

# WAR IN ANGOLA

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THE NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTING EVENTS, INFORMATION AND FACTS RELATING TO THE CONFLICT IN ANGOLA AND SOUTH-WEST AFRICA (NAMIBIA) FROM 1975 TO 1989

## Historical Background: A new regime in Angola

The third part of the series of articles on **"THE POWER STRUGGLE IN ANGOLA"**

In Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau, the Portuguese insurrection got another inflection. Here the construction of five centuries visibly collapsed. Here everything was much more final. Here, the essential human elements, from suffering to joy, achieved possibly more festive forms than in Portugal.

The coup of 25 April 1974 surprised Angola. Apparently the bulk of the population had not foreseen this at all. They were badly informed about the events in Portugal. That was because there was a ban on all reports which could harm the Caetano regime. Even Spínola's book



*The abundant wildlife of the Operational Area and south-east Angola: Here an elephant approaches...*

was not distributed in Angola at this stage. In it they finally had to read, to their astonishment, that the war could not be won. This all while, in their own opinion, the war in Angola was practically over in favour of Portugal.

Some felt dejected. Others received the report of the coup

with jubilation, a waving of flags, slogans and calls of "Viva Spínola! Viva Livre!" and "Viva Portugal!".

Within days after the coup, the governor-general and the chief of the army were replaced respectively with Governor-General Carneiro and Gen. Pinheiro. Further, a sort of military body, a type of Junta, was appointed to ensure that the decisions of the MFA was implemented. Political prisoners were released and returned to Angola. Not much changed in Angola in the first few weeks, though. The war in the east and north of the country continued. The military situation at that stage was still considered to be

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Featured Gallery:



Mi-24 HIND attack helicopter of the Angolan Air Force (FAPA)



Soviet-supplied SA-2 anti-aircraft missiles deployed in Angola



Angolan BMP-1s moving through an open chana somewhere in Angola

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### Next Week's Features

- The Historical Background series of articles on the POWER STRUGGLE IN ANGOLA continues: "Decolonisation"
- The hard-hitting R1 rifle
- "The revolution of 1961, Part 1" Looking at Portugal's desperate efforts to keep Angola
- Operation Moduler: the battles continue with the First Clashes against 47 Brigade, Part 2

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## Historical Background: A new regime in Angola (continued)



Angolan FAPLA officers relaxing somewhere in the bush of south-east Angola...

### Link to this story:

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favouring Portugal.

The Military Junta initially strived for a "political solution" in the spirit of Spínola's book. For that purpose a referendum of all acknowledged parties were envisioned for each area, but with a general cease-fire as prerequisite.

The Angola liberation movements rejected the proposal for a referendum straight away. The

most vocal of them all was probably Dr. Agostinho Neto: "This war will continue until our right to independence is recognised first". At another occasion he said: "We reject a referendum organised by the Portuguese and carried out in Angola by the administration, the army and the police". (**"Africa Contemporary Record"**, 1974-75, p.B528, Quotes from the two newspapers "**Le Mond**" and "**El Moudjahid**".)

Some members of the Military Junta in Portugal adhered to the ideas of Spínola. Others took the viewpoint that the coup was executed to stop the colonial wars and not to extend them. Gradually the last viewpoint got the upper hand.

## From the Diary of Lieutenant Colonel Igor Anatolevich Zhdarkin

"We received news of the wounding of Soviet advisors of the 21st brigade and then about the death of the interpreter, Oleg Snitko. "

### October 14, 1987

Today, at 07:30 AM, we finally reached the Command Post of the 21st brigade and Operational Group. We met here advisors and specialists of the 47th brigade and of the "Osa-AK" anti aircraft missile system (nine people in all). So many «horrors» they recounted to us.

Much hope had been placed, during the offensive action, on the 2nd Tactical Group (Force) to which the 47th air-assault brigade belonged. The 47th brigade was reinforced with a tank battalion, artillery and with the "Osa-AK" anti aircraft missile system. The Group's mission was to secure the right flank of the general offensive. It was commanded by Major Tobish, Chief of Staff of the 6th Military District.

But the Group was not up to task. According to what was said, the commanding officers drank too much during the op-

eration. The offensive was conducted sluggishly, without enthusiasm, although there was practically no serious resistance in its path.

In the end, to be sure, "there appeared to be a so-called clap of thunder in a clear sky". The offensive of other brigades was conducted more or less successfully, and UNITA suffered defeat after defeat. It appeared as if victory was already close.

