The Western Cape Military History Society
Die Wes-Kaapse Krygshistoriese Vereniging
Umbutho weMbali yoMkhosi weNtshona Koloni

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September 2026

A summary of the last meeting

We were very fortunate to have two talks this month.

On the 17th we hosted Walter Volker who educated us about **"THE OWLS AND THE SHADOW WAR" LIFTING THE VEIL ON THE SECRET WORLD OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE** and on the 24th Leon de Bruin from the Pro Patria museum guided us through the "**STORY OF THE BORDER WAR"**

Walters talk.

On Thursday, 17 September, Walter Volker gave a presentation to the Western Cape branch of the Military History Society. The focus of the presentation was on the Military Intelligence Division of the SADF.

The presentation was based on the research which Walter has been busy with for the past 15 years, which includes over 180 personal interviews, as well as consulting various publish and unpublished documents in private collections and in the military archives.

The presentation AGENDA was as follows:

1. Measures used by intelligence agencies to protect their secrets
2. PERSONAL Introduction & How I gained access
3. MID history series
4. SOME BASIC CONCEPTS
5. SA intelligence agencies & coordination
6. Chief of staff intelligence (CSI) & military intelligence Division (MID)
7. Intelligence operations – SDIO, DST & Comops
8. West Front: Unita
9. North, east & home Front: Biafra, Renamo, Super-ZIPRA, LLA, Inkatha, etc.
10. Air operations & Pasload flights

A few photographs taken at the meeting.



Marina, Mac and Chris



Ronnie, Walter and Carl



Carl welcoming everyone



Carl shows off one of Walter's books



Walter delivering his talk



Questions and answers



More questions and answers



A small gift for the speaker

On behalf of the Committee and the Society we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Walter for his interesting talk.

Leon's Talk

On 24 September, we hosted Major (Retired) Leon de Bruin who presented "The Story of the Border War". He spoke about the 23-year conflict from a veteran's perspective. He placed the Border War within the global Cold War and its strategies, then traced the catalyst for its escalation and the forces involved. The presentation offered insight into the SADF's various arms, equipment, training, border bases, operations and key units. Photographs from the era brought the soldiers' daily lives and conditions into focus.

Leon also presented an insightful segment on township duty, drawing on TRC material and first-hand accounts to describe the complex dynamics and violence of the 1980s and 1990s. The evening gave members an opportunity to reflect on a difficult period of South African history and to hear the experiences of those who served.

We had close on 50 members and visitors present. Quite a few of those present saw service in the border war in the different arms of the South African Defence Force. After seeing the photographic slides shown I am sure that quite a few memories were brought back. Leon and the curators of the Pro Patria museum are doing an amazing job in preserving the memories of the Border conflict, if your are able to help sponsor them, please see the last slide below with their banking detail.

A few photographs taken at the meeting.



