Histories of the SOUTH AFRICAN CORPS OF SIGNALS

This trilogy relating to the history of the South African Corps of Signals (SACS) was launched at the Wonderboom Military Base in May 2010 during an event hosted by Brig Gen Leon Eggers, General Officer Commanding SA Army Signal Formation. Many current and former signallers were present, including General Georg L. Meiring (who also wrote the foreword).

The first book, entitled ‘ARMY SIGNALS IN SOUTH AFRICA. The Story of the South African Corps of Signals and its antecedents’ is impressive work of epic proportions, and together with its two companion volumes, will most probably become the primary reference work on army signals in South Africa.

It is a compilation of some previously published material, but consists mainly of new material never before published, large parts which have come from verbal recollections, rather than documentation. It is the result of thorough and meticulous research, including over two hundred personal interviews, stretching over a period of many years. Interviewees range from a number of generals to the lowest troop, to ensure a level of authenticity and reality in all aspects of this history. The effect of including numerous personal accounts sprinkled throughout the pages of the book is that the history literally comes alive and creates a sense of personal experience and interest, rather than just a record of dry facts. The author has also ensured that names and places are mentioned wherever possibly, not just dates and events – again this serves to give the account a greater level of human interest.

The book consists of a chronological sweep of the history of land-based signals in South Africa, starting with the role of the British army signallers and those of the independent Boer Republics before and during the Boer War, through the two world wars, then on through its climax during the Border War (1966 to 1989), the involvement of Military Intelligence in setting up the first Electronic Warfare stations, through to the modern era of incorporation of the liberation
forces and independent homelands. The transformation resulting from being a part of the newly post-1994 SANDF is also covered in detail. The books also contains one of the most comprehensive studies of ceremonial matters as far as they relate to the SA Corps of Signals and related signal units – covering badges, flashes, mottoes, songs and traditions.

What makes this a worthwhile addition to the library of any student of military history, is the fact that the signals/communications role is relevant to almost every part of the military machine; as a consequence it provides a good overview of operational aspects as well as behind-the-scenes developments in terms of Electronic Warfare. The book also contains one of the most comprehensive lists of border operations yet published. It has a total of 694 pages. ISBN: 978-0-620-45344-8

The second volume, entitled ‘SIGNAL UNITS OF THE SOUTH AFRICA CORPS OF SIGNALS AND RELATED SIGNAL SERVICES’ represents one of the most comprehensive collection of regimental and unit histories ever published in one volume in South Africa. It is also the first time that the histories of many of the signal regiments and other units will be published and available to the general public, and will most probably – together with its two companion volumes - prove to be the book of reference on army signals in South Africa. This volume includes a history of each of the major signal units of the SA Corps of Signals, but expands this to include the role of signals elements in special units such as 32 Battalion, the SA Special Forces (the ‘Recces’), Military Intelligence, etc. It also reviews the joint signals coordination function of the Directorate Telecommunications and EW, as well as the communications functions in other arms of the SADF such as the SA Air Force and Navy.
Signals services in the Portuguese, Rhodesian and SWA Territory Forces are then examined. This is followed by the role of related organizations such as Armscor, the CSIR, the Radio “hams” and others. For the first time, the signals elements in the liberation movements (the ANC/MK and PAC/APLA) is examined next, and finally the developments related to the post-1994 SANDF. The book is 820 pages in length. ISBN: 978-0-620-45345-5

The third of the trilogy entitled ‘9C – Nine Charlie! ARMY SIGNALLERS IN THE FIELD. The Story of the Men and Women of the South African Corps of Signals, and their Equipment’, is focused on the contribution of the people who dedicated their efforts, careers, and even sometimes lives, to ensuring one of the most effective army signals organisations on the globe.

It is estimated that over the decades of its existence over 100 000 signallers were part of the South African Corps of Signals, while many more were affected directly or indirectly by its activities. “9C” refers to the standard call-sign of the Signals Officer – who would play a key role during operations, but also in times of peace. This work also focuses on the equipment that was used by the signallers – the vehicles, the radios, the systems and networks. The equipment vendors that played such a crucial role in the success of this organisation, as well as made a contribution to the flourishing of the electronics industry in South Africa, despite comprehensive sanctions and trade embargoes, are also reviewed. Some of the major projects that the SA Corps of Signals was involved in, and which became part of the common language in the army – Ebbehout, Netor, Bowie, Marnet – are also covered in detail. This book also contains a section of the role of signals in the Southern Oceans and Antarctica. Total number of pages is 770. ISBN: 978-0-620-45346-2.
PRICES and FORMATS

The format of all three books is A4 (210 mm x 297 mm); with 700 to 800 pages in length, including numerous illustrations and almost 50 pages of colour plates. They are available in the following versions:

Standard edition: Square back with paperback / soft cover. The price is R350 per volume or R990 for a set of three.


De lux limited edition: Full case genuine leather roundback binding. This version is limited to a maximum of 100 numbered copies each, and is signed by Gen Meiring, Brig Gen Eggers and by the author. Price is R1 500 / R3 600.

About the author...

Walter V. Volker is the Chief Executive Officer of the Payments Association of South Africa (PASA). Prior to this, he worked for Absa Bank for seventeen years, and before that he was with NCR Corporation for seven years.

Walter was born and grew up in the south-eastern Transvaal town of Piet Retief. He started his national service in 1981 with basic training at 3 SA Infantry Battalion, but was later transferred to the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg, where he also received his officer’s commission. He was then transferred to 2 Signal Regiment at Wonderboom as a Command and Control Communications officer. He continued being involved with 2 Signal Regiment during his Citizen Force years, with the last major operation being two months border duty in mid-1988 during Operation Prone, based at Ondangwa.

He holds a B.Sc and an MBL degree, and is married to Trudie (née du Toit). Walter has already published a number of books on genealogy, including *The Cotton Germans of Natal* (2007); this series represents his first published work in the area of military history. In 2012 he published *Piet Retief Commando – the Story of a Border Commando 1880 – 2007* and *Boer War Stories of the Piet Retief Commando and District*.

Contact and Account details:

Veritas Books
PO Box 37672, Faerie Glen, Pretoria 0043

Walter Volker 082-851-6166 volker@boardwalkmanor.co.za

Account holder: T. Volker
Account number: 4073941138 (Cheque account)
Bank & branch: ABSA Menlyn branch, code no. 42-16-45