



live the journey

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Destination: Angola
Tour : **ANGOLA Battlefields: Winds of Change over Africa**
Date : **16 May – 03 June 2010**



Background:

Angola is a beautiful country with a war torn history. This tour will reflect the wonderful scenery, which is in stark contrast to the skeleton remainders of war that dots the countryside. The route will take you through various vegetation zones, landscapes and battle sites of various stages of the war.

On 14 October 1975 Task Force Zulu (South African Defense Force) crossed the border into Angola in what became known as Operation Savannah. This was the first large scale cross border operation of the “Bush War” and can be seen as the commencement of the so-called “War for Africa”.

This conflict ended with a showdown between the forces during 1987 and 1988 around the town of Cuito Cuanavale, which led to the independence of Namibia and peace in the region.

This is a tour through Angola visiting some battles sites of the “War for Africa”. The intention of the tour is not to justify the war, or project it in a one-sided light. We want to project a balanced view of the events in Angola, highlight the beauty and potential of the country and the people and make a positive contribution to economic development. Don't miss this departure date!

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Our Experts:**Brig-Genl. Dick Lord, South African Air Force:**

He has enjoyed a long and interesting career in military flying. Although a South African, he flew off aircraft carriers in the Royal Navy for 12 years, which included a 2 year tour operating with the US Navy, flying Phantoms out of NAS Miramar, the base featured in the Tom Cruise film Top Gun. Returning to the SAAF, he was appointed commander of the SAAF's fighter school at AFB Pietersburg. He then led 1 Squadron flying Mirage F1AZ fighter-bombers during operations in Angola, before being appointed as SAAF operational commander in Oshikati, effectively running the air war.

Lt-Col Eduardo Gonzáles Sarria, Cuban Air Force (Rtd):

He recently retired after a long and distinguished career in the Cuban Air Force. This included 6 years of test flying and 26 years flying MiG-21 and MiG-23 fighters. His career included three operational tours in Angola during the Border War. During his first tour in 1976, he flew MiG-21s. During 1985/86, he was the MiG-23 squadron commander flying out of Lubango. In the 7-month long conventional battle around Cuito Cuanavale in 1987/88 he was an inspector of the Cuban Air Force tasked with ensuring the integration of all the involved forces. Ed has a first-hand knowledge of military tactics, politics and the involvement of the Cubans and Russians in Angola.

It was the love of books and military history that brought Ed and Dick into email contact. During his research, Ed discovered Vlamgat, a book on the Mirage F1 written by Dick. One thing led to another and finally the two men established contact which has led to a flood of email traffic between Havana and Somerset West and a mutual respect between former adversaries. They will meet in person on the battlefields of Angola during the Live the Journey tour in May 2010.

Previous Experts:

2007 – Genl André Bestbier

2008 – Genl Gert Nel

2009 – Col Jan Breytenbach

2007 – 2009: Jaou Nambalo (MPLA Forces)

Our clients our ambassadors:

You have put on wonderfully relaxing and enjoyable expedition – one that allows the individual to soak up all the many experiences of Angola, but without any of the hassle. Those experiences are without doubt some of the most extraordinary you'll have anywhere on the planet. *Richard Washington, Oxford, UK – May 2009*

I would like to congratulate you with this expedition. I have forgotten how beautiful Angola is. This trip has confirmed that Angola should be a top class destination. Thanking you. *Col Jan Breytenbach.*

Itinerary:

This tour is going to be an expedition. The itinerary serves as an indication of the route, but due to road conditions and unforeseen circumstances, the day-to-day programme may be adjusted. Due to practicalities the route does not follow the timeline of the War.

had a stronghold at Mavinga. UNITA approached the SADF for assistance, which resulted in Ops Modular (Sept 1987) followed by Ops Hooper, Packer and Displace in 1988.

The above operations took place south of Cuito. This area is not accessible. The bridge over the Cuito River was a very important target. Various attempts to destroy the bridge were undertaken.

During Ops Modular it was the first time SA tanks were deployed in battle since WWII. It was also during this operation that a fully intact SAM8 missile was captured.

Cuito Cuanavale was the HQ for the FAPLA/Cuban 59 and 21 Brigade. Fidel Castro dispatched an extra 25 000 troops as well as elements of his elite 50th Division to Cuito.

*O/N: Bush Camps (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
No facilities – camp shower and toilet*



Day 9 - 11:

From the Longa to Ebo

The next stretch of the route will take us from Chitembo, Huambo (*Nova Lisboa*), Bridge 14, Cela with Ebo as destination. Travel conditions are difficult so progress will be slow.

Huambo is the main town of inland Angola with an approximate population of 203 000. The town served as a road, rail and air hub for the rich agricultural region. From the town grain, rice, hides, skins and fruit were exported. During the civil war the economy was devastated. Huambo was also the stronghold of the UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi. The town was also on the main route back to Namibia for all the troops that had to withdraw when Operation Savannah came to an end.

