.

The success of the Peace and War Center and the Center for Global Resilience and Security can be measured by their impact on both the Norwich University community and the wider world. Both centres have had a significant influence on Norwich University cadets and civilian students, providing them with unique opportunities to engage with real-world issues and develop skills that are critical to their future careers. The centres have also contributed to recognition of the university as a leading institution in the areas of resilience, understanding conflict, and environmental security. The PAWC and the

CGRS are testaments to the importance of multidisciplinary and experiential approaches to address complex global challenges. The vision is that the outcomes of centre activities will continue to be felt in the years to come both in the academic world and in the field of policymaking.

ENDNOTES

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A Profession Without a Distinct Science: Reflection on the Professional Requirement for Officers to Hold a University Degree

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Abstract

The study on which this article is based, explored the fundamental question: why do future officers of the armed forces need to receive a university education? In other words, which reasons justify this professional requirement to hold a university degree for candidates to this profession? This fundamental question still deserves attention, despite the broad consensus around the requirement, as this is a condition for recruitment for most Western armed forces, or an integral part of the training and education programme offered to naval and officer cadets attending military academies today. There are seven distinct but somewhat interrelated reasons in support of this professional requirement: complexity of operational theatres or warfare; a new vision of the officer; better-educated officers; the integrated career-long training path for officers; professionals reflecting on their own profession; a mechanism that reinforces the authority and the legitimacy of officers; and for a better understanding of the military-academic complex. This article focuses on generalist officers, and leaves aside the case of specialists, such as medical officers, legal officers or engineers, as these military occupations already have their own specific professional requirements in terms of university education. In addition, the article does not report on the case of officers promoted from the ranks, for whom there is usually no such qualification requirement.

Keywords: Officer Education, Military Academies, University Education, Military Science, Civil-Military Relations.

Introduction

In 1856, the British member of parliament, Sir Sydney Herbert – who would later become secretary of state for war during the Crimean War – took the floor of the House of Commons to refute a widely-held belief at the time that, if a young man was instructed in his duty as an officer, ‘he was likely to become a pedant and a bookworm, and no longer to be an active, zealous, handy officer’.³³⁶ Excellence on the battlefield was believed by many not to be something to be learned on school benches or in the library, but rather in barracks, in the field, or on the firing range, in short, in the actual practice of the art of war. The idea that a university education was not only unnecessary, but also detrimental to a

young officer's training, would remain dominant in some circles until the beginning of the twentieth century. Indeed, scepticism around this idea has not completely disappeared to this day. In 1990, in an essay dedicated to officer training, the renowned military historian Martin van Creveld wrote:

[I]t is legitimate to call the reader's attention to the existence of some scattered evidence that an early college education, with its heavy emphasis on theoretical work and written skill, can actually be harmful to junior commanders whose job, after all, is to lead men in combat.³³⁷

If one compares how other professions – such as lawyers or medical doctors – already early on placed great importance on education to train their members, one can see how the officer profession has long been reluctant to provide university studies to their candidates. Law schools existed in antiquity. The first modern medical school in Montpellier dates back to the twelfth century.³³⁸ Even if military academies existed in Europe since at least since the eighteenth century,³³⁹ it was not until only about a century ago that they began offering fully recognised and accredited university-level education to their naval and officer cadets. In addition, it is only recently that most Western armed forces have made a university degree a formal condition of admission to the officer profession.³⁴⁰

Today in the West, there is strong consensus in terms of this professional requirement for officers to hold a university degree. Paradoxically, however, the profession of officer is the only one that does not have its own “science”, i.e. a specialised and exclusive field of academic education for its future members, whereas, for example, candidates to the medical profession are required to study medicine at university, and those destined for the legal profession, to study law. There is indeed a university field of research called “military science”, but it is far from being unified, and has no vocational purpose either. Even if there is a relatively universal set of basic knowledge and skills transmitted to cadets around the world at military academies – be it military history, leadership or notions of management, etc. – the academic curriculum offered in these institutions is not standardised or unified. The Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) offers its students a variety of 20 majors from which to choose, among which, French literature and culture, Mathematics, and Space Science.³⁴¹ The United State Military Academy (USMA) at Westpoint delivers undergraduate degrees in 36 majors, including Philosophy, Cyber Science, and a foreign language (Chinese).³⁴² Other military academies limit the choice of degrees to fields aligned with the profession of arms, such as:

- The Royal Military Academy (RMA) of Brussels, which offers only two degrees to their candidates, one in engineering and the other one in military and social sciences;³⁴³
- The French *École spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr* (i.e. Special Military School of Saint-Cyr), which offers only two majors, Engineer Science and Political and Social Sciences;³⁴⁴ yet, with a number of specialisations.³⁴⁵

This educational choice in favour of university studies for cadets thus seems paradoxical: even though this profession has no specific or vocational science of its own, it requires

that their future members hold a university degree in a wide variety of fields, some of which appear far removed from the military domain.

In this essay paper, I explored the fundamental question: ‘Why do future officers need to receive a university education?’ To put it differently, ‘What reasons justify this professional requirement for officers to hold a university degree?’

My intention is not to discuss the choice of university discipline to offer cadets at military academies, but rather the more fundamental question of why they need a university degree to enter this profession, and especially so in the contemporary world. I think that this question still deserves attention, despite the broad consensus around this professional requirement today. It would be an error to deem it trivial, simply since almost all military academies offer university education today.

Such a reflection seems particularly relevant and useful for anyone working in a military academy, whether as a lecturer, a professor, an instructor, or a member of staff immersed in teaching, research, curriculum design, instruction or training. This reflection finds its meaning in the considerable responsibility incumbent upon those working in a military academy, which is to prepare naval and officer cadets intellectually for what awaits them as future officers of the armed forces. This reflection should however also be useful to cadets themselves, as they are required to reflect on the very meaning of the field of expertise and the professional identity of the unique profession they are about to join during their time at the military academy.

This article, which takes the form of an essay, dwells on both my personal experience as a former officer cadet and on my position as a professor at the Royal Military College Saint-Jean for nearly two decades. In addition, the article also takes into account a review of the wide literature on the subject. Finally, let us add that this article concerns future generalist officers and leaves aside the case of specialists, such as medical officers, legal officers or engineers, as these military occupations already have their own specific professional requirements in terms of university education. In addition, the case of officers promoted from the ranks, for whom there is usually no such qualification requirement, is not discussed here.

In my view, there are seven distinct but somewhat interrelated reasons that justify the professional requirement for officers to hold a university degree. This list does not claim to be exhaustive, but reflects a selection of what I consider the most important reasons. Let us tackle in turn each of these seven reasons.

Why Do Officers Need a University Degree?

Complexity of Operational Theatres or Warfare

In recent decades, military theatres of operations have become more and more complex, so that the exercise of command or the discharge of duties in staff positions for officers appears increasingly demanding.³⁴⁶ In an article dedicated to the education of officers, Professor Emeritus Jim Barrett wrote:

The daily reports of suicide bombers, pilotless drone attacks, and cyber warfare viruses all remind us of the new complexity of the old business of warfare. Less visible than combat operations, the work of generating, managing, and sustaining armed forces has become more complicated as well. Governments demand greater financial accountability. Weapons acquisition, logistics, and financial oversight all demand modern business skills. Whole-of-government initiatives and the comprehensive approach are a growing part of the operational fabric, calling for a whole new set of knowledge and skills.³⁴⁷

War and large-scale military operations have a certain universal or permanent character, i.e. regardless of time, context or people, the use of collective violence by a community of people to achieve its ends is a social practice unfortunately as old as humanity itself. It is also worth pointing out a relatively strong tendency among researchers or thinkers in all fields of social science – and military science is no exception – to emphasise:

- The apparent discontinuity between our era and the past;
- The tendency to qualify a phenomenon with a new label, sometimes peremptorily;
- The radically new character of our times; and thus
- Attracting attention in today's highly competitive academic publishing environment.

War is however something that is relatively permanent in time. Its fundamental nature has not changed, and it has remained relatively stable throughout history. The profession of arms is therefore characterised by a certain permanence in its ultimate aims.

Nevertheless, military technologies, tactics, and strategies change over time. The military domain is an evolving one. Mastering today's military technologies is becoming increasingly complex. This is due to a few factors. This complexity derives from the technical sophistication of modern weaponry, but also the dissemination of and access to increasingly sophisticated military technologies, both by state and non-state actors. It follows from a kind of de-compartmentalisation of military operations, which today presents an increasingly elusive aspect. Many conflicts are now taking place in what is known as "grey zones" where the boundaries between war and peace are becoming increasingly blurred, and the distinction between the enemy and the civilian population appears foggy.³⁴⁸ Above all, the complexity of the modern military domain derives from the nature and variety of the operations entrusted to the armed forces by civilian governments, particularly in the West. Armed forces are increasingly being entrusted with new and unprecedented missions with regard to their traditional functions, often in support of civilian authorities, as part of peacebuilding, national reconstruction, response to natural disasters, and other initiatives. This extension of the field of activities entrusted to the armed forces necessarily implies close collaboration with a growing number of non-military organisations, whether private (e.g. with private military firms) or public (e.g. environmental agencies, public safety agencies or social services agencies). These new collaborations inevitably undermine the very expertise of the armed forces, which in the past enjoyed a quasi-monopoly in many of these domains of activities.³⁴⁹

In this context, the tasks and the field of responsibilities of officers appear greater than ever, and certainly more demanding than in the past. In addition, by being trained in the art of warfare in the specific field of the weapon in which they serve, candidates to this unique profession must today receive training and education in a great diversity of other non-military fields, such as communication, psychology, humanitarian aid, and environmental interventions. For future officers, a better understanding of the many issues involved in civil–military relations, at a time when armed forces are increasingly required to work in collaboration with non-military organisations, is becoming increasingly essential. Certainly, the training of cadets today must include a robust educational programme to develop certain essential intellectual skills, such as analytical skills, or technical knowledge, a sense of judgment sharpened by ethics, or the knowledge of advanced intellectual tools. These skills are acquired at the university. Frankly, it is difficult to see how an officer could be expected to fulfil the scope of his or her responsibilities in the complex operational environment of today, which increasingly requires collaborative work with non-military organisations, without the mastering of these advanced, yet not strictly military in nature, intellectual skills.

A New Vision of the Officer: “Strategic Lieutenant”

The increasing complexity of military theatres of operation also comes with certain changes in the role of the officer, of which the concept “strategic lieutenant” (or the similar “strategic corporal”) is the clearest expression.³⁵⁰ While we have already stated that war has a certain permanence, the fact remains that, in the current operational environment, certain actions, decisions and gestures taken in the field – particularly by officers – tend to have an effect that they did not have in the past. In the media environment today, every officer must realise that, in the field, their decisions, and actions – however limited these may seem at the tactical level within which they operate – can nevertheless have a major effect on the entire mission or, in other words, on a strategic scale. For French sociologist Bernard Boëne, there is no doubt that –

[T]he young officer cannot be satisfied with considering only the tactical aspects of their mission: without risking or questioning its legitimacy even at the slightest incident likely to capture the attention of the world’s media, he or she must simultaneously take into consideration all these other factors. The responsibility that weighs on their shoulders is notably heavier than in the past and includes aspects that previously concerned only the operational and strategic levels.³⁵¹

The training and education offered at the military academy must therefore consider this new reality of the potentially strategic effect of any decision taken in military theatres of operation. Military academies must ensure that they provide cadets with a high level of education, so that they are able to grasp the strategic dimension of their future decisions and actions. We can even say that this new situation has an influence on the very mission of the military academy. The core learning objective of military academies should not simply be to train *future lieutenants*, capable of exercising the role at the tactical level of platoon commander, for example, but also *future officers*, namely professionals capable

of grasping the full scope of military thinking, from the tactical to the strategic level, through the operational level.³⁵² Obviously, it is only much later in their careers – as they will climb the ranks of the military hierarchy – that officers will be able to act and make actual decisions at the strategic level. Still, very early in their careers, young officers must nevertheless be able to grasp the potentially strategic significance of their decisions and actions in theatres of operation, something that requires intellectual skills to be acquired through university education, in academic fields, such as political science, international law, and sociology.

