

**REPORT ON THE MEETING**

**BETWEEN**

**STUART STERZEL**

**IN HIS CAPACITY AS A RETIRED SPECIAL FORCES OPERATOR  
OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SPECIAL FORCES**

**AND**

**THE RUSSIAN ANGOLA VETERANS UNION**

**IN MOSCOW, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**JUNE 2013**

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# REPORT

**This report has been submitted to the Russian Angola Veterans Union  
for their review and approval prior to it being distributed.**

**A copy of this report has also been sent to them**

## A. BACKGROUND:

As some colleagues are aware, I previously conducted commercial activities and geopolitical advisory activities in (among other locations) the [Russian Federation](#) and [CIS](#) for approximately 10 years, and have some relationships in government and other circles there. I also have relationships with military veterans in Russia, but these are with retired members of the [Spetsnaz](#) / [GRU](#) / another Agency's paramilitary units. I have not previously initiated contact with the [Russian Angola Veterans Union](#), which is the formal veterans' organisation in Russia for all Russian Federation members of the [Red Army](#) of the [Soviet Union](#) who served in Angola during the Angolan War.

I did, in the late 1990s, arrange for a well-known South African journalist to travel to Moscow and meet with former USSR Red Army veterans of the Angolan war / former USSR government members who administered the finance and operations of the war in Angola (I also arranged for this journalist to meet the former Chief of Staff of FAPLA, with former Warsaw Pact / USSR / FAPLA soldiers in Angola, and with former members of the Soviet government.) However, after these visits and meetings (and the opportunity for meetings with former members of the Soviet government was not taken up), the journalist buried the story and all of the video interviews. I can only assume that this was because the journalist found out the true story of the war, and not the fictional (but popular) version of the war as it has been portrayed in the recent past; and decided to just bury the true story so that the popular fictional one would remain prominent.

In any event, after a break of a few years, I have resumed contact with some business associates in the Russian Federation and CIS, and on a recent trip to Moscow, a Russian colleague and friend of mine (who is also a veteran from a specific Agency, but from the Chechen War not the Angolan War), arranged for me to meet with the Russian Angola Veterans Union (at my request).

The following is a general report on the meeting, which is provided for the interest of colleagues.

## B. INTRODUCTION:

I met with the board of the Russian Angola Veterans Union at their headquarters off Smolensk Square in Moscow. The Chairman of the Union kindly interrupted his holiday at his [Dacha](#) to return to Moscow for the meeting, and he requested the attendance at the meeting of other members of the Board of the Russian Angola Veterans Union, who all travelled from various areas to assemble at the Moscow headquarters to meet with me. This was a very kind gesture, for which I am grateful.

The meeting included the following persons:

- Mr [Vadim Sagatchko](#), Chairman of the Russian Angola Veterans Union.
- Mr [Maxim Gladkov](#), member of the Board of the Russian Angola Veterans Union.
- Mr Yevgeny Loginov, member of the Russian Angola Veterans Union and Director of the [Military Institute of Foreign Languages](#) Alumni Association.
- Myself, in my personal and private capacity as a retired Special Forces Operator, the former Chairman of the South African Special Forces League, and a friend of the Russian Federation.
- A friend of mine who is a retired member of a Russian Agency, who facilitated the meeting. His name and the name of the Agency that he is a former member of are not relevant to this document.
- A colleague of mine from the Executive Management Team of my company, whose name and details are not relevant to this document.

In the introductory discussions, we exchanged some details about our personal backgrounds vis-a-vis where we were during the war, the years that we were present there, and other details of relevance.

The members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union informed me that they had very good contact and excellent relations with our Special Forces colleague Douw Steyn. They also informed me that they had seen an interview from our Special Forces colleague Anton Beukman, in which he related his experiences during Operation Coolidge (the blowing up of the bridge crossing the Cuito River near Cuito Cuanavale). The Cuito River is a dangerous obstacle, as it is wide, deep and fast-flowing; with dangerous currents, whirlpools and – at the bridge – a large number of crocodiles.

We then went on to discuss various specific topics, the most relevant of which will be clarified to colleagues in specific paragraphs hereafter:

### C. THEIR VIEW OF THE WAR AND THE SADF, AND MY RECIPROCAL VIEW:

*Note: With the exception of views recorded as having been expressed by the members of the Russia-Angola Veterans Association, the views expressed in this document are my personal views:*

I got on very well with the members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union. I informed them that in my opinion, they were my wartime comrades (*Note: "Comrade" is used in the German sense – "[Kamerad](#)" / "[Kameraden](#)" – which pre-dates the Soviet use of this word by over 900 years, is not connected to the Soviet version, and has a different connotation - primarily military-related*). The reason for this is that although we were on opposite sides during the war, they shared the same experiences in the same environment as my colleagues and me, and therefore we share a close bond of a shared history and experience that will bind us together.