Carl opening the meeting



Leon delivering his presentation



Lots of photographs



A nice full room



Questions and answers



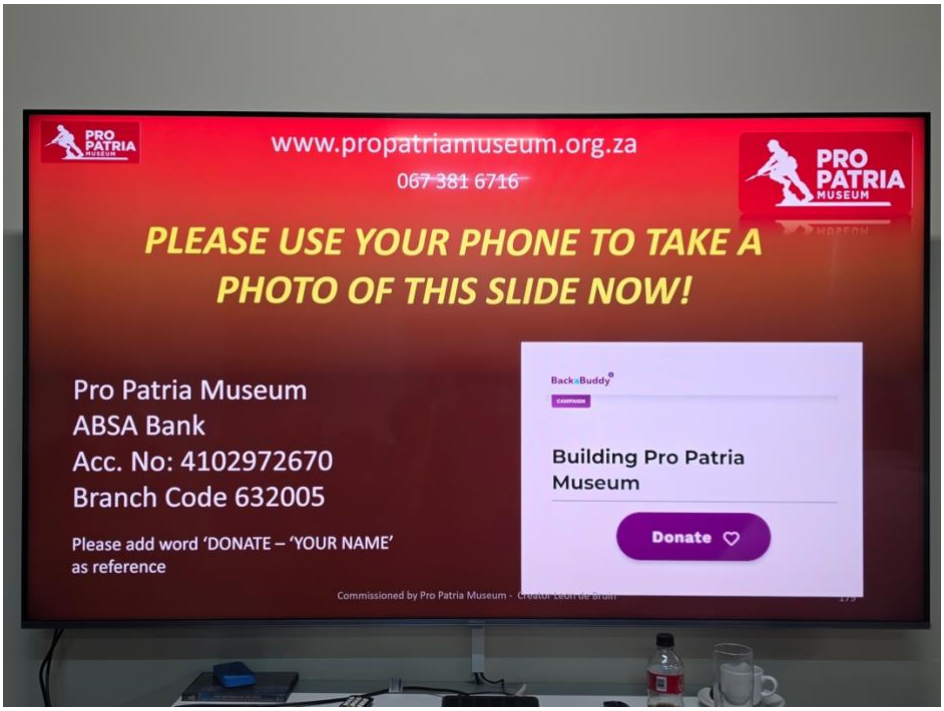
More questions and answers



A small gift for the speaker



The speaker, his guests with Ronnie and Carl



. **<u>In case you would like to make a donation</u>**

On behalf of the Committee and the Society we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Leon for his interesting talk.

Our next meeting

15th October 2026

Notification is given of the August Meeting to be held at the SA Legion, Rosedale Complex, Lower Nursery Road, Rosebank at 19h30.

Our speaker for the evening will be R ADM (JG) A.G. SÖDERLUND, SM, PS*, MMM* SA Navy Rtd

The presentation on the book 'Iron Fist from the Sea' covers the then Top Secret part played by the SA Navy and Special Forces, particularly 4 Recce Regiment, in the Border War with Angola as well as Mozambique between 1978 and 1988. It also covers the early history of the participating units and runup to over 40 seaborne operations against both landward and sea targets and infrastructure. Some led to delays and finally the cancellation of the Cuban led advance on Mavinga.

As little open-source documentation or information was available, the book was based on five years of interviews with various participants and research as well as the personal experience of the authors. The South African edition has been listed as a classic by the publishers as is still in print and on book shop shelves some eight years after being first published.

R ADM (JG) A.G. SÖDERLUND CV

Born in Kimberley in the Northern Cape in May 1948, Arnè (Angel) Söderlund was educated at Christian Brothers College in Kimberley where he matriculated in 1965. He joined the SA Navy (Permanent Force) as a seaman in early 1966 and in April of the same year was selected for officer training. In early 1969 he was selected to join the Argentinean sail training vessel ARA *Libertad* for a training cruise to various countries in the Americas, Europe and Africa. On completion he rejoined the Type 12 Frigate SAS *President Pretorius* to complete his bridge watchkeeping training.

Commissioned in 1970, he served as First Lieutenant of the Ton class minesweeper, SAS *Johannesburg* and later as watchkeeper aboard the frigate SAS *President Steyn*. After a short stint as a training officer at the basic training unit SAS *Saldanha* he completed the Combat Officers Qualifying (previously the Lieutenants Qualifying) course in 1973, coming joint first and awarded the 'Packer Shield'.

His next appointments were as Anti-Submarine Warfare Officer in SAS *President Steyn* and later, Officer Commanding the Torpedo Recovery and Diving Support Vessel SAS *Fleur*. In late 1975 he proceeded overseas for Weapons Training and to stand by the building of the second strike craft as Executive/Operations Officer in Israel. This vessel, P-1562, arrived in South Africa on Christmas night 1977.

R Adm (JG) Söderlund served in the Strike Craft Flotilla in Durban from 1978 to 1984. This period included two and a half years in command of SAS *Oswald Pirow,* attendance of the Naval Command and Staff Course and as Flotilla Personnel Officer. This was followed by an appointment as Directing Staff and later Senior Directing Staff at Naval Staff College. Promoted to Captain in 1988, he was appointed to Intelligence Division in Pretoria as SSO Maritime Intelligence which included responsibility for assistance projects in central Africa and foreign liaison tasks elsewhere. He attended the Joint Staff Course in 1991 and then served as SDS Navy at SA Defence College until the end of 1993.

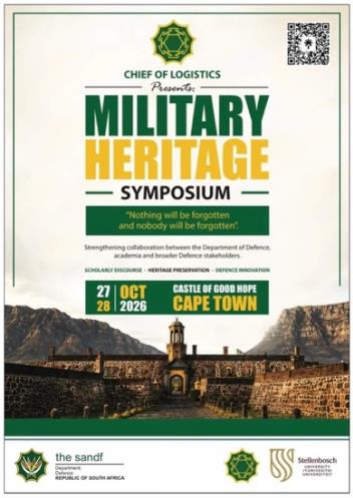
In 1994 he was appointed Naval and Military Attaché (later Adviser) to the Court of St James in London, returning to SA in early 1997. As Senior Liaison Officer (Visiting Ships), he was involved in the planning and execution of the SAN 75 International Fleet Review. On completion he was appointed Commander Task Group with the rank of Commodore (R Adm (JG) wef 1 Apr 98), based at Navy HQ in Pretoria. With transformation, he was appointed Director Fleet Force Preparation in November 1999, based in Simon's Town. As such he managed the Fleet (ships and submarines) and prepared it for operations. He retired from the Navy in May 2006.