Better-Educated Officers: A Requirement of Our Democratic Societies

For a long time, armed forces in the West have evolved on the edge of society, with exceptions of countries where we find the tradition of armies comprising citizen-soldiers or where conscription existed. Armed forces tend to form separate “societies” each with its relatively distinct culture, social norms, values, and strong traditions – some of which date back generations.³⁵³ This is particularly apparent in the wearing of uniforms in a society where this practice has largely been abandoned; in symbolic markers of authority, such as ranks, in an increasingly egalitarian society; in an organisational culture in which individual members’ autonomy is very limited, which runs counter to personal independence valued in civil society, and so on. The existence of a “culture gap” between the military and civil society has given rise to an abundance of scholarly literature and is one of the major subjects of studies on civil–military issues.³⁵⁴

In the last decades, we have been witnessing the development of increasing pressure from civil society everywhere to reduce the civil–military culture gap, i.e. by bringing the culture of the armed forces in alignment with the dominant values in civil society – or, at the very least – to make it less *incompatible* with those values prevailing in society at large. This impression seems even truer today. Nowadays, the military is held to a high standard of professionalism, dictated by the democratic requirements of our societies.³⁵⁵ More recently, there has also been a new demand for respect by armed forces for the principles of diversity, inclusion and equality, values that have come to occupy a prominent place in the political imagination of liberal democracies.³⁵⁶ This new set of values is not without clashing with the traditional principles of uniformity, division, and hierarchy that lie at the heart of traditional military organisational ideology. In a democratic society, maintaining the bond of trust between the population and its armed forces, or between the civilian power and the senior military leadership is crucial. As the dominant values of society change, it is only natural that the demands placed on the armed forces should evolve accordingly. In this context, officers must be able to act as agents of “cultural change” within the armed forces.³⁵⁷ If the armed forces are to adapt to the new demands of our democratic societies, officers need to have a good grasp of certain social dynamics that run through our societies. The university-level education offered to cadets must also pursue such an objective in order to keep them connected to civilian life, notably through university debates.³⁵⁸ In this sense, the legitimacy that the public places in the officer corps rests largely on the ability of its members to fully appreciate the role, function or place of the armed forces in society, and also to understand the meaning of the demands society makes of this unique institution.

Nowadays, members of the officer profession must acquire a new set of “soft” skills and abilities – unknown to past generations of officers – a majority of which are acquired precisely in a university educational environment.

The Integrated Career-Long Training Path for Officers

Throughout their career, officers may spend between one fifth and one quarter of their time in training and education, including attending professional programmes at different military schools.³⁵⁹ To our knowledge, no other profession spends as much time as the armed forces do with their members in continuous learning throughout their careers.³⁶⁰ Officer professional development, i.e. the training programme for officers as they move up the military chain of command, appears relatively standardised for members of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries, for example, to enable interoperability. The training offered at the military academy is thus part of a “continuum”, while throughout their careers, officers have to complete additional training courses in their **branch schools** for their trade, in addition to attending the **staff school**, few years after receiving their commission, and some years later, for those selected to climb the upper echelons of the military hierarchy, the **war school**.³⁶¹ As far as education is concerned, although military academies are responsible for offering their candidates a university education – most often at undergraduate level; sometimes at postgraduate level – the educational pathway appears a little less consistent throughout the officers’ career progression. Apart from the requirement to hold a bachelor’s degree to enter the officer profession, the pursuit of university studies later in an officer’s career does not appear to be a universal requirement. In some countries, successful completion of training at the staff college or war college leads to a graduate diploma, but this practice is not universal. That said, there is a widespread tendency everywhere to streamline officer education, by linking the initial university training received at the military academy with the professional training offered later in the career. The advanced level of training offered in these professional schools today requires that students attending these establishments, gain mastery of knowledge and intellectual skills or abilities that are usually only acquired in a university setting.

Professionals Reflect on Their Own Profession

Since the founding work of sociologist Talcott Parsons, one of the distinguishing features of any profession, as opposed to a trade for example, is the ability of its members to reflect on the very meaning of their field of expertise and their professional identity.³⁶² The profession of officer is no exception, as the classical conceptualisations of the military profession by Samuel Huntington and Morris Janowitz have shown.³⁶³ Being an officer requires the ability to reflect on what it means to be a member of this unique profession. This implies the ability to reflect on:

- The scope of responsibility of their decisions and actions;
- The nature of the contract that binds their profession to the rest of society;
- The ethical guidelines they must set for themselves to maintain the bond of trust with society in general.

The above abilities imply the capacity to “think like an officer”. Following the analysis of the US historian Reed Bonadonna –

[T]hinking like an officer is the most defining aspect of military professionalism, more than values, character, or knowledge, and that it has been neglected in officer education. There are many books on military tactics, strategy, and leadership, but few if any treat these subjects as matters of thinking, as cognitive challenges that are distinct but also related in that they place in the officer’s mind and within the context of the military culture and profession.³⁶⁴

In the past, the acquisition of this form of thinking for cadets attending military academy was mainly through a process of informal socialisation with peers and staff. This involved acquiring the codes of military culture and those specific to the officer’s profession, as well as integrating military values and certain social practices, through emulation. Nowadays, although military academies are still places where learning takes place through socialisation, training now relies more heavily on a richer and more formal pedagogical approach, with greater emphasis on critical analysis, self-reflection, mentorship and self-awareness. Learning to think like an officer now involves a comprehensive reflexive process. To take up Bonadonna’s reflection:

[T]o make an analogy, the service academies used to assume that cadets were absorbing leadership abilities and ethical awareness through the example of the commissioned officers with whom they came into contact, but over the past few decades leadership and ethics have become subjects for formal instruction, discussion, and critique.³⁶⁵

Here again, the university environment seems the best place to undertake this fundamental reflection for any cadet, which requires the mobilisation of intellectual resources developed by academic disciplines, such as social sciences, literature, history or philosophy, but also military sciences.

Mechanism to Reinforce the Authority and Legitimacy of the Officer

Among the reasons for offering future officers a university education, is the fact that one must recognise that, in any society, education is an effective mechanism to reinforce its authority and legitimacy. In practice, officers derive part of their actual authority over their troops from their credentials earned on school benches. Historically, or rather at the time of the emergence of the profession of officer somewhere in Europe in the seventeenth century, this issue did not arise, as officers were naturally recruited from the noble classes. Their authority thus naturally derived from their social status, in an already highly hierarchical social structure, whereas soldiers were recruited from the lower social classes. With the democratisation of society and the abolition of the requirement of noble rank for entry into the officer corps – abolition which can be traced back to the Scharnhorst Reform of 1808 at the *Kriegsakademie* in Berlin³⁶⁶ – the question has arisen: What authority can officers claim over their troops, compared to non-commissioned officers (NCOs) for example? NCOs often have more military experience than the young officers under whom they serve. In practice, the authority and the legitimacy of officers not only derive from their position in the hierarchical structure of the armed forces, or their holding of an “officer

commission”. Their authority and the legitimacy also derive, in part, from a certain “social status”, which is intimately linked to the fact that, in our societies, despite wider access to higher education, university studies are still limited to certain groups or individuals. Members of the officer corps distinguish themselves and derive part of their authority and legitimacy – if we compare them with their troops – from the greater knowledge, intellectual and analytical skills and tools they possess, all of which were acquired at the university. Of course, there are an increasing number of soldiers and NCOs in all Western armed forces who are educated, and sometimes even hold university degrees. Some senior NCOs in Canada even hold master’s degrees. This however remains the exception. Officers everywhere have a higher level of education than the troops, and part of the authority and legitimacy they have over their troops derives from this professional attribute.

A Better Understanding of the “Military–Academic Complex”

The university research community today occupies an increasingly important place in knowledge society. Public and non-state organisations and institutions are increasingly relying on the research produced by universities, research centres, and think-tanks in their decision-making processes. The armed forces are no exception. If, what the outgoing US president Dwight Eisenhower in the 1950s called the “military–industrial complex” became dominant throughout the West, we are now witnessing the emergence of the “military–academic complex”, so to speak. The military organisation is increasingly making use of studies produced by military research centres or work produced by civilian researchers working in universities and other research agencies. In this context, it appears increasingly essential for officers, especially senior officers, to be able to understand the complex interface between the military and defence research organisations, to mobilise this scientific knowledge better for the benefit of the organisation they serve. Such knowledge – by the level of theoretical complexity on which it is based and the intellectual tools it mobilises to be produced – is indeed only accessible to those who already possess advanced theoretical knowledge and intellectual skills, precisely those which are acquired through university studies. In this sense, in the new knowledge economy of today, it is important that officers be able to make use of scholarly research. And this is the final reason for offering university-level education to cadets at military academies.

Conclusion

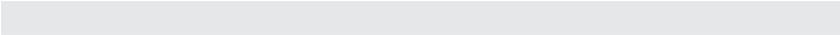
Today, more than ever before, in the performance of their duties, officers of the armed forces must deploy theoretical knowledge, analytical tools, and intellectual skills that can only be acquired through tertiary education. The training and education of officers increasingly require the successful completion of university studies, either at a military academy or before donning the uniform. In this reflection, we have reviewed what we consider the seven main reasons why candidates for the profession of officers should receive a university-level education. Even more fundamentally, this professional requirement stems from the fact that, to use the words Professor David Last, the primary goal of university studies should never be to obtain a degree, but always, more fundamentally, to engage in a transformational experience, in that by educating oneself, one becomes a fundamentally different person.³⁶⁷ Education is a process that

involves more than the simple transmission of knowledge or the acquisition of new skills, since it always has the profound effect of transforming the student. And that is why the military academy, along with its comprehensive training programme, must always put its educational programme first, as becoming an officer can only be achieved through a genuine education process. One simply cannot be *trained* to become an officer, one needs to be *educated*.

ENDNOTES

- ³³⁵ Dr Danic Parenteau is professor of political science and philosophy at the Royal Military College Saint-Jean where is currently serving as Academic director (Interim). He holds a doctorate in philosophy from the Université de Paris 1 (Panthéon-Sorbonne) and is a graduate of the Royal Military College of Canada. His main research interests focus on the education of officers.
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Much Ado about Disinformation: A Critical Approach to Coping with Information Manipulation in a Post-Truth World

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Education must be about thinking – not training a set of specific skills.³⁶⁹

Abstract

The purpose of the study on which this article is based, was to explore how to build cadets' ability to fight against disinformation in a post-truth age. Considering lessons from the study of the human mind, invited us to examine why we fail to discern truths rather than how to win this fight. Disinformation – often interchangeably called “fake news” – seeks to shape or change perceptions of information users. The understanding of disinformation by our young leaders is crucial because it – i.e. sowing distrust and doubt among members – is dangerous and even fatal to the Army, which places great emphasis on mutual trust as its core value. The military in general and the Army in particular are expanding their information operations capabilities, as North Korea is one of the few countries that actively engage in a disinformation campaign. During their years at the military academy, cadets should however improve their ability to discern truths before acquiring skills relevant to a counter-disinformation campaign. The best way to enhance cadets' ability to discern truths – even in a media-saturated age – is still to participate in deep reading, especially reading imaginative literature that fosters inventive as well as critical thinking. The current study argued that our grasp of human frailty through deep reading helps us develop an ability to discern truths.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Deep Reading, Disinformation, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Simulacra

Introduction

In the technology-driven world today, there is a common perception that warfare is primarily about technology.³⁷⁰ My concern, however, stems from the rhetoric of this age, “technology alone”. My role as a professor of English Literature at a military academy is often questioned with questions such as –

- What are the benefits of learning literature?
- Why not teach about artificial intelligence, military robots, or drones instead of literature?

It is challenging to persuade sceptics that deep reading is an effective practice in countering disinformation, especially when literature is deemed irrelevant in the face of such challenges.