I informed them that it was a pity that the Russians had fought against the South Africans, as the Russians were historically strong supporters of South Africa. I reminded them of the Russian volunteers under [Colonel Maximov](#) and other Russian volunteer leaders who had fought very bravely and correctly to defend the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek during the Anglo-Boer War, and spoken out strongly in Europe against the [Concentration Camps](#). I also reminded them of how Russian support had been so strong that the song "[Transvaal, Transvaal my country](#)" had become one of the most popular [folk songs](#) in the [Russian Empire](#), and then in the Soviet Union / USSR.

I informed them that I was very happy to be among them, and that as a result of our shared experiences in the war, now that it is over, I consider them not to be just my comrades-in-arms, but also my friends.

The Chairman of the Russian Angola Veterans Union - Mr Vadim Sagatchko - informed me that they felt exactly the same. He went on to say that in respect of his and his Association's view of the South Africans and the SADF, that:

**"Even during the war, the Russians did not regard the South Africans as enemies, but only as adversaries".**

He agreed with my comments and said that they mirrored his views and those of the members of his Union. He went on to say that he hoped for friendship and cooperation between his Union and its members, and all and any South African SADF veterans' organisations and SADF veterans from the Angolan War. He said that they will be happy to form bonds and ties with any such organisations and / or persons.

His colleague, Mr Maxim Gladkov, stated in respect of his view and the view of his colleagues of the Russian Angolan Veterans Union of the South Africans and the SADF, that:

**"We all feel much more comfortable knowing that our former adversaries are no longer foes but friends with whom we share our common history and discuss how happy we were when we were young".**

They mentioned that in any event, such wars are fought merely as an extension of politics, and that the men on the ground are merely carrying out the instructions of the respective governments of the day in their execution of the endgames of political policies / geopolitical strategies.

As such, the men on the ground are not responsible for the commencement or the ending of the wars, and although politicians / people who are politically-motivated may harbour enmity towards one another after a war, there is no need for proper soldiers to do so.

I concurred with this.



#### D. WHO WON THE WAR:

On responding to this question, I mentioned that for me personally this is not a matter of consequence. I informed them that what I personally find of importance is not who won - but rather how the participants conducted themselves during the war.

I informed them that I personally found the adversaries of the [USSR](#) / [FAPLA](#)\* / [Cubans](#) to be very correct in the discharge of their duties, as they showed courage, resilience and bravery, and they were honourable. As such, they earned my respect. This is what, in my view, is of consequence. (\*Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola)

I informed them that as an example of what I meant, I was able to locate the person (from FAPLA) who shot me through the chest in a particular battle - just over two weeks after the battle in which he had shot me, and after I had returned to operations post-treatment. He had been wounded and captured during a subsequent battle and was recovering in a [UNITA](#) field hospital.

I went to visit him (along with Piet Fourie). He was a really nice guy, and we had a great afternoon chatting about many things – including the battle in which he shot me – from our different perspectives. He informed me that he had aimed at me from the kneeling position and taken his time to shoot. I complimented him on his cool and courageous action under fire, as it had been a particularly pressured situation (*two [Battalions](#) and a Reinforced [Company](#) of FAPLA caught 40 of us in an [L-shaped ambush](#) / attack and then surrounded us, necessitating a breakout of encirclement. The battle had therefore been at very close quarters, and not particularly pleasant for any of the participants*).

I went on to tell the FAPLA soldier that my only criticism was that if he had taken his time to aim, he must have jerked the trigger like a raw recruit when he shot me, and therefore pulled the shot to the right – otherwise it would have been through the heart. As such, I informed him that if he had been in my team I would have punished him for making such a basic error.

The FAPLA guy enjoyed that comment at the time and laughed a lot. The Russian colleagues enjoyed this story too. I informed them that this symbolises my view, that what matters is not who won, but rather whether one's colleagues and one's opponents – like the FAPLA soldier – fought with honour and courage under very difficult circumstances, and did their best, that was the litmus test for correct behaviour; and if one behaved correctly in the war, then it merited respect.