The Queve and Nhia Rivers flow north of Nova Lisboa. These rivers posed real obstacles for operations to the north to take Gabela, Ebo, Catofe and eventually Luanda during Ops Savannah. Bridge 14 across the Nhia River was on the only tarred road to Quibala. Due to the fact that the rivers were in flood and it was the rainy season the tar road was the only road to the north the armoured vehicles could use. All the bridges across these rivers were destroyed, which resulted in a very important stand-off for the control over Bridge 14, which the MPLA forces had blown up. Whoever managed to get the control of Top Hat, an observation point, would have success in taking control and rebuilt Bridge 14.

The SADF crossed the river and went ahead to take Catofe. They were heading for Quibale when the order came for the advance to be stopped, which led to the end of Ops Savannah.

We head to Ebo.....the battle at Ebo took place prior to the Bridge 14 operations. It was a victorious day for the MPLA. The terrain of the battle was unsuited for the

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Elands who could only operate on the main road. The Elands were important back-up for the UNITA and FNLA infantry who did not perform well.

The defeat at Ebo blocked the advance to the north, which turned the focus back to Bridge 14.

O/N Bush Camp (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

No facilities – camp shower

Day 12 - 16:

Ebo – Namibe

[Ebo – Sumbe – Lobito – Dombe Grande – Namibe](#)

We explore the terrain around Gabela en route to Sumbe (Nova Redondo) as we head for Lobito. It was formidable terrain for Combat Formation Zulu with wide rivers which made crossings nearly impossible and muddy valleys which meant the Elands had to stick to the roads that would make them easy targets for the FAPLA RPG7's.

Sumbe (Nova Redondo) is situated along the coastline. The famous Pink House in Nova Redondo became Bravo companies HQ. It was the former house of the Portuguese governor of Nova Redondo Province.

Proceed along the coastal route to Lobito. Lobito was an important harbour town as it was tied to the Benguela railway line. It was also a major holiday town and before fleeing it housed the largest concentration of well-to-do Portuguese families. The town was also famous for its festivals and carnivals.

During Op Savannah Combat Formation Zulu and Battle Group Foxbat took off a few days to relax in Lobito. This was to allow the powers to be to decide on the way forward. This sudden halt allowed FAPLA to re-group and resulted in much stronger resistance when the marching orders for the groups came to move further north to Nova Redondo.

In skirmishes that followed the 25 pounder howitzer was used for the first time in a war situation since WOII.

From Lobito we continue further south following the coastline line driving via Benguela, the notorious Dombe Grande and Lucira until we reach Namibe formerly known as *Mocamedes*. The beauty and prosperity of yester-years is still very much visible in Namibe.

The harbour of Mocamedes was a strategic port for the MPLA. From this harbour T-55 battle tanks, PT-76 amphibious tanks, BTR-60 armoured personnel carriers, all of Soviet origin, was airlifted to inland centres such as Menongue and Cuito Cuanavale. It was also in Porto Namibe that Special Force frogmen sank one Soviet ship, badly damaged two others carrying weaponry and blew up oil storage tanks.

O/N Bush Camp (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

No facilities – camp shower

Day 17 - 19:

Lubango – Ruacana

[Namibe – Lubango – Cahama - Ruacana](#)

Lubango was the main commercial centre of southern Angola and the capital of the Huila Province. Overlooking the city is Monte Christo with the towering statue of Christ, a replica of the one in Rio de Janeiro. Battle Group Alpha had to concur Monte Christo during the invasion of Sa da Bandeira during Ops Savannah. The main battle was focused on the airstrip. Later in the war the city became a Cuban stronghold.

Sightseeing in Lubango will include a drive to Humpata to see the monument that was erected to commemorate the Dorsland Trekkers as well as some of the graves. Also drive the magnificent Leba Pass with its waterfall and cantilevered hairpin bends. The road ascend from the coastal plain to an altitude of over 6 000 feet in just a few kilometres.

Head back to Ruacana via Cahama and enter Namibia. Our progress will be slow due to bad road conditions. Ruacana was the operational base and formed part of Sector 10. The HQ was Oshakati and the purpose was to protect Ovamboland.

After crossing the border it is time for sad farewells. You will be responsible for your own travel arrangements from there onwards.

Itinerary details

Period	: 19 days
Rate	: group of 12 pax: R22 900.00 per person group of 14 pax: R19 900.00 per person group of 16 pax: R17 900.00 per person group of 18 pax: R16 600.00 per person (group sizes for the past 3 years were between 18 - 20 pax)
Date	: 16 May – 3 June 2010
Included	: 3 meals daily, experienced guides with own vehicles, tour leader, two way radio's for vehicles, camping fees, consession fees, knowlegable person on Border War
Excluded	: transport, fuel, camping gear, visa, travel insurance and vehicle insurance, drinks, cross border taxes and things of a personal nature.
Note	: To optimise your experience the number of participants will be limited. Bookings are essential.
For bookings	: contact Live the Journey at tel 021 912 4090 or e-mail info@livethejourney.co.za

Deadline for bookings are 01 March 2010

Logistical support by Uri Adventures, Namibia

Special NOTE: Live the Journey will assist with the organising of invitation letters that are required for visa applications, but each person will have to take responsibility for the visa application.

Safety of passengers and vehicles receive priority. We will be travelling on routes that were swept by humanitarian operations.

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