I do not dismiss the importance of our cadets learning scientific and technological knowledge, which is crucial given the pervasive influence of “information” and “technology” in our lives. Information technology literacy should however encompass more than just operating skills. It should involve hermeneutic analysis, which interprets ‘confused, incomplete, cloudy, seemingly contradictory’ data and information.³⁷¹ Hermeneutic analysis, involving a recursive process of interpretation, is essential for true information technology literacy. My contention is that literary literacy and information technology literacy share similarities in their objectives and the skills they develop. Both require the ability to analyse and interpret different forms of communication critically across various mediums.³⁷²

If our literature courses aim to teach cadets to think critically and fairly, then the practice of hermeneutic analysis can also be applied to countering disinformation, necessitating that cadets become critical and ethical consumers of information.³⁷³ In our post-truth milieu that perpetuates the spread of disinformation, this is a most timely issue. As a literary scholar, my curiosity and sensitivity cannot but be drawn to deep reading of literature as an efficient response to the problem of disinformation.³⁷⁴ I argue that the best and most efficient way to respond to fake or manipulated information is to equip our cadets with the awareness and ability to understand hidden meanings underneath the surface through a deep reading of Shakespeare’s comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*. The study employed a presentist approach to align the insights in the play with contemporary experiences, aiming to build arguments informed by modern knowledge without equating the past with the present.³⁷⁵

Disinformation matters

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘disinformation’ – often linked to fake news – is defined as ‘false information, esp. when supplied by a government or its agent to a foreign power or to the media, with the intention of influencing the policies or opinions of those who receive it’.³⁷⁶ Russia has long mastered disinformation for domestic and foreign policy, with the military traditionally defining it as an attempt to disrupt decisions of the enemy through deceptive information.³⁷⁷ While the term “disinformation” originated during the Cold War (1947–1991), it was not until the 2010s that concerns about disinformation campaigns expanded beyond the military to encompass all aspects of life, particularly with the rise of the internet and digital technology.³⁷⁸ Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, while facilitating information flow, are frequently sources of false information deliberately crafted to harm individuals or groups. When disinformation is conveyed through trusted sources, the damage is profound, making it crucial to address this growing issue.³⁷⁹

Countering disinformation requires a multifaceted approach; yet, discussions often focus on fact-checking and technological advancements, such as artificial intelligence

(AI) for detection and policy interventions. This, however, overlooks the fundamental battle for people's hearts and minds – to influence opinions and emotions. Countering disinformation should therefore also involve advocates of hermeneutic analysis of texts and their contexts. A 2022 *Military Times* article highlights the importance of education in countering disinformation:

Education is the simplest thing, and the most immediate thing, and the most effective thing that we can do at our level for the individual. Because at the end of the day, mis- and disinformation is only effective if the recipient is vulnerable to it.³⁸⁰

Disinformation thrives in the absence of discernment and vigilance at individual level, but responsive critical thinking can combat it. False claims by North Korea about Japan discharging radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean illustrate how education in critical and moral reasoning can counter disinformation in practice.³⁸¹

The North Korean goal is to create anti-Japanese sentiment among South Koreans, hindering military cooperation with Japan. Given the historical disputes between Korea and Japan, the public is divided on Japanese matters. While verifying the accuracy of the North Korean claims, we must practice hermeneutical analysis to filter out how false information distorts interpretation. In this regard, *Much Ado About Nothing* is enlightening, as the central issue in the play is 'interpretation'.³⁸² The play revolves around two pairs of lovers: Claudio and Hero, and Benedick and Beatrice. Claudio falls in love with Hero, and plans to marry her, but the villainous Don John deceives Claudio into believing that Hero has been unfaithful, leading to public disgrace and a faked death. Meanwhile, Benedick and Beatrice, who initially engage in witty banter and claim to disdain love, are tricked by their friends into confessing their feelings for each other. Ultimately, the truth about Hero's innocence is revealed, leading to her reunion with Claudio, and Benedick and Beatrice also marry, culminating in a joyful resolution.

In scene after scene, this Shakespeare comedy addresses the problems created by the difference between a surface-level interpretation and a deep-level interpretation of information. At the surface level, the play examines how a 'swift movement' of information can be used to shape perception, even when the information is contradictory or deceptive.³⁸³ At the deep level, the play demonstrates how disinformation spread by trusted people – especially military and political leaders – undermines their credibility and social trust. As if answering the question of why our cadets should read literature, Shakespeare confirms that achieving complete objectivity is difficult because of inherent human flaws. Essentially, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shakespeare provides us a case study, demonstrating that the only way to overcome these flaws is to think critically.

What it means to think critically

Much Ado About Nothing explores the theme of deception and the contrast between appearances and reality. Characters engage in various forms of deception, highlighting misconceptions and the consequences of disinformation. Shakespeare reflects the

conditions under which disinformation thrives. Before examining *Much Ado About Nothing* for insights into countering disinformation through critical thinking, it is essential to define critical thinking.

The term “critical” originates from the Greek word *krinein* (κρίνειν), meaning ‘to separate’, ‘to judge’, or ‘to distinguish between two or more things’.³⁸⁴ John Dewey provides a definition of critical thinking that harkens back to these Greek roots: active, persistent, careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends.³⁸⁵

While Robert Ennis expands upon the meaning of critical thinking from a logical perspective so that it can comprise ‘rational reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe and do’.³⁸⁶ Jane Roland Martin argues from a moral perspective that reflective thinking goes beyond mere logical analysis and considers the emotional, intuitive, and contextual dimensions of ethical issues.³⁸⁷ For her, critical thinking can facilitate moral judgment by enabling individuals to reflect on moral claims, assess the consequences and implications of different actions, and weigh conflicting moral values or principles. It is however important to note that neither critical thinking nor moral consideration alone is enough for recognising our own biases and identifying gaps, inconsistencies, or manipulations in the information we encounter. As contemporary research suggests, we need to use cognitive skills actively, including ‘problem-solving, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions’, for intellectual engagement with people whose knowledge, beliefs, and political opinions vary.³⁸⁸ This active engagement is crucial for understanding diverse perspectives, fostering meaningful discussions, and developing critical thinking.³⁸⁹ In Shakespeare’s text, we can find many points of potential comparison to the contemporary military context.

Shakespeare’s characters, such as Hamlet, Othello, and Lear, often fail to implement critical thinking, making themselves vulnerable. They embody the distinction between reality and appearance, highlighting the contrast between how things appear and how they truly are. While these characters should be understood within their historical context, examining them through a twenty-first-century lens reveals new relevance, particularly regarding disinformation. *Much Ado*, more than any of Shakespeare’s plays, provides an interpretive glimpse of the conditions for the successful spread of disinformation: ambiguous information, malicious actors, and audience expectations. Consider Borachio’s plot to ruin Hero’s reputation:

BORACHIO

But know that I have tonight wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero’s gentlewoman, by the name of Hero. She leans me out at her mistress’ chamber window, bids me a thousand times goodnight. – I tell this tale vilely. I should first tell thee how the Prince, Claudio, and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

CONRAD

And thought they Margaret was Hero?

BORACHIO

Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio. But the devil my master knew she was Margaret. And partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which deceive them but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made – away went Claudio enraged, swore he would meet her as he was appointed next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'ernight, and send her home again without a husband. (3.3.142–161)³⁹⁰

This dialogue reveals that slander (a modern synonym for disinformation) relies on what the characters called ‘fashioning’ (3.3.134) to plant, place, and possess people’s hearts and minds in order to say that seeing is believing. Carol Cook makes the centrality of ‘fashion’ within the play vivid by linking it with ‘talking well’, suggesting that rhetorically well-fashioned talking is ‘defensive’ and is, therefore, used to ‘cover their emotional nakedness and to avoid exposure’.³⁹¹ It is telling that fashion is most dangerous to the insinuating malice of slander when it involves a purposeful presentation to create a desired image or perception. Even more telling is that Borachio calls up two aspects of fashioning disinformation: cognitive bias that reinforces sexism, and emotional bias that provokes an emotional reaction in the audience in the form of anger and a desire for revenge.

Shakespeare’s figuration of influencing minds as a fashion epitomises the extent to which individual heuristics and existing biases can reinforce social division and prevent critical thinking. Claudio’s anger and his desire for revenge toward Hero inscribes upon her the label of ‘Dian in her orb’ (4.1.57) but in reality ‘more intemperate... / Than Venus’ (4.1.59–60). This has something to do with the pervasive misogynist values in Messina, and reflects the community’s fear of women’s sexual passion.³⁹² Not surprisingly, Claudio, trapped in social conditions in which there is no room for critical thinking, accepts provided information without verification, and then seeks to make an emotional connection with the citizens of Messina, simply instilling a negative image of Hero as a ‘rotten orange’ (4.1.32) among their hearts and minds. The important point is that he lacks critical thinking. Claudio falls prey to the cognitive bias that reinforces his misogynistic viewpoint: ‘But she is none. She knows the heat of a luxurious bed’ (4.1.40–41). This idea of the social inscription of female-sexed bodies as a permanent stain is evident too in Leonato’s language: ‘O she is fallen / Into a pit of ink, that the wise sea / Hath drops too few to wash her clean again’ (4.1.139–141). Throughout military culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many military texts favoured intellectual capabilities.³⁹³ The soldier-characters in this play however do not embody this ideal.

What it means to read deeply

Critical thinking is a skill that can be developed and improved with practice. Deep reading is one way to cultivate critical thinking by engaging with ambiguous or confusing texts. Deep reading contributes to the acquisition of true knowledge, and is more than merely reading for a longer period. Maryanne Wolf, an expert in reading and literacy, defines deep reading as ‘the cognitive, perceptual, and affective processes that prepare readers to apprehend, grasp, and assimilate the sense of what is read – beyond decoded information’.³⁹⁴ In other words, deep reading supports the development of critical thinking skills by identifying biases or gaps in the argument, assessing the evidence provided, and providing a rich context for understanding. Wolf’s primary interest lies in the ability to link a visual representation (image) to linguistic and conceptual information (meaning), as this is the very first step in developing critical thinking. It is crucial to recognise that images alone may not always provide the complete truth or the full context of a situation. The fact that images can be manipulated, taken out of context, or used as a form of disinformation to influence and shape the public, informs several arguments related to how we create meaning from images. The scene where Hero’s visage is read in two different ways demonstrates the subjective nature of interpreting images:

CLAUDIO Behold how like a maid she blushes here.
O, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue? ...
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.
(4.1.34–38; 42)

FRIAR By noting of the lady, I have marked
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes,
And in her eye there hath appeared a fire,
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth.
(4.1.158–164)

Two characters interpret the same image differently based on preconceived notions and emotional states. This dramatises what Nicholas R Helms calls the ‘interpretability’ of images and how these images can shape behaviour and action.³⁹⁵ Shakespeare demonstrates how emotionally charged vocabularies, combined with images, generate specific responses and reinforce false narratives without clear evidence. This is epitomised by Friar Francis’ absolute assurance in his belief:

FRIAR Call me a fool,
Trust not my reading nor my observations,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant

Knowledge is acquired through various means. Shakespeare's characters' knowledge is however confined to sensory experiences, or observations, of the immediate moment, as exemplified in Leonato's comments about Beatrice's way of understanding the world: 'Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly' (2.1.78). Having said that, we know that that the term 'apprehend', implying the act of grasping, has particular relevance.

The play invites us to reflect on our contemporary epistemological currency that an individual's own belief suffices for justification. Such cognitive bias that leads to misinterpretation of information is best described in Beatrice's remark to Leonato's reproach for her disdainful attitude: 'I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by daylight' (2.1.79–80). Both Leonato and Beatrice exemplify the tendencies to place more trust in what is personally seen and to rely on seeing as the sole criteria for believing. In this regard, it is helpful to remember that, for the entire Western tradition, knowledge acquisition involves the concept of grasping and tends to equate such conceptual grasping with seeing.³⁹⁷ This tendency is addressed in the play when the meaning of Hero's blushes remains indeterminate. Claudio's emotional reasoning poses an important question: is seeing an objective way to validate one's interpretation? Claudio's words signal that the way we see sometimes blurs rather than clarifies, and that this kind of situation can be explained only by imaginative language:

CLAUDIO O Hero! What a Hero hadst thou been
 If half thy outward graces had been placed
 About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart!
 But fare thee well, most foul, most fair; farewell
 Thou pure impiety and impious purity.
 (4.1.99–103)

Claudio's inability to assess evidence critically or creatively leads to his misjudgment. Shakespeare's questioning of the relation between truth and appearance remains relevant, as highlighted by Harold Bloom's remarks, 'the Friar too tends to make Hero's absence the occasion for a "moving" representation of her'.³⁹⁸ For Bloom, the friar's use of a theatrical representation that evokes strong emotions or touches the audience deeply exemplifies the power of the stage to create an alternative reality. The idea that Hero's absence becomes an opportunity to create an emotionally powerful portrayal of her however uncovers a terrifying reality where we fail to distinguish between alternative (civilian) and augmented (military) reality and reality. As we will see below, Shakespeare specifically depicts the need for meticulous awareness in being a good soldier, especially when the nature of communication shifts from text to visual images that can effectively simulate public sphere dialogues.