The members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union responded that their views were the same as mine. They stated that the arguments about who won the war were, in our circles, immature, and should be left to those who had not actually been in the war, as usually it is those who have not participated in that war (or any other war), or who have political or other hidden agendas, that have the most to say. However, what they have to say is not relevant, as empty barrels make the most (irrelevant) noise. I concurred with this.

## E. THE BATTLE OF CUITO CUANAVALA:

The members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union asked me what had happened at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale, as they wanted to know the truth. I informed them that this was not a difficult question to answer, because in fact there had never been a battle of, or even at, Cuito Cuanavale.

I informed them that, as a starting point, had the South Africans wished to attack Cuito Cuanavale, they would not have blown up the only bridge over the (otherwise impassable) Cuito River long before starting an attack, as once the bridge was blown it was not possible to cross the river to the other side – where Cuito Cuanavale lay – to even begin to attack it.

A good example of this from recent history is the [Arnhem incident](#) – which graphically demonstrated how important it is to protect or secure a bridge, [not to destroy a bridge](#), if one needs it to [cross a major river obstacle](#). In fact, the situation in Angola in 1987 / 1988 was very similar to that of Arnhem, as the Soviet-led forces – through their failure to protect the only bridge over the Cuito River – also went “[a bridge too far](#)”.

After the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban advance to the Namibian border was stopped and they retreated, they found themselves trapped on the UNITA side of the Cuito River, without the possibility to retreat back across the river to Cuito Cuanavale – or to be resupplied from it – because the bridge had been destroyed. They were then surrounded and trapped in a pocket on the Eastern side of the Cuito River by SADF and UNITA forces.

I informed the members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union that when we had finished our general discussions I would give them an overview on what had happened in the 1987 / 1988 war, which would explain the situation to them clearly. The top-level description of what I informed them about thereafter was this:

- There was no battle of, or at, Cuito Cuanavale in either 1987 or 1988. What in fact happened was:-
- In mid-1987, 8 full-strength [Soviet-led Conventional Brigades](#) and [Mechanised Battle Groups \(called the “Tactical Groups”\)](#) left [Cuito Cuanavale](#) and [crossed the only bridge](#) from the USSR-controlled Western side of the Cuito River onto the [UNITA-controlled](#) Eastern side. This force – together with the personnel of the logistical and resupply element that accompanied them – totalled approximately 30 000 persons;
- Their strategy was to strike South, [take the main UNITA towns of Mavinga and Jamba, destroy UNITA in Cuando Cubango Province, and take up position on the Angolan / Namibian border](#);
- It was in the strategic interests of South Africa to prevent conventional Soviet forces from taking up position on the Namibian border, and so an SADF\* / [SWATF](#) Expeditionary Force entered the area of “Free Angola”, which was the area of Angola under UNITA control, to assist UNITA to stop the southward offensive. (*\*Note: all Services of the SADF, including [Army](#), [Air Force](#), [Medical Services](#) and [Navy](#) took part in activities related to the support of this operation*);