But, as it usually had happened many times before, the South Africans, seeing this process, did not permit UNITA to be completely destroyed. Skillfully exploiting the mistakes and miscalculations of FAPLA, they openly penetrated the territory of the People's Republic of Angola. Now they publicly declared that the South African army was in Angola with the aim of preventing the complete destruction of UNITA.

This was the beginning

of the operation's downfall, the beginning of a tragedy.

First of all, we received news of the wounding of Soviet advisors of the 21st brigade and then about the death of the interpreter, Oleg Snitko. Afterwards, when we encountered our comrades from the 47th brigade, we heard from them details about their brigade's route.

The brigade suffered three attacks from the South African regular forces. The flight which began after the second attack, turned into panic with the launching of the third.

There were many reasons for this: the running out of ammunition, as well as the cowardliness of the officers, the absence of precise instruc-

(Continued on page 5)

**ERRATA:** In Volume 1, Issue 1, the photo in the position below showed a truck-mounted SA-3, not a SA-2 as described—thanks to Johan Smit for pointing it out.



Soviet Advisor with his Cuban counterparty and FAPLA officers



## Featured Equipment: The Dragunov SVD Sniper Rifle

The Dragunov is a semi-automatic gas-operated rifle with a short-stroke gas-piston system, developed in the Soviet Union. It bears a resemblance to the AK series of weapons, such as the large dust cover, iron sights and lever safety selector, but these similarities are primarily cosmetic in nature. It has been re-engineered to meet the demands of the sniping role. The barrel breech is locked through a rotating bolt (left rotation) and uses three locking lugs to engage corresponding locking recesses in the barrel exten-

sion. The rifle has a manual, two-position gas regulator. The rifle features mechanically adjustable backup iron sights with a sliding tangent rear sight (the sight can be adjusted to a maximum range of 1,200 m). The iron sights can be used with or without the standard issue optical sight in place. This is possible because the scope mount does not block the area between the front and rear sights. The combination of special ammunition, the very long barrel and telescopic sight results in a very capable sniper weapon which is both

precise and rugged. It has served well in various theatres since its introduction in 1963.

The tactical use of Dragunov is by armed marksmen from just behind the first line targeting high value targets of opportunity and providing special long-distance disrupting and suppressive fire on the battlefield.

*For more detailed information on the Dragunov, see Wikipedia:*  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragunov\\_sniper\\_rifle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragunov_sniper_rifle)



Could that be a Dragunov on the back of the Fapla soldier in the middle? Note the long barrel and thumbhole stock of the weapon.

### Specifications

Country of Origin:	USSR/Russia
Caliber:	Russian 7.62x54mm Rimmed
Length:	122.5 cm (48.2 in)
Weight:	4.31kg (9.5lb) empty with telescope
Barrel:	62 cm (24 in)
Feed/magazine capacity:	10 round detachable box magazine
Operation:	gas, semi-automatic
Max rate of fire:	30 RPM (Aimed: 3-5 RPM)
Muzzle velocity:	830 m/s (2,723 ft/s)
Effective Range:	800 m (874 yd)

"The combination of special ammunition, the very long barrel and telescopic sight results in a very capable sniper weapon."

### The Dragunov SVD Sniper Rifle



While the Soviet Union apparently have not directly supplied Angola with this weapon, its availability and use was probably introduced by the Cubans. Extensive sniping occurred during the final phases of the War In Angola. Comments on this weapon's use in Angola will be welcomed.



## Featured Organisation: The forming of the FNLA



FAPLA soldiers of the MPLA on the move

**Link to this story:**  
<http://www.warinangola.com/Default.aspx?tabid=1050>

“Unfortunately he had little knowledge of the Portuguese and underestimated them greatly. ”

The FNLA emerged from some movements among the Bakongo-tribe. The most important of these was the **União das Populações do Norte de Angola** – UPNA (Union of the nations of northern Angola), which was created in 1957, shortly after the forming of the MPLA, by groups settled at Leopold City and Matadi, with Manuel Barros Nacaca as president. Apparently the UPNA endeavoured for the restoration of the old Congo-kingdom, and had Bokongo-followers in three states, namely Angola, the Belgian-Congo, and Congo-Brazzaville. Because of this, it was difficult to obtain international support for the organization and it was therefore decided to send Holden Roberto on a mission through Africa and America. (J. Marcum, “**The Angolan Revolution**”, Volume I, chapter 2.)