The 'moving representation' of Hero can be associated with Jean Baudrillard's notion of simulacra, which refers to the idea that contemporary society is increasingly dominated by images, signs, and representations that have detached themselves from their original meanings.³⁹⁹ According to Baudrillard, simulacra have become substitutes for reality, blurring the boundaries between the real and the simulated.⁴⁰⁰ In the following scene, we can find elements that resonate with Baudrillard's ideas:

FRIAR

Let [Hero] a while be secretly kept in,
And publish it that she is dead indeed.
Maintain a mourning ostentation,
And on your family's old monument
Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites
That appertain unto a burial.
(4.1.203–208)

At first glance, the fashioned image of a dead Hero and some feigned shows of grief seem like simple deception. It is however important to note that, even before the slander of Hero occurred, the friar was certainly familiar with such fashioning techniques, considering his articulation of a counter-narrative to Claudio's insult. In fact, the friar's outright fashioning of Claudio is achieved by making a surface manipulation of Hero's death credible with the forged epitaph for her. It is also important to note that the friar has a good understanding of fashioning words that goes beyond simple deception:

FRIAR

When [Claudio] shall hear she died upon his words,
The'idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparelled in more precious habit,
More moving, delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul
Than when she lived indeed.
(4.1.223–230)

The friar's invention of Hero's virtual death exemplifies Baudrillard's ideas: the representation of dead Hero appears so vividly in Claudio's mind that it becomes more real than Hero who existed in reality. In my view, Shakespeare's awareness of simulacra – long before the invention of the modern version of the concept – is confirmed by Claudio's language. In a foregoing scene, Claudio uses Baudrillard's notion to accuse Hero of her infidelity, saying that she is but 'the sign and semblance of her honour' (4.1.33). Whereas Claudio's speech signals the division between appearance and essence, that of the friar further poses a question about how such a division can work together, contributing to the normalisation of the simulacra, which Baudrillard describes as –

The transition from signs that dissimulate something to signs that dissimulate that there is nothing, marks the decisive turning point. The first implies a theology of truth and secrecy (to which the notion of ideology still belongs). The second inaugurates an age of simulacra and simulation.⁴⁰¹

The important point is that the friar is concerned only about the success of his counsel to influence people, not about proving Hero's innocence to people. Therefore, to him, there is no difference between Hero, who is dead now, and the living Hero. In a sense, Claudio only experienced the simulation of Hero's death as real in the same way Borachio succeeded in simulating Margaret in Hero's clothes as the real Hero.

Applying these observations to disinformation, one could consider disinformation an instance of simulacra – the collapse of distinction between real and simulated. Recent examples, such as the 2022 fake video of Volodymyr Zelensky calling for surrender and the 2023 fake Pentagon explosion, highlight the challenge of discerning truth in a simulated digital world. *Much Ado* however demonstrates that self-awareness through deeper or imaginative probing is essential to fight disinformation, despite seeming ineffective at times.

Authorial Responsibility of Disinformation

The final scene in *Much Ado* – in which Hero presents herself as an object, hiding her identity behind her mask – underscores our heightened vulnerability to disinformation and the difficulty in distinguishing reality from simulacra. Upon her unmasking, Hero reconciles with Claudio:

HERO (unmasking) And when I lived I was your other wife;
And when you loved, you were my other husband.

CLAUDIO Another Hero!

HERO Nothing certainer.
One Hero died defiled, but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.
(5.4.61–66)

Claudio's exclamation 'Another Hero!' however suggests that he sees the woman as Hero's 'copy' (5.1.283) who resembles Hero identically. And Hero's reaction to him, 'Nothing certainer,' only confirms that all reality is nothing but an image; thus, unmasking becomes just another mask, substituting the living Hero for the dead Hero. According to Jacques Derrida, just as masking is not a simple act of concealment, unmasking is not a straightforward unveiling of truth.⁴⁰² For Derrida, unmasking involves questioning the presuppositions, assumptions, and hidden biases that shape our understanding of phenomena, including power dynamics, cultural norms, and ideological frameworks. It is from this Derridean deconstructive approach that we can ask a relevant question about the problematic ending of this play: Doesn't Hero enjoy such substitution by simulacra, adapting and even extending the friar's plot to die to live?

Although there have been many conjectures as to this ending, I suggest that, considering the scepticism found in the play toward fixed meanings, the scene confirms that simulacra – as habitual acts – are now being normalised within Messina's climate of disinformation. Furthermore, I would like to compare a mask to a computer screen, what Giorgio Agamben calls a 'surface on which images appear'.⁴⁰³ According to Agamben, 'the computer is constructed in such a way that readers never see the screen as such, in its materiality, because as soon as we switch it on, it fills up with characters, symbols, or images'.⁴⁰⁴ As if anticipating Agamben's notion of the material immateriality of the screen, both masking and unmasking in the final scene invoke the continual process of questioning, challenging, and reinterpreting the underlying assumptions, biases, and rhetorical strategies employed

in disinformation campaigns: while the mask screens Hero from Claudio's sight, while at the same time it displays Hero as image, another Hero.

The real problem however lies in the near impossibility of identifying a person who is responsible for the spread of disinformation and its consequences because of the decentralised nature of disinformation-making. As we encounter in *Much Ado*, anyone can habitually live in disinformation. In the concluding act, the play illustrates these difficulties related to identifying the main actor(s) in the disinformation campaign against Hero. Consider the following scene in which Ursula, one of those who distributed disinformation, takes the role of sending a true report to her audience:

URSULA It is proved my Lady Hero
 hath been falsely accused, the Prince and Claudio
 mightily abused, and Don John is the author of all,
 who is fled and gone.
 (5.2.93–96)

Consider also how Benedick, who was asked to initiate an action for Hero's defamation, responds to Ursula's report and a messenger's notice about the arrest of Don John and his return to Messina:

BENEDICK Think not on him till tomorrow. I'll devise
 Thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers.
 (5.4.127–128)

Will people change their minds once they are provided with true information? Although we hear Benedick's promise to come up with a fitting retribution for Don John's evil deed, it is hard to know whether imposing punitive measures is an appropriate solution for disinformation. Don John, who is the main instigator in this disinformation campaign, remains behind the scenes until the end of the play. It is as if the true identities of the agents involved in the disinformation campaign are concealed behind a computer screen. Considering authorial responsibility, it is worth noting that the term "author" is broadly used for a 'creator, originator, instigator' who begins the process of creation – but it does not necessarily mean a concluder of it.⁴⁰⁵ Ursula therefore speaks of Don John's authorial responsibility because she knows that he does not control the direction of the plot. The role of intermediaries – almost all the characters in the play risked endangering the cohesiveness of the community (civilian) or the unit (military) – in the spread of disinformation is not always intentional or malicious. Their influence and reach however make it crucial that they foster social conditions to disseminate false information. Then, *Much Ado* can be read as a response to the effects of a quasi-post-truth culture. Shakespeare again provides us with an interpretative glimpse of the general conditions for disinformation, which are just as common in the current post-truth world. As we anticipate the challenges and potential of disinformation in military operations, we must combine data awareness with deceptive strategies to gain an advantage in our actions.

Conclusion

This reading of *Much Ado About Nothing* demonstrates that deeply attentive reading of literature develops the ability to navigate ambiguity and discern information accuracy. Such reading, focusing on the negative consequences of disinformation – reducing meaningful communication and reflection opportunities and undermining democratic values – emphasises understanding simulacra as common denominators of disinformation and their potency in public discourse. Technical or tactical approaches alone are insufficient; they fail to examine the rhetorical distortion of truth, leading to polarisation within society.

As demonstrated in the play, when individuals or groups deliberately twist the truth to promote their own interests, it can deepen the erosion of trust, a fundamental democratic value. Emphasising only the technical approach without recognising the affective potency of disinformation is a fundamental misunderstanding of our goal to educate and train leaders of character and competence. Elsewhere, my colleague and I have argued that the present effort of the Korean military aims at fostering the development of soldiers who will defend democracy by introducing the concept of the ‘democratic citizen in uniform’.⁴⁰⁶ To support this effort, the Korea Military Academy (KMA) has provided recommendations for developing three competences amongst young soldiers: reflection, sympathy, and tolerance. Similarly, the US-based Centre for Media Literacy regards the value of media literacy from the perspective of educating democratic citizens: it ‘builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy’.⁴⁰⁷ Our experiences however indicate that disinformation significantly hinders our efforts, contributing to emotional and ideological polarisation as well as social antagonism. Reading of *Much Ado* within the contemporary post-truth climate reveals real-life parallels to Hero’s case – individuals whose reputations are damaged by disinformation.

The most important part of our mission is to develop well-rounded leaders, and understanding of human nature is key. Robert J Vandenberg *et al.* highlight that information management techniques and research on information behaviour fit within our curriculum.⁴⁰⁸ It is however also worth listening to René van Woudenberg’s advice about how deep reading can enhance our ability properly not to be swayed by false information. He claims that we can prevent ‘wishful thinking, cognitive biases, fantasy, and self-deception, as well as extrasensory perception, telepathy, and clairvoyance ... from qualifying as a source of knowledge’.⁴⁰⁹ Unfortunately, due to the displacement of reading experiences by shallow engagement with digital texts, our society is losing its opportunity to nurture the ‘capacity for abstract thought, enabling us to pose and answer difficult questions, empowering our creativity and imagination, and refining our capacity for empathy’.⁴¹⁰ Cadets’ recognition that the ways words are used can affect the way we think is an essential part of my teaching. In addition, I want my cadets to learn that words (or images created by their imagination) can manipulate their gaze to focus on a particular aspect of reality. I argue that the deep reading of literature – despite its iterative process – stimulates our young leaders’ imaginations to play with and grasp the meaning of an ambiguous text, and therefore helps them discern good and bad information. This

is demonstrated by Shakespeare's dramatisation of slander in *Much Ado*, which testifies to the persistence of disinformation conditions across different time periods, and helps us understand current disinformation problems.

ENDNOTES

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Book Review

The Boer Invasion of the Zulu Kingdom 1837–1840

John Laband

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“Heritage”, as Clinton David van der Merwe argues, is a contested concept in South Africa.⁴¹¹ This is illustrated by the existence of two separate commemorative museums in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa: the Blood River Heritage Site (*Bloedrivier Erfenisterrein*) and the Ncome Museum on opposite sides of Blood/Ncome River.⁴¹² These museums represent ‘memory sites’,⁴¹³ as tangible manifestations of the controversial and complex Battle of Blood River (*Impi yase Ncome* in IsiZulu or *Slag van Bloedrivier* in Afrikaans) of 16 December 1838.