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- After crossing the Cuito River and then striking South, the Southernmost point that the Soviet-led forces reached was the Lomba River Valley where the SADF / SWATF conventional forces were waiting for them;
- Between August and September 1987, FAPLA's 21 Brigade was defeated while trying to cross the Lomba River Valley towards Mavinga, and thereafter their elite 47 Brigade – which crossed to the Southern side of the Lomba River Valley – was met in battle and annihilated in conventional battles at close range by an SADF / SWATF Battle Group. This was known as “The Battle of the Lomba”, and it was *the* strategic battle of that campaign, as it stopped the Soviet-led Southward advance in its tracks;
- At the same time as the SADF / SWATF / UNITA began engaging the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban forces at the Lomba River Valley in August, an SADF Special Forces Team blew up the bridge over the Cuito River. The damage to the bridge closed it to vehicle traffic, which cut off the Soviet-led forces' logistical resupply from – and their retreat to – Cuito Cuanavale. This left them trapped on the UNITA side of the (otherwise impassable) Cuito River (Note: in January 1988, [South African Air Force](#) used a [Buccaneer](#) to drop an H2 Glide Bomb, which further destroyed a very large section of the bridge, and cut off pedestrian traffic over it);
- At that stage, in late August 1987 after the annihilation of 47 Brigade and the destruction of the bridge, the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban High Command issued the order to all of their forces on the Eastern side of the Cuito River to retreat back to Cuito Cuanavale;
- This precipitated the Soviet-led forces' retreat back to the bridge over the Cuito River;
- During this retreat, over a two-month period and a distance of 120 kilometres, the SADF / SWATF / UNITA forces pursued the retreating Soviet-led Brigades, and continually engaged them in [conventional warfare battles](#) of varying sizes and, together with UNITA, also implemented [asymmetric warfare](#) against them;
- These multiple and continuous battles throughout the 120-kilometre-long retreat of the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban forces resulted in the destruction or crippling of many of their remaining brigades, and the destruction of the majority of their heavy equipment (i.e. tanks, armoured vehicles, vehicles, artillery, missile batteries, etc);
- Although the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban forces had been ordered to retreat back to the Western side of Cuito Cuanavale, upon reaching the bridge over the Cuito River, the retreating Soviet-led Brigades could not cross it back to Cuito Cuanavale. [It had been totally destroyed for vehicle traffic, and only allowed passage on foot over a makeshift wooden suspension footbridge](#). To cross it in strength was not possible, as it would have exposed the Soviet-led ground forces to annihilation by artillery fire, and it would also have forced them to abandon all of their remaining equipment. In any event, as their force was so large that it had initially taken them 4 months to cross the Cuito River when launching their offensive, this was not an option;
- The remaining Soviet-led forces therefore adopted a defensive posture, cut off from the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban side of the river, and with their backs to the river;
- The SADF / SWATF / UNITA forces then surrounded them and kept them [encircled](#) in a [pocket](#) near the town of Tumpo on the UNITA-controlled Eastern side of the Cuito River, with SADF / SWATF / UNITA forces to their front and sides, and the Cuito River to their rear;

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- The Soviet-led forces' retreat and resupply was cut off due to the destroyed bridge over the Cuito River, and accurate fire from the South African artillery prevented / frustrated all Soviet-led forces' attempts to lay [pontoon bridges](#) to cross the river by alternative means. With the Soviet-led forces' escape or resupply routes cut off, and with continual harassing attacks against their encircled pocket by the SADF / SWATF / UNITA forces, the leadership of [the Angolans and the Cubans requested the resumption of peace talks](#) in late 1987;
- Due to the commencement of peace talks, and because the Soviet-led forces were now immobile –trapped in a pocket on the UNITA side of the river and unable to cross back to Cuito Cuanavale, and also unable to replenish their exhausted diesel and low stocks of ammunition and food – most of the combat-experienced National Servicemen of the SADF and SWATF were allowed to return to the Republic to “clear out” (i.e. end their military conscription);
- The battle-experienced personnel of the SADF who were withdrawn were replaced primarily by fresh [National Servicemen](#) (conscripts) and [Citizen Force](#) (Territorial) units in 1988;
- The SADF / SWATF forces surrounding the entrapped USSR / FAPLA / Cuban forces were also substantially reduced in numbers from the 1987 strength, as these replacement forces' task was not to implement a [battle of annihilation](#) of the Soviet-led forces trapped in the pocket, for there was no need for this as peace talks were already underway. There were approximately 2500 SADF / SWATF forces, of which approximately 1800 were combat troops (the others being logistical / support personnel), of which approximately 30% were Citizen Force personnel. They kept the encircled 20 000+ USSR / FAPLA / Cuban forces contained in the Tumpo Pocket while the peace talks continued, and until the conclusion of the peace talks (these concluded in late 1988);
- Every day that the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban forces remained trapped, their supplies of diesel, ammunition and food were reduced and all of their equipment and personnel were effectively tied down. Also, every attack against their pocket resulted in further destruction of their equipment;
- The Soviet-led forces inside this pocket could not implement a [breakout](#), as due to their being cut off from resupply from their logistical base at Cuito Cuanavale on the other side of the river; they did not have enough diesel, ammunition or food to do anything other than conduct a defensive action. Additionally, they had nowhere to breakout to, as the entire area on the Eastern side of the Cuito River where they were trapped was UNITA territory; and their breakout route to their own forces was blocked by the Cuito River;
- Even the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban forces inside Cuito Cuanavale were suffering from acute logistical shortages. They were resupplied from the town of Menongue, with only one road running from Menongue to Cuito Cuanavale [through a salient](#) within [UNITA-controlled territory](#). As UNITA controlled the bush on both sides of this road within this salient, it attacked every resupply convoy between Menongue and Cuito Cuanavale – causing substantial and on-going equipment and personnel losses. The USSR / FAPLA / Cuban casualties along this road were so high that they nicknamed it “[The road of Death](#)”;
- Other than this, it was by now December 1987, and Summer had begun with the usual rainy season. In that part of Africa, effective movement of large conventional forces can only be achieved in the Winter dry season. As such, the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban forces on the Eastern side of the Cuito River were trapped;