Holden Roberto, named after a Baptist mission-

ary, was born in 1923 in São Salvador as a member of the Muchicongo-tribe. While still young, he moved with his parents to the Belgian-Congo where he finished his schooling at a Baptist mission. He was then employed as an official in the Department of Finance of the Belgian-Congo. Attracted by leftist political ideas, he studied the works of Marx, Lenin, Nehru and Voltaire and started a friendship with Patrice Lumumba.

During his first overseas trips to raise support and sympathy for the UPNA, Holden Roberto met figures such as Kwame Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon and Kenneth Kaunda and attended the first **All African People’s Conference** in December 1958 in Accra.

Gradually he became convinced that UPNA was too strongly based on ethnical grounds and that the restoration of the Congo-kingdom was an

idle dream. For that reason UPNA was changed to UPA (**União das Populações de Angola**). Instead of just northern Angola, the focus was now on the entire Angola.

From 1958 Roberto took over control of UPA from his uncle Necaca. He still travelled and visited Africa, Europe and America. Thanks to his knowledge of French and English, he could easily move in international circles and managed to get acceptance and assistance for UPA. Unfortunately he had little knowledge of the Portuguese and underestimated them greatly. He was also overshadowed by figures such as Neto and De Andrade with their university training and deeply ingrained knowledge of the Portuguese culture.

Back in Kinshasa he started a newspaper, **La voix de la Nation Angolaise**, in which articles were published in Kik-

He sent twenty-four of his men to Algeria to be trained

ongo, Kimbundu and Portuguese. His number of followers grew steadily. Soon after the liberation of Algeria, he sent twenty-four of his men

there to be trained under the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale), and also received some weapons from there. (M. Morris, “**Armed conflict**

**in Southern Africa**”, p.112; J. Marcum, “**The Angolan Revolution**”, Volume I, pp. 64-70.)

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Convoy of T-55 tanks on their way to Cuito Cuanavale



The T-34 tank, veteran of World War 2, were still in use in 1988



A captured ZPU-2 14.5mm AA heavy machine gun used by UNITA

Images from “Grensoorlog” series, by Linda de Jager, reproduced with kind permission by MNET

## Historical Account:

## Operation Moduler: First Clashes — 47 Brigade, Part 1

Extract taken with the author's permission from: "War In Angola - The Final South African Phase", by Helmoed-Römer Heitman

**47 Brigade; 13 and 16 September, Part 1**

In the west, the teams from 5 Recce had been deployed and had marked the positions of 47 Brigade for the air strike planned for 11 September. 47 Brigade

had been brought to a standstill by Quebec and Papa (MRLs) Batteries' harassing fire, and had dug in four kilometres south of the confluence of the Lomba and the Cuzizi. The Recces pinpointed its positions during the night 9 to 10 September and marked them during the following night for the air strike planned for 03h 15. Permission for the air strike was, however, withdrawn at the last moment, because of the critical

stage of the negotiations for the POW exchange involving Captain Du Toit, who had been captured in Cabinda in 1985. The artillery bombardment of the positions - both G-5s and rockets - was carried out, but the attack by Unita was cancelled by them, in the absence of air strike.

Colonel Deon Ferreira and Commandant 'Bok' Smit now sat down to plan a mechanised at-

*(Continued on page 6)*



South African 81mm mortar firing

## This week, 23 Years Ago, In South-East Angola...

**Friday, 15 January 1988: Generally quiet**

15 January was generally quiet. Exceptions were three sorties by Angolan fighters, including two inaccurate attacks on the South Africans, and continued shelling by the South African artillery....

**Saturday, 16 January 1988: PTSM ferry brought into operation at the Cuito bridge**

On 16 January, Lieuten-

ant Piet Koen, the observer monitoring the Cuito bridge area, reported that Fapla had a PTSM self-propelled ferry in operation. They were therefore quite capable of supplying and reinforcing the brigades east of the river....

**Sunday, 17 January 1988: A Fapla force assembled south of the Dala**

At 11h55, Unita reported contact with Fapla infantry in the area of the

Dala source. This Fapla element fell back after a brief clash, but the Fapla artillery had meanwhile begun to shell the former 21 Brigade positions heavily. The Fapla force, which the elements in contact had been screening when they clashed with Unita, now assembled south of the Dala. The artillery observers reported that this force consisted of two battalions with tanks, BTR60s and BRDM-

*(Continued on page 7)*

"Exceptions were three sorties by Angolan fighters, including two inaccurate attacks on the South Africans, and continued shelling by the South African artillery..."