The Boer Invasion of the Zulu Kingdom 1837–1840, written by the renowned historian, John Laband, provides an insightful and balanced re-appraisal of the encounter at Blood/Ncome River, between the Voortrekker *kommando* under Chief Kommandant Andries Pretorius and the Zulu impi of King Dingane kaSenzangakhona, the second king of the Zulu nation. On that Sunday (16 December 1838), 464 Boer Kommando fighters (Voortrekkers), with 3 white volunteers from Port Natal, 60 black levies, 130 black wagon drivers, 100 commando auxiliaries (*agterryers*) and 300 other blacks confronted between 10 000 and 15 000 of Dingane’s Zulu impi commanded by Induna Ndlela and Induna Nzolo in a military engagement, which had a lasting effect on South African history.⁴¹⁴ Before the battle, on 9 December 1838, the Voortrekkers (or Trekkers), took an oath (known as the Covenant or the Vow) to God, committing to honour him if he assisted them in defeating the Zulu warriors. The Trekkers emerged victorious, and 16 December was celebrated by the Boers (Afrikaners) as a day of thanksgiving. Subsequently, 16 December was declared a public holiday in 1864 by the Transvaal Republic (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek) to commemorate what they described as ‘God’s grace’ in liberating the Boers from Dingane’s yoke.⁴¹⁵ Another independent Boer republic, the Orange Free State, proclaimed 16 December as Dingaan’s Day in 1894. From 1910, when the Union of South Africa was established, Dingaan’s Day became a national public holiday. To mollify a critical and revolting black population, the ruling National Party later renamed it the Day of the Covenant (1952–1979), and still later, the Day of the Vow (1980–1993). In recent decades, some historians however started to reassess the Battle of Blood/Ncome River, mainly questioning and demystifying the Day of the Covenant, which perpetuated exclusive Afrikaner nationalism and the notion that they were God’s ‘Chosen People’ with the right to dominate South Africa.⁴¹⁶ In the light of that Afrikaner perspective,

celebrating 16 December as the Day of the Covenant was regarded as divisive. In 1995, the new democratic government under Nelson Mandela revised South African national public holidays, and 16 December was renamed “Day of Reconciliation” to promote the post-apartheid nation-building agenda. In 1998, the Ncome Museum was established on one side of Blood/Ncome River, designed to correct the ‘imbalance of heritage discourse’ represented by the *Bloedrivier Erfenisterrein* on the other side, both memorialising the epic encounter on 16 December between the Boers and the AmaZulu.⁴¹⁷

The establishment of South Africa has been a protracted process of struggle for key resources, such as land, economic and political power, and also the ‘right’ to ‘author the past’.⁴¹⁸ In this sense, as Van Schalkwyk and Smith argue, indigenous communities in South Africa were marginalised due to the ideology of separation, and had limited opportunities in the construction of history.⁴¹⁹ The Battle of Blood/Ncome River, with its controversial significance and ‘focus of emotional commemoration’,⁴²⁰ is one such case where perspectives of the AmaZulu often disappeared into insignificance in the historiography. The impact of the migrant land-starved Boers’ encroachment on Zulu territory, the threat they posed, the strategic politico-military calculations, anxieties, and motivations of the AmaZulu hardly feature in the mainstream historical accounts. To correct this imbalance, John Laband wrote *The Boer Invasion of the Zulu Kingdom 1837–1840*, which considers the evidence of the AmaZulu (in the form of recorded testimonies). In his book, Laband engages with the story of the Boers’ intrusion into the Zulu kingdom established by Shaka kaSenzangakhona in the mid-1820s. Laband explores the trials and tribulations of the adversaries, political and economic dimensions of the conflict, the epic encounter at Blood/Ncome River, and its consequences.

The Boer Invasion re-examines the Battle of Blood/Ncome River by putting the AmaZulu at the centre of the story alongside the Trekkers. Laband argues that many historical accounts focused too much on the ‘triumphant Boers’ and failed to appreciate the ‘mainsprings of Zulu policy and action’.⁴²¹ In the first ten chapters of *The Boer Invasion*, Laband insightfully brings into focus various critical and overlapping encounters between the different warring groups to contextualise the conflict. He also deals, inter alia, with the inter-group relations between Europeans and Africans from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, the occupation of the Cape of Good Hope by the Dutch East India Company in 1652, their expansion east and north into the interior of South Africa, the military defeat and dispossession of Khoikhoi, San and AmaXhosa lands, the British conquest of the Cape in 1795 and 1806, and the assertion of English political and cultural supremacy, which led to the migration of the Boers into the interior. Laband then reflects on black communities found in South Africa further east and north of the Cape, notably the AmaXhosa and the AmaZulu, and the period of political turbulence and migration generally known as *Mfecane* (i.e. large-scale political and socio-economic disruption, expansion, consolidation, and forced migrations caused by constant warfare). Laband’s interest in military matters is clearly discernible in the analysis of the founding of the Zulu kingdom by Shaka kaSenzangakhona, the politico-military system, socio-political organisation, weapons, war rituals, intelligence, logistics, strategies, and operational tactics. The emphasis here is on the development of the militaristic nature of the AmaZulu, their military identity, and the inculcation of a warrior ethos as the mainstay of the Zulu state under Shaka. Similarly, Laband writes in detail about the Trekkers, their

background and character, their political system, cultural and religious practices, military system (*kommando*), and their operational tactics. He also explores the English trading settlement at Port Natal (now Durban) and the diplomatic manoeuvres by Henry Francis Fynn (called *Mbuyazi* by the AmaZulu) and Lt Francis George Farewell (called *Febani* by the AmaZulu) to obtain Shaka's permission to occupy the area. Circumstances and conspiracies surrounding the assassination of Shaka and the rise of his brother, Dingane, to ascend the Zulu throne are dealt with remarkably.

The book comprises 29 well-researched and easy-to-read chapters on varying themes. These include the English traders' colonisation of Port Natal, the growth of that settlement and Dingane's tenuous relationship with influential figures, such as Allen Gardener, John Cane, and Alexander Biggar, who distrusted Dingane and depicted him negatively. Laband also explores the search for land by the Boer scouting parties (*Kommissietrek*) and the early migration from the Cape to escape the British rule from 1835, then the mass migration of the Boers from the Cape due to 'cultural marginalisation, lack of land, labour and security' (p. 67), and general discontent about the British rule, leading to what became known as the Great Trek. After crossing the Orange River, the Trekkers, as they became known, led by Andries Hendrik Potgieter who came from the Cradock district in the Eastern Cape, and Sarel Cilliers (or 'Charl Celliers', as Laband has it on p. 102), from Colesburg district in the Northern Cape, Cilliers encountered and defeated a powerful and marauding migrant king of the AmaNdebele, Mzilikazi, at the Battle of Vegkop in October 1836, using a combination of firearms (muskets) and wagon laager tactics. Laband also profiles leaders, such as Gerrit Maritz, Piet Retief, and Piet Uys, in terms of their character, attitude, role, and influence among the Trekkers. Furthermore, he examines the Trekkers' elementary political system and governance, election of self-assured Piet Retief as governor, as well as persistent factionalism and disagreements regarding the purpose and direction of the trek. Eventually, Retief's party held sway, and moved eastwards across the Drakensberg mountain range, into Dingane's domain.

Laband then deals with the nature of the Trekkers' encroachment into the Zulu kingdom. He explains why their arrival posed an existential threat to Dingane, who was still consolidating himself as the rightful monarch and intervener (*uMalamulele*) among the Zulu nation. Laband identifies some key problems that resulted from the presence of the Trekkers in Dingane's domain:

- Trekkers who arrived with horses and firearms presented a new threat to Dingane's rule, while he was contending with the growing military capacity of Port Natal;
- Trekkers settled in Zulu territory without Dingane's permission;
- They commandeered maize and sorghum from Zulu villages in the immediate vicinity; and
- Trekkers increasingly arrived in the Zulu domain and occupied additional land.

Moreover, Retief frequently issued veiled threats in his negotiations for land with Dingane, using the Trekkers' success against the formidable Mzilikazi and the retrieval of cattle from the recalcitrant BaTlokwa chief, Sekonyela, to intimidate the Zulu monarch. The mock firearm displays by Retief's entourage at Dingane's great place, emGungundlovu,

increased Dingane's apprehensions and mistrust. Dingane hence ordered the assassination of Retief and his men, and the subsequent massacre of Trekkers encamped around Blaauwkrans on 16 February 1838, to pre-empt potential retribution. Retief's death triggered vengeance among the Trekkers. In April 1838, Piet Uys and Hendrik Potgieter attempted a revenge attack against the AmaZulu. Their mounted force was surprised at eThaleni Hill and suffered defeat against Dingane's impi. Port Natal settlers also mobilised a 'Grand Army of Natal' (p. 206) under John Cane and Robert Biggar, and attempted raids against AmaZulu. Due to poor coordination, the 'Grand Army of Natal' however suffered heavy losses at the Battle of Thukela/Dlokweni on 17 April 1838.

After initial failed attempts to take the fight to Dingane, the Trekkers needed to reorganise. They invited an irregular frontier fighter, Andries Pretorius from Graaff-Reinet in the Eastern Cape, to lead them against Dingane. The scene was set for the epic encounter between the Trekkers' *kommando* under a resolute Pretorius, and Dingane's impi at Blood/Ncome River on 16 December 1838. Laband reiterates the significance of that encounter, which even prompted the new South African government in 1998 to establish a 6-member committee comprising English, Afrikaner, and Zulu researchers and academics 'to formulate an interpretation that fostered understanding and national reconciliation' (p. 228) (the course of the Battle of Blood/Ncome River is discussed in Chapter 23). Laband examines in detail Pretorius's *kommando*, its mobilisation and force design, command structure and orders of battle, operational design and plans, weapons, intelligence, logistical arrangements and movements towards emGungundlovu to confront Dingane's forces, the *kommando*'s Covenant on 9 December, and the arrival and formation of an ox-wagon laager (defensive circle of wagons) at Blood/Ncome River on 15 December 1838. The analysis then follows a similar pattern regarding the war preparations and plans by Dingane's impi to resist and defend the Zulu kingdom.

The battle commenced on the morning of 16 December, and Laband describes the conduct of operations in great detail. Despite multiple strong assaults by Dingane's impi, the Trekkers effectively repulsed them by employing their concentrated firepower from behind the laager. The Trekkers comprehensively defeated Dingane's impi at Blood/Ncome River. After their victory, Pretorius's *kommando* was called the *Wenkommando* (the Victorious Commando). Laband is credited for illuminating other aspects of the battle, which do not appear in mainstream historiography – the role of blacks within the laager. Close to 600 blacks contributed to the Trekkers' triumph by, for example, assisting them in controlling the oxen and horses to prevent these from causing a stampede, bringing up ammunition, loading firearms, and also fighting alongside the *kommando* (p. 233). Another aspect which Laband brings into the equation is the less known legend of Dingane's spy, Bhongoza kaMefu of the Nongoma. Bhongoza lured the *Wenkommando* into a trap laid by the Zulu impi. The *Wenkommando* were tempted with a promise of finding easy cattle from the defeated, demoralised and disorganised Zulu impi. The over-confident *Wenkommando* was surprised, and suffered a near-disastrous defeat against the Zulu impi during an ambush in thornbush terrain at oPhate around the White Umfolozi River on 27 December 1838. That was the last direct encounter between the Trekkers and the AmaZulu, and the *Wenkommando* withdrew from an abandoned and torched emGungundlovu on 31 December 1838. Dingane was eventually overthrown in 1840, through a dynastic conflict initiated by his brother, Mpande, who defected and formed an alliance with the Trekkers

in exchange for additional land. After Dingane's defeat, Mpande was proclaimed the Zulu king by Pretorius. The Trekkers then annexed more of the Zulu territory, from Thukela in the south to Black Umfolozi in the north, as compensation for assisting Mpande. The original Zulu kingdom created by Shaka was dismembered, and Mpande ruled over a reduced territory.

As indicated, at the beginning of the book, Laband makes a point that his objective is to 'remedy the imbalance' (Preface, p. xiii) in the historical accounts of the Trekker–Zulu conflict, by expanding on the part played by the AmaZulu, almost in the same vein as Kriel's re-assessment of the Boer–Maleboch War of 1894, that is, not merely from the usual narrative of the victorious Boers, but also from 'the other side', that of the vanquished African people.⁴²² I believe Laband has succeeded in doing so by bringing into focus the central role and plight of the AmaZulu in their effort to resist the 'unprovoked invasion of their kingdom' by the land-hungry Boers or migrant farmers who moved from the Cape to escape British rule and decided to establish their own independent republic on Zulu soil.⁴²³ Laband contextualises Dingane as a 'tragic figure' (p. 305) who had to fight by any available means, the unprecedented existential threat – from the revolt within the royal house to battling the intrusion of the 'battle-hardened' Trekkers (p. 305) skilled in firearms and wagon laager tactics. Laband contends that it is even doubtful whether Shaka could have survived such odds. Ultimately, it was the royal clash and civil conflict in the Zulu kingdom which brought down Dingane. The Trekkers exploited the tragic situation to claim the land of the AmaZulu. The Trekkers' land claims however came to nothing, as the British intervened with a threat of force, and annexed the Zulu territory south of the Thukela River as the Colony of Natal in 1843.⁴²⁴

Laband effectively widens the lens of analysis regarding the Trekker–Zulu conflict, its causes, course and consequences, fundamentally explaining why and how it occurred, the contrasting military systems and strategies, motivations and ambitions of the warring parties, and reflects on the reasons for triumph and defeat. The book contains various maps, mostly related to battlefields, and varied images of paintings and drawings in black and white, for illustrative purposes. As a point of criticism, some maps and images are very small, making it difficult to read the original inscriptions. Although the book is written in English, Laband is commended for retaining authenticity throughout the text, keeping the nomenclatures, phrases and concepts in their original IsiZulu, Afrikaans and IsiSwati, ending with a glossary translating and explaining non-English words. Additionally, Laband has consulted an extensive variety of sources, such as archival material, recorded Zulu oral testimonies, a collection of published documents, official reports, letters, diaries, memoirs, and contemporary newspapers as well as a variety of secondary sources to provide an enriched multi-sided account of the conflict. *The Boer Invasion of the Zulu Kingdom 1837–1840* is therefore highly recommended for different types of audiences.