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- While the majority of the Soviet-led forces were contained in this pocket on the UNITA / SADF side of the Cuito River in Cuando Cubango Province (South-Eastern Angola) throughout 1988, the Cubans tried to implement a “[show of force](#)” in Kunene Province (South-Western Angola). This was unconvincing;
- Other than the fact that it was the completely wrong season for a major campaign (the rainy season), the Cuban column sent to the South towards the Namibian border did not carry anything more than first-line ammunition and other logistics (i.e. enough for one sustained contact / battle, after which it has to be resupplied), and the column was met in the field by SADF / SWATF forces in South-Western Angola and seriously damaged in a series of engagements, after which it turned around and moved off northwards;
- While these actions were on-going, the well-trained forces of UNITA were tying down remaining Soviet / FAPLA / Cuban manpower and resources in Central and [Northern Angola](#). They also – as they had done throughout late 1987 – continually attacked the only resupply route (overland) from Menongue to Cuito Cuanavale, so even the remaining Soviet-led forces at Cuito Cuanavale were in dire straits from a logistical resupply point-of-view;
- In late 1988, the terms for the peace were concluded in [the Tripartite Accord](#) which was signed in New York;
- As a result of the agreement on the peace accords, the SADF left its positions surrounding the entrapped Soviet-led forces in their pocket on the Eastern side of the Cuito River in Cuando Cubango province and returned to Namibia, and then back to South Africa. This allowed the Soviet-led forces to repair the bridge, leave the pocket and cross back over the Cuito River to Cuito Cuanavale; after which the non-Angolan elements returned to Luanda, and began the process for leaving Angola permanently;
- That was effectively the end of the Angolan War.

As such:

- The events of 1987 / 1988 did not represent an offensive action by the SADF and UNITA to take Cuito Cuanavale. They represented a defensive action by the SADF and UNITA to defend against the Soviet-led forces’ strategy to attack and take Mavinga and Jamba in Cuando Cubango province, and thereafter to take up offensive positions on the Angolan-Namibian border;
- The principal battles, which determined the outcome of that campaign, were the ones waged in 1987, not 1988. These battles took place in the area between the Lomba River Valley and the Cuito River. The principal battle was the battle of the Lomba, where the Soviet-led forces’ Southward advance was halted, with the annihilation of their elite 47 Brigade by the SADF;
- The events of 1988 should correctly be called “**The Tumpo Pocket containment**”, not the “Battle of Cuito Cuanavale”. Military custom historically assigns the name of the closest large settlement as the name of an encircled and entrapped pocket (i.e. the [Dunkirk Pocket](#) / [Demjansk Pocket](#) / [Cherkassy Pocket](#) / etc) – and [Tumpo](#) was the largest village inside the pocket in which the Soviet-led forces were trapped on the Eastern side of the Cuito River;

- The only activities that the SADF carried out in respect of Cuito Cuanavale (*which is, in fact, just [a small and basic town, with a rudimentary airfield](#), on an indefensible flat plain – which was nothing more than the last logistical outpost at the furthestmost extent of USSR / FAPLA / Cuban-controlled territory, before UNITA-held territory began*), was to periodically shell the military runway to keep it cratered and prevent aircraft from using it, periodically shell the riverbanks to prevent pontoon bridges being laid, and periodically shell the approaches to the bridge to prevent it from being repaired. This was very light shelling compared to the barrages that had been put down on the retreating Soviet-led forces in 1987, and the shelling that was directed into the Tumpo Pocket.