## From the Diary of Lieutenant Colonel Igor Anatolevich Zhdarkin

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tions to the troops engaged, their terror of facing the South Africans, and, finally, the fact that on the bank where the brigade stood, across the river Lomba, there was a passage (bridge for crossing). Everybody quickly found out about it, and, if it had not existed, perhaps no one would have tried to

flee.

Many Soviet specialists serving here in the district combat brigades earlier had been in Afghanistan. According to their opinion, "in Afghanistan, we never experienced such horrors as here. One said that "when the South African artillery began to fire, I felt particularly terrified. However, then came the

South African air force and we had very little room on the ground. But the most horrible was when the Angolans turned to flight and began to throw away their equipment..."

This was just what happened with the 47th brigade. As long as the brigade commander maintained radio contact

*(Continued on page 8)*



A Soviet adviser assisting with the deployment of a FAPLA brigade

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## Historical Account: Operation Moduler: First Clashes — 47 Brigade, Part 1



The South African Buffel mine-resistant armoured personnel carrier

*(Continued from page 5)*

tack on 47 Brigade by Combat Group Alpha, with Combat Group Charlie in reserve. Brigadier Johan Louw, the SWATF Chief of Staff, Operations, flew in to sit in on the planning sessions. During the night of 11 September, the Brigade headquarters received a report of a Fapla force deployed and dug in some six kilometres east of the main 47 Brigade position. At first it was thought that

this might be the Tactical Group, or a part of 59 Brigade that had crossed the Lomba undetected near its confluence with the Cunzumbia. It was later decided that it was more likely to be a part of the main 47 Brigade force. Unita had estimated the force as two infantry battalions dug in with shallow trenches, and supported by three T-54s or -55s and some D-30 guns.

This was a potentially dangerous development, and Hartsliet was or-

dered at 22h00 to take his Combat Group Bravo to carry out an armed reconnaissance the next day, and to intercept this force and drive it back before it could make contact with 59 Brigade. The nearest other Fapla force was the Tactical Group which, with an infantry battalion and six tanks, was deployed between the objective and the main body of 47 Brigade six kilometres to the west. Unita had undertaken to tie the Tactical Group while the at-

### Unita had undertaken to tie the Tactical Group ...

tack went in, having a force deployed to the south-west of it. Another Unita battalion was deployed directly to the east of the objective.

Hartsliet decided to use his two 101 Battalion companies, commanded by Captain Koos Maritz and Lieutenant Johnny Lombard, and two troops of Ratel-90s of 32 Battalion's Anti-Tank Squadron and one detached from Dawid Letter's Combat Group Charlie.

Letter was meanwhile told to hold himself ready in reserve, and was left the missile Ratels which would not have been usable in the dense bush of the objective. Sierra Battery was in close support and redeployed westwards over the In-gue to be within effective range. The G-5s of Quebec Battery would fire an artillery preparation, and would then remain available for direct support. Close air support was approved, and Impala

Mk IIs were available at 30 minutes reaction time from Rundu. Theo Wilken continued as fire support co-ordinator for this attack, travelling with Hartsliet in his Ratel. He had two forward observation officers. Captain Mark Brown and Lieutenant Liebenberg, whom he attached to the two infantry companies. Pi-erre Franken, temporarily unemployed, accompanied the force to see what would happen and to take some photo-

"Close air support was approved, and Impala Mk IIs were available at 30 minutes reaction time from Rundu."

### The operation to be delayed until the next day...

graphs. He was to find himself quite busy with other matters.

Difficulties with replenishing Combat Group Bravo, and several minor breakdowns caused the operation to be delayed until the next day - 13 September - when Bravo moved out at 07h30, accompanied by Colonel Sachse's liaison team. A

Unita major attached as guide proved to be a rather poor navigator, so that Hartsliet was compelled to take over this task himself, using the 'Landnav' system in his command vehicle.