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ENDNOTES

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- ⁴²² Laband, *The Boer Invasion*, x; L Kriel, 'Same War, Different Story: A Century's Writing on the Boer-Hananwa War of 1894', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30, 4 (2004), 790.
- ⁴²³ Laband, *The Boer Invasion*, vii, 305.
- ⁴²⁴ Laband, *The Boer Invasion*, 304–306.

Book Review

Work or Starve: Black Concentration Camps & Forced Labour Camps in South Africa, 1901–1902

Garth Benneyworth

Bloemfontein: War Museum of the Boer Republics
2023, 213 pages
ISBN 978-0-621-51335-6

The individual and collective war experiences of those affected by the Second Anglo-Boer War (also called the South African War) (1899–1902) continue to draw the attention of researchers. As a result, a sizeable amount of literature has been published over the last two decades alone. The most recent addition to this growing pool of knowledge has been the book by Garth Benneyworth, titled *Work or Starve: Black Concentration Camps & Forced Labour Camps in South Africa, 1901–1902*, a work commissioned by the War Museum of the Boer Republics in Bloemfontein. The title further represents the consolidation of most, if not all, of Benneyworth's former research outputs about the topic.

In positioning his work, Benneyworth, following a thorough scanning of the historiographical field, states that the aim of his work is to contribute to capturing the unique internment experiences of black internees (his preferred term), whether refugees, detainees or labourers. This alone makes this book a worthwhile contribution given the relative neglect and under-researched nature of the topic. To achieve his objective, Benneyworth declares upfront that his reading of the evidence suggested that the black internment experience was not only qualitatively but also quantitatively different from that of white internees. For the first group detained in the different camps around Kimberley and parts of the Free State and North West, the choice was simple: collaborate or starve. This stood in contrast to the treatment meted out to those in the white camps. Against this background, Benneyworth rejects any attempt to group the black experience under the umbrella of 'mutual suffering'⁷⁴²⁵ and therefore equal to the suffering of whites, as argued by Kessler.⁴²⁶

The above-mentioned position is a bold and admirable but flawed attempt, given the significant consensus within international literature that prisons and internment camps, at their most basic, are instruments of social suffering. Further, given their connection to involuntary incarceration and the strategic agenda of those in control of these institutions together with the employment of various technologies, as punishment to enforce compliance, internment inflicts indiscriminate and lasting pain – physically and psychologically. It is therefore incumbent upon historians to be cautious in their assessments of suffering and to avoid any suggestion that it may be possible to distinguish

between different degrees of suffering – in this case, encapsulated in the objective formulated as ‘to separate their narrative from that of mutual suffering while disentangling it from a narrative which originated during the apartheid era’.⁴²⁷ Against this background, Benneyworth’s proposition that one should distinguish between ‘sole suffering’⁴²⁸, ‘mutual suffering’⁴²⁹ and separate or independent or ‘standalone’⁴³⁰ suffering when interpreting internment or concentration camp experiences, is therefore a contentious one. Despite its foregrounding of the common utilisation by perpetrators of different sets of punitive technologies for different race groups, from the perspective of this reviewer, *Work or Starve* fits comfortably into the broad paradigm of ‘mutual suffering’. This criticism notwithstanding, the book makes a fundamental contribution to our understanding of the black war experience and should therefore become an integral part of any coursework on the topic. Benneyworth’s combination of methodological tools also sets an important precedent and raises questions about a range of matters for others to follow and investigate.

Thirteen years before the publication of *Work or Starve*, leading historian Fransjoan Pretorius, while lauding the sustained interest and growing number of publications about the South African War, also lamented a creeping methodological laziness on the part of some historians of the war. Key problems identified were, among other things, a lack of rigour and the inability of some historians to interrogate both the available archives and the creators thereof properly. From Pretorius’s perspective, this lack of prudence was at the heart of a crop of historical output that was not only blatantly subjective, but also poor and ‘bad’ in quality.⁴³¹ Whether this assessment had anything to do with Benneyworth’s decision to follow an integrated approach, or his choice to employ a combination of written or documentary archives, evidence from material culture, and oral testimony skilfully to reconstruct the black internment camp experience is not clear. This notwithstanding, Benneyworth produced a ground-breaking narrative, a book that is both rich and multi-layered in its analysis and which provides compelling evidence to back his key arguments. From this perspective, and thanks to the conscious decision to move beyond the written archive and to employ a combination of methodological tools to write a ‘holistic penetrative history’,⁴³² *Work or Starve* substantially enriches South African historiography and sets a new standard for all South African historians. It moreover gives impetus to ongoing efforts to demythologise the history of the concentration or internment camps as advocated by the work of Elizabeth van Heyningen more than two decades ago.⁴³³ *Work or Starve* further supplements studies such as those that have approached the topic in the intervening years and their subsidiary aspects from the vantage point of the war as a humanitarian crisis⁴³⁴ or as genocide.⁴³⁵

Overall, the richly illustrated 12-chapter book is an easy read. Each chapter is dedicated to a central topic and its existing documentary archive, both in South Africa and abroad. Following a proper mining of the available official record, the author employs both oral history and the tools of archaeology to systematically fill the gaps encountered within the paper archive.

The narrative starts with a thorough historiographical overview (Chapter 1) to position the book appropriately and to indicate its contribution to the further expansion of the pool of knowledge about concentration, refugee, and labour camps clearly. With Kimberley De

Beers Consolidated Mines and its close mining compound management system as his point of departure (Chapter 2), the author proceeds to discuss the characteristics of total war and the push and pull factors that effected the rapid redistribution of the black population from their original places of residence in the various Northern Cape and Orange Free State towns and villages (Chapter 3). Thereafter, the key role of the alliance of the colonial authorities and mining capital in fashioning a distinctive, discriminatory and exploitative camp system (Chapters 6–10) receives attention. In order to promote the reader’s proper understanding of the notion of “degrees of suffering”, the author makes a concerted effort to document and contrast both the key differences and the minute details of the different racial camp regimes. Throughout, the agency of black individuals and communities – including their employment of everyday tools of resistance, such as desertion and a continuous search for alternative accommodation and livelihoods – is acknowledged. The only aspect that needs attention is the correction of a typographical error on page 11 (a piece of orphaned text that appears out of place) that needs to be rectified.

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ENDNOTES

- ⁴²⁵ G Benneyworth, *Work or Starve: Black Concentration Camps & Forced Labour Camps in South Africa, 1901–1902* (Bloemfontein: War Museum of the Boer Republics, 2023), 17
- ⁴²⁶ SV Kessler, ‘The Black Concentration Camps of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902: Shifting the Paradigm from Sole Martyrdom to Mutual Suffering’, *Historia*, 44, 1 (1999), 110–147.
- ⁴²⁷ G Benneyworth, *Work or Starve: Black Concentration Camps & Forced Labour Camps in South Africa, 1901–1902* (Bloemfontein: War Museum of the Boer Republics, 2023), 17.
- ⁴²⁸ G Benneyworth, *Work or Starve: Black Concentration Camps & Forced Labour Camps in South Africa, 1901–1902* (Bloemfontein: War Museum of the Boer Republics, 2023), 17
- ⁴²⁹ Benneyworth, *Work or Starve*, 17
- ⁴³⁰ Benneyworth, *Work or Starve*, 24
- ⁴³¹ F Pretorius, ‘The White Concentration Camps of the Anglo-Boer War: A Debate without End’, *Historia*, 55, 2 (2010), 34–49.
- ⁴³² Benneyworth, *Work or Starve*, 15.
- ⁴³³ E van Heyningen, ‘The Concentration Camps of the South African (Anglo-Boer) War, 1900–1902’, *History Compass*, 7, 1 (2009), 22–43.
- ⁴³⁴ See for example E van Heyningen, ‘The South African War as Humanitarian Crisis’, *International Review of the Red Cross*, 97, 900 (2015), 999–1028.
- ⁴³⁵ H Ribeiro, ‘Did the Confinement of Boer Civilians in Concentration Camps by the British Army during the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) Constitute an Act of Genocide?’, *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, 52 (2020), 1–12.

Book Review

20 Battles: Searching for a South African Way of War, 1913–2013

Evert Kleynhans & David Brock Katz

Jeppestown: Delta Books
2023, 320 pages
ISBN 9978-1-92824-822-4

This is a timely and important volume in the growing literature on modern warfare. While the book focuses on military developments and campaigns relating to South African forces, there is material in this volume that is relevant to all modern armies. The authors have taken a series of key actions, all involving South African forces, over the course of a period spanning 1913 to 2023. In the development of this book, we see the evolution of military forces within South Africa and the gradual move from a contingent that was largely composed of the volunteer forces of a dominion within the wider British Empire, to the development of a modern, national standing army.

The 20 battles that have been chosen for this volume are reflective of the wide range of South African military experience. Chapters on the industrial unrest of 1913–1914 and the Rand Revolt of 1922 demonstrate that, from an early phase, the focus of military service in the South African context could be internal and directed to “aiding the civil powers”-type duties. The outbreak of the First World War (WW1) (1914–1918), forced a major rethink in terms of the expansion of South African forces and their training, equipping, and deployment. While there would be phases in which the force was reduced after 1918, it could be argued that many central principles were laid down. During the WW1, South African forces were initially based on volunteer units, which grew in professionalism as the war progressed.

Chapters 2 to 4 of *20 Battles* focus on deployments against German forces in Africa, while Chapter 5 discusses the deployment of the South African Brigade on the Western Front, particularly at Delville Wood in 1916. It is safe to say that, during the course of that war, South African forces established an enviable reputation as a formidable fighting force.

This was a reputation that was carried forward into the Second World War (WW2) (1939–1945), and Chapters 8 to 13 reflect the considerable service South Africa rendered in the war, which was concentrated initially in Ethiopia and North Africa, before moving to Italy to take part in that difficult campaign. Chapter 10 focuses on the action at Sidi Rezegh in 1941, which in many ways established the reputation of South African troops in WW2. The chapter on Tobruk (1942) is particularly revealing, as this is an action that

we usually associate with ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) forces. The reader is offered an impression of South African soldiers as adaptable and resilient fighters. In the chapters on both world wars, there is some discussion of the domestic debate in South Africa at the time, and its growing importance in the Empire. There are some significant figures within this wider discussion. Obviously, Field-Marshal Jan Smuts is a prominent figure, particularly in the context of WW2.

For the final chapters of this book, the focus is once again on Africa. At the time of the Cold War, the African continent became an increasingly volatile place, and there are detailed discussions of actions in Angola, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and the Border War (1966–1989), among others. We are presented an army faced with challenging decisions as it tries to maintain effectiveness as a modern, mechanised army while also developing competencies in counter-insurgency warfare and, more recently, peacekeeping operations. These processes also affected procurement processes in the 1970s and 80s. Taking the long view of South African military service, across various regimes between 1913 and 2013, we can see an army that gained experience of conventional land warfare within the Western paradigm, but also an army that developed counter-terrorist and counter-insurgency skills. Using South Africa as a case study, we can follow the development of modern warfare, and the military reaction to significant developments in terms of tactics, equipment, and the wider operating environment. Throughout the period 1913–2013, South African forces showed a remarkable ability to adapt to new operational scenarios. They displayed a high level of effectiveness in dealing with a range of opposition forces, which included the German army in both world wars, the Italian army in WW2, but also less conventional forces in more recent campaigns, such as SWAPO (South West Africa People’s Organisation). Overall, it can be argued that, within the lessons learned by the South African military, there are lessons for modern armies across the globe.

The volume under review includes some fascinating photographs and a series of very clear battle maps. For those with personal or family connections to the South African forces during the period covered by the book, this is surely a “must-have” volume. There is also much in this volume that would be useful to a wider readership.