*(Note: It should also be noted that this was not the first time that the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban forces attempted this strategy. They had first attempted this with a major offensive in 1985, and had been defeated at the Lomba River Valley with some South African assistance, and had retreated back over the Cuito River to Cuito Cuanavale. [The US President at the time – Ronald Reagan – openly reported on this in his “Forward for Freedom” speech in 1986](#). In 1986 they tried a smaller offensive, were again defeated at the Lomba River Valley, and again retreated over the Cuito River back to Cuito Cuanavale. The only difference between the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban offensives in 1985, 1986 and 1987, and the SADF responses to them, were:*

- *In the case of the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban forces, the vast scale of Conventional War men and weaponry (of [an extraordinarily large quantity, wide range and sophisticated type](#)) that the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban forces deployed in their 1987 offensive action was such that no equivalent had been deployed in Africa for a single offensive campaign since the major North African battles of the Second World War between the Allied and Axis powers. Their [targets](#) were Mavinga, Jamba and the Namibian border, and their [objective \(strategic goal\)](#) was to destroy UNITA in the Cuando Cubango Province, and thereafter take up position on the Namibian border to threaten, and potentially implement, hostile actions inside Namibia.*
- *In the case of the SADF / SWATF / UNITA forces, in 1987 they determined to wait until most USSR / FAPLA / Cuban men and materiel had crossed the bridge over the Cuito River from the USSR / FAPLA / Cuban-controlled Western side of the Cuito River, into the UNITA-controlled Eastern side of the Cuito River, and then destroy the bridge. Not only would this cut the Soviet-led forces’ logistics and supply lines and prevent them from receiving diesel, ammunition, food and other resupplies (a catastrophic and “end-game” situation from a strategic military viewpoint) – it would also cut off the (only) escape route back to Cuito Cuanavale. This would enable the SADF / SWATF / UNITA to engage them with a view to destroying as much of their equipment as possible. The reason for this was to inflict maximum equipment loss and damage to the Soviet-led forces. Such heavy equipment losses would take years to rebuild to the same levels, and until they had rebuilt their capability (if they did) they would not be able to again launch an offensive towards Mavinga, Jamba and the Namibian border on that scale. The SADF [targets](#) were the Soviet-led Brigades that had crossed the Cuito River, and the SADF’s [objective \(strategic goal\)](#) was to trap these Brigades on the Eastern side of the Cuito River so that they could engage them and destroy as much equipment and heavy equipment as possible.)*

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## F. OPERATION COOLIDGE:

The members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union expressed great interest in Operation Coolidge (the operation to destroy the bridge over the Cuito River near Cuito Cuanavale), and asked many questions about it.

They started by asking whether the operation had been launched from “The Savimbi Path”, but I told them that I had no idea what the “Savimbi Path” was. They explained that it was what they called the Eastern Side of the Cuito River (*Note: the eastern side of the Cuito River was UNITA territory. The Cuito River was the dividing line between FAPLA-controlled territory and UNITA-controlled territory in Cuando Cubango Province*).

I replied that in this case I now knew what they were talking about, as I had been active throughout the area between the Cuito and Lomba rivers, and in some other associated locations, continuously from March to December 1987 with one short break and a further involuntary short break. I was therefore able to give feedback.

I informed them that I was one of the persons that did the first reconnaissance behind the Soviet-led forces’ lines on the Cuito Bridge and the area around it for the suitability of entry points for the 4 Recce team (*I was part of the Directorate of Special Tasks “Liaison Team”, led by Lima Romeo, who did the reconnaissance*), and thereafter I led the Directorate of Special Tasks Team and UNITA that guided the 4 Recce Reconnaissance Team in to do their follow-up selection of entry points and other tests / information-gathering prior to the operation. (*Note: initially it had been planned that a Directorate of Special Tasks team would attack the bridge from the river from Zodiac [inflatable boats](#), until it became apparent that due to the defences on, around and under the bridge, it would have been utterly futile to attempt this type of operation with/from Zodiacs*).

I then provided them with some background on how the initial reconnaissance had been done, the circumstances, the terrain, the challenges, etc; for both the initial reconnaissance, and thereafter the follow-up reconnaissance with 4 Recce. I also mentioned how on the initial recce we had watched fire-plans being fired by mortars / BM21s / D30s into the bush around Cuito Cuanavale at night - and even Anti-Aircraft fire at night into the air - which was quite dramatic to see (and an indication of how much fear there was inside Cuito Cuanavale).

I also discussed some specific incidents that had taken place – a funny one where we walked into a minefield and the \*Moroccan-trained UNITA said “We’re in a minefield, don’t tell the South Africans” (as they did not want to appear foolish, and did not know that I spoke perfect Portuguese), and a tragic one where one of the UNITAs died of a heart attack by trying to keep up with us by walking at speed over a long distance with very heavy kit over difficult terrain (this happened occasionally). (*\*Note: In 1987 and 1988, the majority of the very well-trained and capable UNITA that had been trained by the SADF were removed from Cuando Cubango Province to carry out operations in Central and Northern Angola, to place pressure on the Soviet logistical system / tie-down other forces. The UNITA in Cuando Cubango province during that time were therefore primarily the Moroccan-trained UNITA, who were trained to a much lower standard (i.e. just above militia standard)*).