Arriving at his intended forming up place, Hartsliet found that he was in disagreement with Unita regarding his - and their -

position. They differed by some 3 000 metres east to west. The problem now was to locate the enemy, who Unita said was 1 000 metres to their west. Either the enemy was 3 000 metres further east than originally reported, or he was 4 000 metres away from Unita and not 1 000. In the thick bush, distances

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Ratel-Command variant with its crew and the commander relaxing on top of the vehicle

## Historical Account:

## Operation Moduler: First Clashes — 47 Brigade, Part 1

*(Continued from page 6)*

of this scale are all that is needed, to miss an objective altogether. He decided that Unita were more likely to be correct about their proximity to the enemy than their actual position, and shifted his planned preparatory fire 3 000 metres to the east.

Having decided where the enemy probably was, Hartsliet now found himself facing a more difficult task than he had expected. Given that Fapla were where he now suspected them, they were deployed inside an old Unita logistic base. This presented a serious problem for his mechanised force of wheeled vehicles; the base was criss-crossed with deep trenches,

some as deep as his Ratels were high, and there was only one access route, which ran along the east-west axis and would therefore certainly be covered by Fapla, who knew that the South Africans would approach from the east. He decided to go ahead anyway, and ordered the artillery preparation to be fired and the close support 120 mm mortars to be shot in. The 120 mm mortar bombs actually fell rather farther forward than intended - an error resulting from the total lack of observation - but this proved convenient, as the advance was initially much faster than expected and they soon approached the impact area.

The entrance to the base was only some 800 me-

tres to the west, so Hartsliet decided to enter the base area and deploy inside. He deployed his force with Captain Maritz's infantry company in line astride the east-west roadway and one Ratel-90 troop on each flank. Lombard would follow with his depth company on the road, to be employed as the situation developed.

Properly deployed, they moved off due west into the base proper. The G-5s and 120 mm mortars placed fire on suspected targets immediately ahead of the advancing company, often only 100 to 170 metres in front of them. They had advanced only some 400 or 500 metres, when the leading company reported movement on its

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South African Mechanised Infantry stepping out of their Ratel-20 Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV)

**Link to this story:**

<http://www.warinangola.com/Default.aspx?tabid=665>

"The 120 mm mortar bombs actually fell rather farther forward than intended - an error resulting from the total lack of observation."

## This week, 23 Years Ago, In South-East Angola...

*(Continued from page 5)*

2s....

**Monday, 18 January 1988: Fapla drove away Unita from north of the Dala**

At 14h00 on 18 January, the artillery observer reported that this Fapla force had driven Unita away from the north of the Dala, and had deployed along an east-west line on the high ground north-east of the Dala source. The 4 SAI combat team on the 21 Brigade position was ordered not to take any action, the intention being to let Fapla reoccupy what was now known terrain, and then to deal this force in isolation and

destroy it....

**Tuesday, 19 January 1988: Unita attacked 25 Brigade**

At 22h00 on 19 January Unita attacked 25 Brigade, supported by the 120mm mortars of Romeo Battery. This attack also failed, convincing the South Africans that Unita was not yet capable of either taking or holding terrain against conventional forces....

**Wednesday, 20 January 1988: More Cubans and Soviets arrived from Luanda**

Another contingent of Cubans and Soviets had arrived from Luanda on 20 January. Piet Koen

and the G-5s scored a particular success when one round landed on the PTSM ferry, causing it to go out of control and hit the bridge. A series of explosions followed as its cargo 'cooked off'. Two MiG-23s flew yet another inaccurate attack against the G-5s. At 14h00 the 'groundshout' team deployed opposite 59 Brigade....

**Thursday, 21 January 1988: 4 SAI moved to a new laager**

21 January also passed quietly; 4 SAI moved to a new laager in the Cunzumbia source area during the night, to carry out maintenance and replenishment....

**Link to this story:**

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South African troops being briefed in the field

## Uittreksel uit "Ag man dit 'WAS' lekker in die Army" - van Danie Matthee



South African infantry ready to move off during a training exercise. Note the clean and neat appearances



### Link to this story:

<http://www.warinangola.com/Default.aspx?tabid=1092>

Die eerste aand in die Army was 'n warboel. Nadat ons met Samils in Zeerust (2SDB) basis afgelaai is en die nodige papierwerk afgehandel is, deel hulle ons sommer vinnig in groepe in. Elke groep word oorhandig aan 'n Koporaal wat ons al skreeuende aantree en na die magasyn toe masjeer. By die magasyn word elke troep uitgereik met die nodige toerusting om die eerste aand in die Army deur te bring. Daar kry jy jou trommel met twee komberse, 'n matras, 'n pisvel, 'n kussing met kussingsloop en twee lakens. Nadat almal alles gekry het wat nodig is, jaag die Koporaal ons aan en beveel ons om hom te volg na die *bungalow's* toe. Die probleem is dat jy al die goed wat