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Book Review

The Raw War: 123 Battles of the Boer War (1899–1902)

Guy Keeling

Pinetown: 30 Degrees South Publishers
2023, 591 pages
ISBN 978-1-928359-87-6

At first glance, the book has an enticing title and, given that it covers 123 battles from the South African War (1899–1902), it offers much promise to parties interested in this conflict specifically, and military history more broadly. The author situates the 123 battles against what the book describes as the ‘six phases of the war’, namely the first Boer and first British offensives; the second British offensive; the Boers losing the conventional war; the Boers then initiating a guerrilla war; and the British developing a counterstrategy to the guerrilla war. Each battle starts with a situational analysis, followed by an outline of the battle itself, and concluding with an analysis and lessons learned and not learned.

From its outset, however, spelling mistakes regarding the names of key persons and places abound, and soon it becomes apparent that the book cannot pass muster as an academic work of military history. The narrative also contains many errors of terminology, which proofreading, or even peer review, would have identified. Without dissecting each of the 123 battles in detail to make this point, some examples follow.

The surname of the commander of the Kimberley garrisons is spelt “Kekerwhich” but should be spelt “Kekewich” (page 39). The same is true about the British commanding general at the Battle of Talana Hill (24 October 1899) being indicated as “Penn Symonds”, when in fact he was “Penn Symons”.

Many basic historical errors are also found, for example on pages 101–102, the Battle of Graspan (25 November 1899) is spelt “Grasspan”.

On page 22, President Brand is mentioned, while it was in fact President Steyn of the Orange Free State Republic (OFS). Page 25 has it that the ‘OFS had signed a treaty with the RSA to guarantee each other’s independence’. This presumably refers to the mutual defence pact between the Orange Free State Republic and the South African Republic (ZAR) and not the RSA – an abbreviation, which presumably refers to the Republic of South Africa, which only came into existence in 1961. Page 252 shows a photograph of British graves captioned as those of soldiers killed at the Battle of Driefontein (10 March 1900); yet, nowhere on the remote Driefontein battlefield were any of the British soldiers buried in a walled cemetery, which in this case appears to be the Boshof town cemetery.

On page 24, Keeling portrays the British army as having ‘made little progress since Napoleon’s defeat in 1815 at Waterloo’s battle in Holland’. This statement negates the expansion of the British Empire, much of it built on military conquest, and which included the Crimean War (1853–1856). One must only look at the creation of the Indian Empire and the acquisition of territory during the scramble for Africa, after the Napoleonic Wars. On page 32, it said that General Cronje was going to assist in the Orange Free State, when in fact he went to the Kimberley sector, and commanded the Boer forces at the Battle of Modder River and then at the Battle of Magersfontein (10–12 December 1899), both places being in the Cape Colony.

Confusion also prevails about the Siege of Kimberley (11 October 1899–15 February 1900), as on page 41, the narrative has it that Baden-Powell assembled more defences’, and again on page 45, that Baden-Powell was active in Kimberley. However, Baden-Powell was never the commander of the Kimberley garrison, as he commanded Mafeking, some 420 km north of Kimberley.

Regarding both the Mafeking and Kimberley sieges, the civilian losses and deprivations refer only to white civilians.¹ Nothing is said about the black civilians who, having fled the Rand Mines, found themselves locked up in Mafeking. Once they had completed the construction of siege defences, their food was stopped, and they were forced to walk through the Boer lines to Kanye in Bechuanaland. Many hundreds perished from starvation.

Regarding civilian casualties during the Siege of Kimberley, on page 45 it is said, ‘the children suffered the most; without milk, many died during the siege’. This is, however, a very narrow view of the siege and its effect on civilians. Current research has white civilian casualties being approximately 51 killed and 107 wounded. The Kimberley municipality recorded total deaths as 1 679 of whom 1 648 were classified as natives at the time. If one can attach a hierarchy to suffering, then it was the mineworkers trapped in the compounds who bore the brunt of starvation, with 1 600 fatalities, apart from those recorded by the municipality. These civilian experiences escape the analysis of these two sieges.

Other points making no sense are found, for example, on page 49 where the author describes the British infantry attack during the Battle of Talana Hill (24 October 1899), ‘The 60th Rifles destroyed Majuba, and when Colonel Bobby Gunning called the NCOs together, he implored them to “remember Majuba, God and our country”.’ The name “Majuba” refers to an action on 27 February 1881 during the Transvaal War of Independence (or the First Boer War), in which the 60th Rifles participated; however, the regiment did no such thing as destroying Majuba. That action saw the entire British force routed from the summit of Majuba and defeated, resulting in an armistice and peace negotiations.

1 Siege of Mafeking (13 October 1899–17 May 1900), and Siege of Kimberley (11 October 1899–15 February 1900).

Another example is the use of the term “cannons”, which in fact refers to ship artillery and should be described as “guns” or “field guns”. On page 55, at the Battle of Elandsplaagte (21 October 1899), the Boers retaliated with their ‘giant guns’. In all the literature on the South African War, no term such as “giant guns” is found, leaving a question regarding what type of artillery this was.

On page 97, where the Battle of Belmont (23 November 1899) is mentioned, it is said that the British did not feed their troops before the battle, ‘as hunger would raise their fighting spirits’. It would be useful to know the source of this statement, as the British forces were fed when they arrived at Belmont Farm late in the afternoon of 22 November 1899. Nowhere in any of the literature of the war is there any indication of a formal British army policy of using hunger to induce combat aggression. The facts were that, before going into action at Belmont, the troops were issued a rum ration, had their water bottles filled with tea, and received tinned rations.

At Belmont, the British infantry attack is erroneously described as that the first Boer volley is said to have flown ‘harmlessly over their heads’ (page 97). The reality was that the attacking infantry, particularly the Grenadier Guards, suffered many casualties when crossing the open veld towards the hills. On page 98, another error has it that it was not possible to bring the naval guns into action, as ‘the horses of the 18th Battery had no water since the start of the day’. While the condition of the horses is correct, the 18th Battery was a separate artillery battery from the naval guns, and the two operated some distance from each other, with the naval guns having their own animal transport. General Featherstonhaugh is described as ‘leading the guards’ and, while the narrative is not clear, the implication is that he was ‘shot and killed without hesitation’ (page 99). However, Major General Featherstonhaugh commanded the 9th Brigade during the action, and was severely wounded.

The Battle of Modder River (28 November 1899) had the British artillery shelling the north side of the river before the infantry attack was launched. The author has ‘Pole-Careur’s’ men later breaking through by crossing the river and, on page 107, it is said that the day ended as ‘Christiaan de Wet moved up and down the trenches with his sjambok to enforce his discipline.’ The historical reality was somewhat different. There was no preparatory bombardment against the north side of the river or against any of the Boer positions prior to the infantry attack. It was Major General Pole-Carew’s troops that broke through and crossed the Riet River into the village of Rosmead. Christiaan de Wet was nowhere near the action, as he only arrived at Magersfontein after the battle was concluded on 12 December 1899.

The Magersfontein action receives a similar narrative. On page 143, it is stated, ‘Most of the Boer trenches at Magersfontein were used in WW1’, which makes no sense at all. Moreover, it is said that the action was ‘concluded and lost in the first ten minutes’ when in fact it was not (page 144). Unfortunately, an enduring myth is perpetuated on page 145 where it is said that the Boer forces ‘included a barbed wire fence’ in their defence works, which they did not. There were farm fences on the terrain at the time; yet, these impeded neither the frontal attacks nor the attempted enveloping attack behind the hill, none of which is mentioned.

One final point on historical errors is that of the concentration camps. The author correctly identifies that the camps were part of the British counterstrategy to guerrilla war (page 389); however, in Chapter 68, he states that the motive behind the camps was ‘utterly humane’ (page 389). In all the literature of the war and of the camps, it is widely accepted that there was nothing humane behind the motive to establishing the camps. As for the camps discussed, the book refers only to camps interning Boer civilians.

No mention is made of the concentration camps that interned more than 120 000 black civilians from late 1900 until the middle of 1901, when the Native Refugee Department was formed. This military department then created and managed forced labour camps along a work or starve policy where black civilians were induced as forced labourers into wartime and agricultural service to the British army. Many thousands, perhaps 30 000 or even more, perished under the most inhumane conditions.

In conclusion, *The Raw War: 123 Battles of the Boer War (1899–1902)* did not set out to be an academic work of history and is recognised as such. It is also not an analysis of the South African War, and the book contains many errors, which could have been avoided through a peer-review process at the time of writing. Nevertheless, it provides an overview of 123 battles and can be used as a quick go-to reference guide about these battles. Alternatively, it might provide a ready introduction for those seeking to align the chronology of the war with 123 of its battles. Perhaps a second edition, edited and reviewed, might do the book justice.

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Book Review

The MiG Diaries: Fighter Pilot Memoirs & Accounts of Cuban, SAAF and Angolan Air Combat in Southern African Skies

Eduardo González Sarría and Lionel Reid

Mercury, Cape Town
2023, 415 pages
ISBN 978-1-9909-5654-6

The age-old adage – a story always has three sides: yours, mine, and the truth – also applies here. Apt words to describe a truly remarkable book. For 40 years, readers of authoritative South African (SA) literature covering the aerial war over Angola (1976–1988) and the South African Air Force (SAAF) history, have believed that Johan Rankin (3 Squadron, SAAF) shot down two Cuban MiG-21s over southern Angola, when in fact one of the MiGs made it home, albeit on a wing and a prayer. For 40 years, an SAAF C-130 crew believed they were targeted by an SA-2 surface-to-air missile (SAM) system, when in fact they were nearly shot down by a Cuban MiG-23 flown by Eduardo González Sarría himself. Only when two sides of the same story were analysed and timelines were compared, did the stories become one: the truth.

The MiG Diaries is a true and brilliant account of some of the aerial warfare encounters of the Angolan conflict during the 1970s and 1980s. In an SA context, most of these accounts are well known, and have been discussed and written about for many years. These accounts however have all been marred by one big limitation: the stories were told based on reports of SAAF aircrew alone. Moreover, no matter how accurate and authentic these accounts are, no story can ever really be declared truthful if not validated by the other side. And this is exactly where Lionel Reid, a former SAAF pilot involved in the Bush War (1966–1989) and Lt Col. Eduardo González Sarría, a Cuban pilot who flew MiG-21s and MiG-23s in Angola, have managed to fill a 40-year-old void. They have succeeded in addressing uncertainties that have been lingering for a very long time in the minds of those involved on both the SAAF and the Cuban and Angolan sides, providing a fresh and more inclusive view of the aerial war in Angola.

The MiG Diaries is in essence an account of the aerial war in Angola between 1976 and 1988, primarily from the viewpoint of the Cuban aircrew involved. Throughout the book, it is evident that the authors prioritised the factual correctness of all mentioned encounters. To this end, the authors made an effort to track down and interview numerous personnel involved, not just from the SA and Cuban sides, but also from the Angolan and even Soviet sides. No effort was spared to achieve a nuanced and detailed view of all the encounters.

Being the author of two previous books (in Spanish) on the subject, Eduardo González Sarría was already in possession of various recorded encounters and photographs from former colleagues. These, in conjunction with similar books by SA writers, provided the perfect foundation for *The MiG Diaries*. In the book, particular emphasis is placed on the experiences and contributions of Lt Col. Eduardo González Sarría, who completed three separate operational tours in Angola between 1976 and 1988. His first deployment in 1976 was as a 26-year-old, rookie MiG-21 pilot. He returned as a MiG-23 squadron commander in 1985 for his second tour, during which he played a pivotal role in all MiG-23 operations. His final tour saw him being part of a safety board delegation in 1988.

As a former SAAF pilot involved in the war, full-time airline pilot, and avid military aviation enthusiast, Lionel Reid has always had a fascination with the details of the Angolan conflict. After reading one of Sarría's books, Reid identified an opportunity to piece together a book project aimed at eradicating decades of one-sided narratives. A few emails between two old foes soon blossomed into a lasting friendship between Reid and Sarría, and the birth of *The MiG Diaries*.