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I informed them that I of course knew all of the stories of the 4 Recce Operators who took part in the actual operation in the river, as many of them are very good friends of mine, and I have discussed it with them often. I therefore know about one of them being caught in a whirlpool and swimming out of it; Anton Beukman being attacked and taken to the bottom of the Cuito River by a crocodile and fighting it off with his knife; the fire directed at them when the underwater booby-trap demolitions went off; and so on.

However, I informed them that as I was not in the water (as I am not a [4 Recce](#) Operator / Attack Diver) that it is not correct for me to provide such feedback second-hand, as this is best obtained from one of the people who were in the water. I said that one of the best persons to discuss this with was also Douw Steyn, as he has all required information on this operation. I said that my last activity for that operation was around the fire with the 4 Recce Team on the night of the operation, when I said goodbye to my friends as they left to enter the water, and I went to take up my position at the Northern Extraction Point on the Cuito River point for that operation.

I did tell them that in my opinion it was one of the most challenging operations in international Special Forces history, and that I thought every single one of my friends from 4 Recce who got into the water - knowing in advance about all of the man-eating crocodiles, current, defences at the bridge, underwater booby traps and explosives, and so forth – were of the most courageous people that I have ever had the privilege to know.

I also mentioned that a sometimes overlooked aspect of Operation Coolidge are the actions by the [5 Recce](#) Special Forces Teams of Shaun Gullan and Jim Maguire at the Southern Extraction Point on the Cuito River, who switched off their radios to avoid being ordered to leave after they overstayed the maximum cut-off time in order to wait for Anton Beukman.

I informed them of how an [Mi24 Hind](#) gunship had hovered over Shaun's hide at such close proximity that he could see the face of the (Russian, he thought) gunner, and how he kept it in the sights of his [Ambrust](#) until it flew off.

I also informed them of how Jim Maguire had swum the Cuito River alone to go in and fetch Anton and bring him out when Anton caught the underwater rope across the river, but was too exhausted from his multiple wounds to get to the river bank.

Their subsequent exfiltration through and past multiple Stopper Groups is also an interesting story.

The members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union were satisfied with my explanations and feedback, and said that they and all their colleagues looked forward to, in the future, hearing from some of the other participants who were in the water. They had already heard about the operation from Douw Steyn and seen Anton Beukman's interview – both of which they found extremely interesting. They said that they would be very interested to hear the perspective s from the other participants too.



## G. THE CUBAN QUESTION:

The members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union asked me for my view on the Cubans. I informed them that I personally find Cubans – in general – to be very nice people, and that I considered them to have been good soldiers who conducted themselves correctly, honourably and courageously. I informed them that I also regarded Cuban veterans as being my wartime comrades (“Kameraden”) - as I do in respect of FAPLA and UNITA veterans too. I informed them that I did not discuss the war with any Cubans except Cubans who are in the Cuban expatriate community in the USA, and some that I had met in Angola after the war.

I informed them that the reason I do not discuss it with Cubans living in Cuba or in Cuban government service is because Cuba is not a free country. It is a [cult-of-personality dictatorship](#) (in the same manner as [North Korea](#)) where for the past 54 years the Castro brothers have acted as though they are (unelected) Kings-for-life, and have treated the country and its people as though they are their [dynastic](#) private property. Consequently, Cubans living there – or in government/ official service in other countries – cannot express themselves freely, and unless they say what their dictatorial government expects them to say (which is a repetition of propaganda), [they will get into serious trouble](#).

As such, I never want to place residents of Cuba in a situation where they will either get into trouble [or be arrested for saying something openly which does not follow their dictatorship’s official line](#), or alternatively be placed in an uncomfortable position by having to repeat to me things that may not be what they truly want to say.

Other than this, many aspects of [Cuban reality](#) are [kept from its people](#) in-country as there is no press or media freedom, so they [may not](#) even [be aware](#) of many [aspects](#) and [issues](#). As the lives of all the inhabitants of that country have been made unpleasant enough through their dictatorship reducing them to a state of utter beggary (including the Cuban veterans of the Angolan War, who live miserable lives), I have no desire to make their lives even more unpleasant by engaging in discussions for which they are not ready. On the contrary, when their country becomes free (which it will, as it is [now in a far worse state](#) that it was in before Castro’s revolution, and is ready for a change), I will assist them in the same manner that I will assist any *real* veteran of the Angolan War.