He is happily married (55 years) to Lyn and they have three daughters and three granddaughters. R Adm Söderlund is an amateur historian (military), avid reader and collector of renown, with some 400+ collections ranging from antique maps and flags to naval cap ribbons and airsick bags! His private museum has nine display galleries and raises funds for the SA Bone Marrow Registry. He has been awarded the Southern Cross Medal, the iProthiya yeSilva (and bar) and Military Merit Medal (and bar). He has also received a Chief of the SA Army Commendation. He was actively involved in the preservation of the submarine SAS *Assegaai* (since 2003) and is Chairman of the Board of Assegaai Management NPC which runs the Assegaai Museum on behalf of the SA Navy and the NHT of which he is a Trustee.

He has authored, co-authored and published (including layout and desk top publishing) a number of books including a comprehensive book on the SA Navy (*South Africa's Navy*) in 2008 as well as one on Top Secret clandestine maritime operations during the Border War (*Iron Fist from the Sea*) in 2014 – later abridged and translated into Afrikaans (2018). He has edited a number of journals and newsletters including Navy News, the SA Navy's official news magazine from July 2007 to October 2009. He is a regular volunteer guide in the museum submarine Assegaai and is a vexillologist, advising on heraldic matters including the design of flags, ship's badges and uniform insignia. He was instrumental in the design of the current SA Navy uniforms introduced in 2003 as well as many of the Navy's ship and unit badges since 1980 and the naming of the four Valour class frigates.

Notice Board

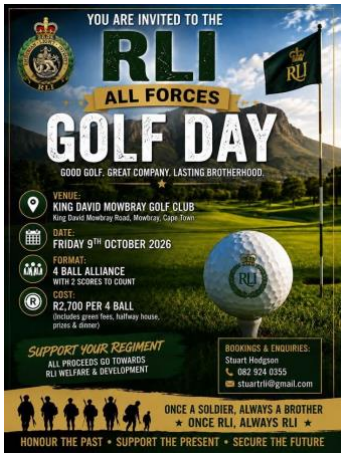
If you have any events that you would like us to add to this page please feel free to email me on woodworkgavin@gmail.com with the details.



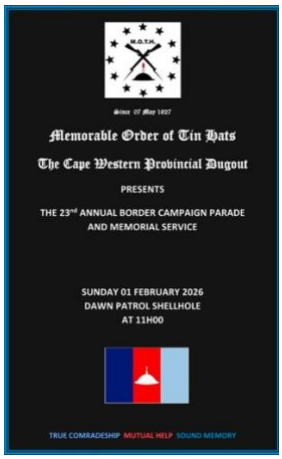












Parades

El Alamein	18 Oct 2026	Cape Town Gardens
Veterans Dinner	29 Oct 2026.	Kelvin Grove
Remembrance Day	11 November 2026	Royal Cape Yacht Club
Remembrance Parade	1 November 2026	Battledress MOTH Shellhole
Remembrance Day	6 November 2026	Red Cross Children's Hospital
Remembrance Day	8 November	Cape Town Cenotaph

Upcoming Meetings

15 October 2026.	Rear Adm (Rtd). Arne Söderlund	Iron Fist From The Sea (19h30 – 21h30)
19 November 2026.	Capt (Rtd) Chris Dooner	The Heritage Day Cannon Firing (19h00 – 19h30)
19 November 2026	Michael Schaaf.	The Development of the Hydrogen Bomb (19h30 – 21h30)

Important Information

Our meetings starts promptly at 19h30 at the Rosedale Complex, Rosebank
Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month, February - November
A donation of R10.00 is requested, this is payable on arrival, this assists to cover the cost of the hire of the Rosedale facilities.
Membership costs R80.00 a year.
Tea/coffee and biscuits are served after the meeting.

Please be so kind as to follow and like our Facebook page.
https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61579493864071

A few photographs of the Western Cape Military History members in action.