The MiG Diaries aims to eradicate misconceptions and uncertainties related to the aerial war component of the Angolan conflict, and deliberately circumvents controversial politics. The events covered in the book are well known and have been covered in many books in the past, from an SA as well as a Cuban and Angolan viewpoint. For the first time, however, these well-known stories are synchronised, presenting a complete picture of numerous air encounters in detail. The book manages to effect an amazed “wow!-is-that-what-happened” response from the reader, especially among those who have been confronted with one-sided narratives for many years. The prime example here is the subject of the air-to-air MiG-21 losses in November 1981 and October 1982. In both these cases, Maj. Johann Rankin (3 Squadron, SAAF) managed to engage a Cuban MiG-21 with the 30 mm cannon of his Mirage F1CZ. The first MiG-21 shootdown on 6 November 1981 was clear, and no doubt ever existed in the minds of either side about the outcome of that engagement. The second MiG-21 “shootdown” on 5 October 1982 could however never be confirmed by the SAAF. A large explosion noted on the gun camera footage led to the belief that the MiG-21 could not have survived the engagement. For many years, the SA narrative was that Johann Rankin downed two MiG-21s. In fact, Raciél Marrero Rodríguez, the pilot of the stricken Cuban MiG-21, achieved a marvellous feat that day, and managed to land a very badly damaged aircraft at Lubango. For an avid reader of SAAF history, this revelation undoubtedly affected a very surprised response from the reviewer. Many more such examples are discussed in detail in *The MiG Diaries*. Another big revelation for the reviewer was to realise that most Angolan and Cuban aircraft shootdowns scored by a South African during the Angolan war was not by a pilot, but by an electronic warfare turned air-defence operator by the name of Flight Sergeant Johan Strydom. And the bigger “wow!” affected here was to realise that he shot these aircraft down with a Soviet-made SA-9 (self-propelled anti-aircraft missile system), captured from the Angolans. The mystery surrounding these encounters and many more have finally been debunked.

The aerial war turned well in favour of the Cubans during the mid-1980s. The access to MiG-23s equipped with all-aspect missiles stacked the odds squarely in their favour. This was highlighted in September 1987, when Arthur Piercy's Mirage F1CZ was badly damaged by an AA-8 air-to-air missile fired from a MiG-23. The aerial war was primarily conducted over Angolan territory, which inherently meant that SAAF aircraft often had to operate well outside friendly radar coverage, and well inside dense enemy radar coverage. This forced the SAAF to concentrate on low-level operations in an attempt to remain below enemy radar coverage for as long as possible. The ground attack tactics and doctrine developed by the SAAF during the Angolan conflict were extremely effective, and the SAAF carried out many successful strikes deep in Angolan territory. As many similar books before, *The MiG Diaries* highlights the inability of the SAAF air combat component to attain and maintain air superiority over southern Angola during the mid- to late 1980s. This was primarily due to a lack of proper over-the-horizon friendly radar coverage (i.e. airborne early warning and control system or AWACS), the lack of proper all-aspect short-range missile systems, and the lack of proper beyond-visual-range missiles.

The MiG Diaries tells the story of the Cuban, Angolan, and SA pilots who fought during the Angolan conflict. The book was written by two pilots who were intimately involved in the conflict, and experiences are brought to life by a magnificent selection of pencil sketches by Sean Thackwray, a former SAAF fighter pilot himself. The book allows the reader to become part of the war, sitting in the cockpit, feeling the kick of the afterburner, and smelling the cordite from a fired cannon. It is a must-read for all military aviation enthusiasts and aerial warfare historians.

General Carlo Gagiano (former Chief of the SAAF) aptly noted to Lionel Reid that this was probably the last chance to tell the story of the aerial war over Angola correctly. With memories fading and war heroes passing on, the authors should be commended for achieving this objective. Although ideologies might differ, one certainty remains, pilots will be pilots. The camaraderie, crew room banter, passion for flying, and love for our machines cut across all differences.

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SCIENTIA MILITARIA

South African Journal of Military Studies



Book Review

Honoris Crux: The Evolution of South Africa's Cross of Honour

Paul F Roos with JH Fouché

Cape Town: New Voices Publishing Services
2023, 563 pages
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There is currently an abundance of literature regarding the South African Defence Force (SADF). This literature includes a wide range of semi-official histories; autobiographies, biographies, and personal memoirs; thematic works; as well as academic publications. One aspect of the SADF not previously covered extensively is the medals and decorations that were awarded from 1957 to 1994. Military medals – whether they are awarded for campaign duty, for meritorious service, or for gallantry – are key to understanding and exploring the military history of a country, as well as to uncover the careers and exploits of individual recipients. Books on military medals can serve as a guide not only for collectors, but also for family members who want to find out how to use medals to learn about the history of military units and the experiences of the individuals who served in them. As is the global military custom, the SADF also bestowed medals on its members – regardless of race or colour – in recognition of specific acts of service, or for bravery and valour. It was especially medals awarded during the so-called “Border War” (1966–1989) that represented the sacrifice and heroism of each recipient.

At van Wyk’s *Honoris Crux: Ons Dapperes/Our Brave* appeared in 1982,⁴³⁶ followed by a second volume in 1985.⁴³⁷ In both volumes, Van Wyk relayed the accounts of the men who were awarded the Honoris Crux (HC) decoration, which was the highest SADF award for bravery at the time. In 1992, Ian Uys published a similar but updated book on the HC titled *Cross of Honour*.⁴³⁸ Van Wyk’s revised editions of his earlier books appeared in 2008. In these, he shared information that was regarded as too sensitive for publication in South Africa during the 1980s.⁴³⁹ Other publications on the subject of medals and decorations include *A Guide to South African Orders, Decorations and Medals and their Ribbons 1896–1985*⁴⁴⁰ by John Fforde and Stanley Monick, as well as *South African Orders, Decorations and Medals* by McGill Alexander, Gary Barron, and Anthony Bateman.⁴⁴¹ These latter publications were both launched in 1986. *A Guide to South African Military Awards*⁴⁴² by Paul Matthysen was published in 2009, and may be regarded as the most complete and detailed publication on South African military awards from the inception of the country as the Union of South Africa to the present-day democratic republic.

Honoris Crux: The Evolution of South Africa's Cross of Honour by Paul Roos appeared in 2023, and covers the period from 1973 (when the first HC of the 1952 series was awarded) to 2004 (when the last HC was awarded). Reference is also made of the new bravery awards of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), i.e. the Nkwe or Leopard series for bravery. Prior to *Honoris Crux*, Roos also published *Pro Patria Medal: Types, Variants, Ribbon Accoutrements and Selected Recipients of Interest*⁴⁴³ in 2021. This medal was part of the 1975 series and was awarded as a military campaign medal from 1974 until 1989. It was subsequently replaced, first by the General Service Medal as campaign medal, and then discontinued in 2003, to be replaced by the Tshumelo Ikatelaho medal for internal and external military service.

Honoris Crux is a book that will appeal to all serious medal collectors as well as military enthusiasts. The purpose of the book is not so much to highlight the deeds of heroism, which resulted in the award of the HC, but rather to fill the void in the reference material pertaining to the evolution of this decoration. The significance of the book lies in the extremely thorough archival research that was done in terms of all aspects of this decoration, as well as numerous interviews with recipients. Every detail of this specific decoration is discussed at length. The HC can be considered the South African equivalent of the British Victoria Cross, or the United States Congressional Medal of Honour. The 1975 series of the HC, which replaced the 1952 series, was graded into four classes: the HC Diamond (never awarded), the HC Gold (awarded six times), the HC Silver (awarded 28 times), and the standard HC (awarded 199 times).

Honoris Crux contains numerous colour as well as black and white photographs, which highlight the different variants of each class of the HC. Many tables are also found to indicate all the recipients. In some instances, short summaries are given of the citations for awards, indicating where, when, and for which actions an HC was awarded. A good balance is maintained throughout by the way the history and evolution of the award and the supporting photographs – many of which are published here for the first time – are presented. Roos narrates the history of the HC decoration from a third-person's perspective, however, lapses now and then into the first person. A number of technical errors occur throughout the book with regard to the naming of units and political parties. There is also repetition of some of the literature and photographs; however, this does not diminish the good work that has been done in terms of research.

Although the book is not arranged in clear chapters, it can be roughly divided into eleven parts. The first part introduces the reader to the HC decoration, and describes the origins of the medal, which date back to 1894, when the president of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR), Paul Kruger, proposed the establishment of a system of honours for the Boer Republic.⁴⁴⁴ This is followed by the history of the institution of the 1952 series HC, of which only five were awarded between 1973 and 1974 in the SADF. The next four parts cover the different classes of the newly instituted 1975 series HC that replaced the 1952 series HC, and describe in detail the award criteria, technical details of the award, as well as selected recipients of the award. Of interest is the section dealing with the variants in certificates and the boxes or packets within which the HC was issued. There is also a photographic library of all the confirmed numbered HCs, as well as a

section on inconsistencies and anomalies in terms of the award. Three recipients were decorated twice with the HC, and seven recipients have been decorated with the HC and similar military awards for bravery. Being the recipient of a multiple bravery award is an outstanding achievement; hence, parts eight and nine list these recipients and the actions that resulted in them being decorated so. In part ten, the largest single action for which the HC was conferred, is described.⁴⁴⁵

The last part of the book provides interesting facts about the award, such as which units had received the most HCs, who received the wrong class of the HC, and that all the HCs awarded to members of the South African Navy were for deeds of heroism in non-combat roles. It also highlights the institution in 1987 of the Service Cross series⁴⁴⁶ and how the HC and the Service Cross series were discontinued by the SANDF in 2003 and replaced with the Nkwe or Leopard series for bravery. Photographs are favoured over the written word in all parts of the book, and this is where the strength of the book lies. *Honoris Crux* is not a book for reading in the traditional sense of the word, but rather for studying the vast number of photographs. Roos argues that the history of this prestigious decoration serves as an example of how symbols, such as medals and decorations, reflect the changing political and military circumstances of a country. This is clearly highlighted in the South African military history also, as described by Roos in the book.

Honoris Crux is an important contribution to the historiography of South African military medals and decorations, particularly the Honoris Crux, to which the book owes its name. The book further emphasises that bravery does not know colour, race, or politics, and that it is important that those who have been awarded the highest military award for valour, especially those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, should be remembered and their deeds celebrated, regardless of the political period in which the award was bestowed. One can only hope that Roos will see his way open to publish a similar book on the Service Cross and Leopard series in the future.

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ENDNOTES

- ⁴³⁶ A van Wyk, *Honoris Crux: Ons Dapperes/Our Brave* (Cape Town: Saayman & Weber, 1982).
- ⁴³⁷ A van Wyk, *Honoris Crux: Ons Dapperes II* (Cape Town: Saayman & Weber, 1985).
- ⁴³⁸ I Uys, *Cross of Honour* (Germiston: Uys Publishers, 1992).
- ⁴³⁹ A van Wyk, *Die Roem en die Rou: Stories agter Honoris Crux* (Pretoria: Litera, 2008).
- ⁴⁴⁰ JPI Fforde & S Monick, *A Guide to South African Orders, Decorations and Medals and their Ribbons 1896–1985* (Johannesburg: The South African National Museum of Military History, 1986).
- ⁴⁴¹ EGM Alexander, GKB Barron & AJ Bateman, *South African Orders, Decorations and Medals* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1986).
- ⁴⁴² P Matthysen, *A Guide to South African Military Awards* (Johannesburg: Marc Norman, 2009).
- ⁴⁴³ PF Roos, *Pro Patria Medal: Types, Variants, Ribbon Accoutrements and Selected Recipients of Interest* (Cape Town: New Voices Publication Services, 2023).
- ⁴⁴⁴ Although Kruger attempted to introduce a series of state orders intended for citizens of the ZAR and foreign dignitaries who had performed distinguished service for and on behalf of the Republic (these orders would have been known either as the Order of Merit of the South African Republic, or the Order of the Golden Eagle), his proposal was rejected by the Volksraad; this, despite the fact that the design was already in an advanced stage. The design of the 1952 and 1975 series HC was, however, inspired by the 1894 design.
- ⁴⁴⁵ This was Operation Coolidge, a Special Forces operation in Angola by 4 Reconnaissance Regiment in 1987, where 12 attack divers attempted to destroy the bridge over the Cuito River.
- ⁴⁴⁶ The Army Cross, Air Force Cross, Navy Cross and Medical Service Cross series was instituted in 1987. Any non-combat deeds of heroism were to be recognised by the award of this new Service Cross.

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NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

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