jy nou net gekry het en jou persoonlike bagasie daarby op een slag moes saamdra *bungalow* toe. Die Koporaal wag vir niemand nie en loop vinnig vooruit. Nou sukkel jy met jou matras en ander toerusting bo-op jou trommel in die donker, tussen 'n klomp ander ouens wat rondskarrel, en probeer bly in die groep wat jy ingedeel is. Dit is net 'n geskree en 'n gevloek op die klomp verwarde ouens wat nie weet waar om te vat en te los nie. Ek kon glad nie oor my matras wat ek op my trommel gelaai het sien nie en moes elke nou en dan stop om alles neer te sit sodat ek kan kyk of ek kan sien waar die Koporaal is en of ek nog in die regte rigting beweeg. Sodra jy stop word

daar op jou geskree dat jy jou gat moet roer. Toe ek uiteindelik by die *bungalows* uit kom is ek heeltemal verdwaal. Ek probeer toe maar elke *bungalow* om te sien of ek nie iemand wat in my groep was erken nie. Na die derde *Bungalow* skree 'n Koporaal op my en vra of ek wag dat hy my goed vir my moet dra? Ek wil nog sê ek soek die groep waarin ek ingedeel was toe hy my stil maak en sê ek moet 'n bed kry en begin regmaak vir inspeksie vir die volgende dag. Ek twifel of ek ooit in die regte groep opge-eindig het waarin ek oorspronklik ingedeel was.

Kavalaris D Matthee  
1987 tot 1988

## From the Diary of Lieutenant Colonel Igor Anatolevich Zhdarkin

(Continued from page 5)

with the commander of the tank battalion, everything to be sure remained relatively normal. But then the tank battalion commander was hit and being wounded, he moved to another tank which too was hit and from which he then could not crawl out. Meanwhile the tank platoon commander who was next to him fled. The tank battalion commander (his name is Silva) thereupon was taken prisoner by the South Africans.

At the time of its flight during the crossing of

the river Lomba, the 47th brigade lost 18 tanks, 20 armored troop carriers, 4 D-30 (122 millimeter) guns, 3 BM-21s mounted artillery, 4 Osa-AK anti-aircraft rocket launchers, 2 Osa-AKs transport cars, one P-19 radar station, heavy automobiles, broadcasting stations, mortars, grenade throwers, approximately 200 pieces of small arms, etc., etc.

The loudly proclaimed words about the safety of Soviet advisors and specialists were forgotten. The armored troop carrier of the Soviet advisors exited, last but one,

over the bridge, and without cover, by order of the brigade commander, and protected only by 11 people. Within 15 minutes, the position where it had stayed before was burst upon by a South African AML-90 (armoured troop carrier).

There was terrible panic and confusion all around. The South Africans were shooting all over the place, not sparing ammunition. No one clearly knew whether to run and what to do. The one thing which everyone wanted was to get across to the other bank

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Russian advisor posing at his Soviet-supplied jeep (UAZ-469)

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## Historical Account: First Clashes — 47 Brigade, Part 1

(Continued from page 7)

right flank. Hartsliet ordered G-5. and 120 mm fire on the area and Maritz to report the outcome which was infantry withdrawing to the north. Hartsliet now ordered the right flank Ratel troop to join up with the company in contact, and Maritz to wheel his company around to face north and deploy north of the roadway. Lombard's company and the Ratel-90 troop on the left flank were left where they were for the moment.

Maritz drew no further direct fire, but did receive heavy 60 mm mortar fire for a few minutes while

he deployed. His company now advanced northwards, pinning a large group of Fapla infantry up against a shona running along the edge of the river. The Casspirs and Ratels swept this open ground with cannon, machine-gun and 90 mm canister fire, cutting down the Fapla infantry as they tried to escape westward along the edge of the shona, having discovered that they could not cross it. Elements of the company leap-frogged each other north-west along the line of the shona to keep up with the fleeing enemy. The G-5s had now ceased fire, but a troop of 120

mm mortars had moved up and now concentrated its fire on the edge of the shona. When it was over, about 200 Fapla had been killed for no casualties to Bravo, One Ratel-90 got stuck in a trench in this manoeuvring, but it was quickly pulled out by a recovery vehicle.

Hartsliet meanwhile ordered Lombard to move one platoon west and northwest, to take up a position to observe and block any Fapla attempting to pass. He then ordered the Ratel-90 troop on the left flank to move up with this platoon.

*To be continued next week, in Part 2...*



Ratel-20 with open hatches, waiting to move forward

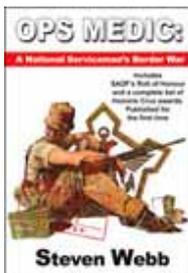
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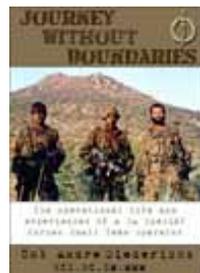
"When it was over, about 200 Fapla had been killed for no casualties to Bravo."

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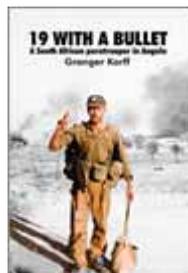
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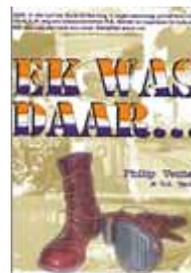
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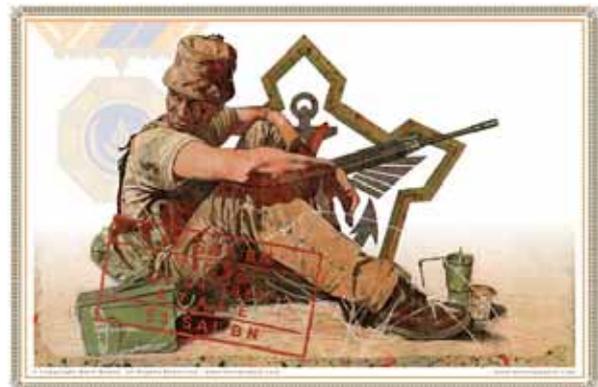
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Mark Raats has created this **SPECIAL EDITION** high quality 900mm x 600mm poster of his original artwork, "An Unpopular War", SPECIFICALLY and EXCLUSIVELY for the users of WarInAngola.com. This is the same artwork which has proven such a direct hit in the form of the complimentary "OUMAN" sticker we have been sending out to all SADF

Veterans, courtesy of Danie Matthee, with the kind permission and specific design provided by Mark. This high quality poster is now available for only **R300, plus R50 handling and postage** anywhere in South Africa. Postage to the rest of the world will be added accordingly. Please enquire first as to the cost thereof.



## Schedule of Events

- 24-27 January 2011 — 8th Annual Tactical Power Sources Summit, USA
- 24-27 January 2011 — NCW 2011: Network Enabled Operations, USA
- 24-26 January 2011 — Disaster Management Showcase & Conference, USA
- 24-26 January 2011 — Airport Security Asia 2011, Hong Kong
- 24-26 January 2011 — 9th Annual Underwater Battlespace 2011, Italy
- 24-26 January 2011 — 7th Total Asset Visibility for Defense, USA
- 24-26 January 2011 — Counter IED Summit, USA
- 24-26 January 2011 — 4th Annual Biometrics for National Security and Defense, USA

## JANUARY 2011

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## From the Diary of Lieutenant Colonel Igor Anatolevich Zhdarkin



Fapla soldiers preparing trenches

(Continued from page 8)

as quickly as possible. The so-called "commission" for organizing the crossing was one of the first to escape.

However, only three Strela-10 anti aircraft system, two armored troop carriers, two EE-25 vehicles and one Land Rover got across to the other side of the Lomba. Nothing more they were able to save. And if the South Africans had sent over only one company to the other bank and opened fire against the Angolans on the river bank, the entire 47th brigade would have landed at the bottom of the Lomba.

The Soviet "advisors"

had to set on fire and abandon their armored troop carrier and then crawl, hugging the ground for 1.5 kilometers along the "shana" to the other bank of the Lomba. They crawled under fire, throwing away everything except for their weapons, while the South Africans struck direct laying fire against them. Then the swamps began. Our men overcame this too and there remained only a short distance to the bank. Completely exhausted, they decided to pause for breath. The South Africans, estimating, by the length of time, that they had already gotten across, began to shoot along the shore. Shells were exploding 10 to 20 meters from them while

three fell into the swamp 5 meters from them. What saved them was that the shells and mines fell into the swamp and on the "shana" (which was also sticky and swampy), sank and only then exploded. Only for this reason, no one was wounded, not taking small fragments into account.

The crushing defeat of the 47th brigade seriously affected the 16th, 21st, and 59th brigades as well as the military situation as a whole. Now the brigades were positioned on the line formed by the Cunzumbia river. Such was the state of affairs when we arrived.

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## NEW: PREMIUM MEMBERSHIP

**With over 3,800 UNIQUE visitors to War In Angola, viewing in excess of 56,000 pages per month, the time has come to allow a select few to rise above the rest.**

In order to continue expanding the site and adding additional functionality it is essential that some sort of revenue is generated to overcome the ever-increasing costs.

While by no means minimising the information available to Public and Registered users (which is what attracts all the attention in the first place), it takes considerable time and effort to research, find and publish new information all the time.

To this effect, some new information will only be made available to Registered users that have subscribed to the annual PREMIUM MEMBERSHIP.

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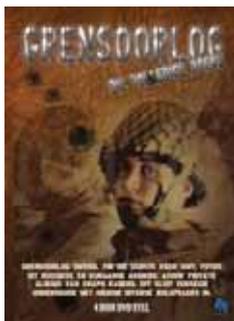
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THE NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTING EVENTS, INFORMATION AND FACTS RELATING TO THE CONFLICT IN ANGOLA AND SOUTH-WEST AFRICA (NAMIBIA) FROM 1975 TO 1989

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The War In Angola website ([www.warinangola.com](http://www.warinangola.com)) is dedicated to recreating and re-fighting the battles between the adversaries of the Angolan War (or Border War as it is also known), that is, the SADF and UNITA on the one side and the Soviet-supplied FAPLA, Cuba, and SWAPO on the other side. In order to recreate the battles as accurate as possible, a lot of research is required about the equipment, organisation, quality, uniforms, command, support and logistical structures behind the different forces.

There are two sides to the website: the gaming and recreation of the miniature battles; and the historical facts and research of the forces behind the battles.

The dividing line between the two sides is deliberately blurred in order to expose both sides to all the users, thereby promoting and exposing the wargaming and modeling hobby to the historically inclined and vice-versa.

Johan Schoeman

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## Last week's latest topics on the Forums

**Link to the Forums:**

<http://www.warinangola.com/Default.aspx?tabid=590>

### **RE: My military service by pfv**

Hi Dave. Johan posted my e-mail to him here for me, so I am only looking at your entry for the first time. It's one of those funny coincidences that we are the only two on this topic so far, and that...

### **RE: Sergeant Pierre Digue by Deeski**

Hi Johan The truth is is that i got thrown out the back of a Samel in an accident and snapped my leg effectively curtailing my army career. My interest was aroused as Sgt Digue was my platoon Sgt ...

### **RE: 101 Werksplaas by TONY**

Hi Adrian Great pics , i was in the LWT next to the gates of 101 , sad to hear that the place is in a bad shape. We were the group of convoy tiffys servicing 16maint unit . served in that area f...

### **Bren and Browning 7,62 conversions by pfv**

I was a Tiffie working on the conversions of Browning and Bren 7,62 mm during 1974-5. I would be really interested hearing from ou manne who used these weapons in the field; where, when, how, etc., as...

### **RE: East Germans in Africa by pfv**

Hi Cassius. As a history teacher, as wel as an SADF ou man, I have a long-term research interest in the DDR and NVA, which has brought me numerous friendships with former NVA-conscripts in former Eas...

### **RE: Background and early operations (1975 -1985) by pfv**

I cleared into 5 SAI in 1973. Diensplig was then 12 months. We were told we would be sent to the Border for 3 months, but by that time I was no longer in 5 SAI. I cleared out of 81TSD in 1975 Septemb...

### **Well Done boys by S/Sgt Willem van Dyk (guest)**

It is really good to re-live the happenings during all our campaigns. It was done very professionally and I want to congratulate you with this work. VIR JOU SUID AFRIKA . . . . .

### **RE: The attack on 16 Brigade: 9 November 1987 by Glynn**

I may be incorrect on which type of Ratel it was that was shot out. I will need to scratch around and see if I have any pictures, I did have some by are not sure where they are now. An interesting t...

### **RE: The attack on 16 Brigade: 9 November 1987 by johansamin**

Hi, Glynn Nice to hear from you.... AMAZING story! Was this the battle of 9 November 1987 against 16 Brigade? That was the first tank vs tank action since WWII and it is documented that one ...