The Russians informed me that they regarded the Cuban soldiers who fought as their allies very highly, and as their brothers. They informed me that during the war, Fidel Castro had instructed informally that for every Russian soldier who was killed in combat, three Cuban soldiers should have died first in the same battle. They went on to say that the Cubans had followed this guideline. They gave me an example of a siege that some of them had undergone in an Angolan city which had been besieged by UNITA, and in which they were trapped. They told me that the Cubans had followed Fidel Castro’s decree, and had [died in great numbers](#) in defence of the City and of their Russian colleagues, and that the Cubans had freely shared their last food with their Russian colleagues (who would otherwise have starved) to their own great detriment.

I mentioned that there were great stories to be told by the Cubans, but that they would have to wait until that country is free. The Russian Angola Veterans Union mentioned that this is most probably the case, as a well-known Cuban soldier from that war who has since fled from Cuba recently released a book on the war where in the preface he states that the young Cubans should not believe what their government has to say on the war, and that they should rather conduct their own personal investigations of what happened to find the truth. I am sure if colleagues email the persons at the Russian Angola Veterans Union, the name of this author and book can be obtained.

## H. THE “WANNABE” QUESTION:

To my great surprise, I found out that the Russians have as big a problem with wannabes as exists in South Africa (and in the USA), and in Russia it is particularly acute in respect of the Angolan War. This is because – as in South Africa – details of the Angolan War were kept confidential from the general public in the USSR. As such the Russian general public is not very well informed of the situation relating to the Angolan War. Many people do not know that Russian soldiers were there. This provides a fertile breeding ground for people to tell utterly idiotic war stories, which the general public believe.

They informed me that it is a serious problem for them, and they regret that there is no “[Stolen Valor](#)” law in Russia as there is in the USA, where people can be prosecuted for making such false statements and claims.

I informed them that the Stolen Valor law in the USA has in fact been partially repealed (due to a freedom of speech challenge), but that I would place them in touch with my friend [Larry Bailey](#) of the US Navy SEALs who has been involved with [activities to combat this phenomenon](#), as well as the lobbying and motivations to the US government to bring about the promulgation of the original law in the first place.

I went on to say that I recommend they establish a [Wall of Shame](#) on their website, as it was effective in South Africa in respect of discouraging [wannabes](#), as well as illustrating to the public that this phenomenon exists and the type of stories that these individuals tell. It would therefore serve as a shield in protecting their reputation and correcting public perception.

I informed them that when I was Chairman of the League, and that enquiries / complaints regarding more than a thousand wannabes had been received, but that since the “Wall of Shame” had been introduced the incidence had dropped – but that it was still a problem. I informed them that the Special Forces League was managing this problem most effectively and professionally (through the dedicated activities of Heinrich von Berg), and that the Russian Angola Veterans Union really should consider doing the same in respect of managing this phenomenon, as otherwise great reputational damage and other unpleasant results can arise.

They then related to me an example of a recent wannabe story that they had had to deal with. It is a fantastic story, and deserves 11-out-of-10 on the Richter scale of fantasy. For colleagues’ enjoyment, I reproduce it overleaf.

Firstly, it should be taken into account that just as military veterans’ organisations in South Africa have access to the military records of all SADF personnel, the Russian Angola Veterans Union has access to the military records of the members of the Soviet army who participated in the Angolan War – including where they were, what they did, etcetera.

It came to their attention that an individual was telling major Angolan war stories in Moscow. Unfortunately for him, according to their (100% accurate) records, he had never been near Angola. They therefore invited him to attend their offices to relate his story to them, and he actually did (a triumph of arrogance & stupidity over common-sense & prudence). This is his story:

**He was sent on a “special secret mission” from Russia to Angola.**

*(This already sounds familiar.)*

**He left Russia and travelled all the way to Angola underwater in a Diesel Submarine.**

*(He did not specify from which port – so it could have been any one of them along their 37 653 km long coast. He also did not specify why he did not instead travel on one of the multiple routine daily flights from Russia to Angola, or in a comparatively lightning-fast Soviet warship or nuclear-powered submarine; but preferred instead to travel in a diesel submarine as if he was in the Second World War, and seemingly did not suffer from diesel exhaust fume poisoning even though they never surfaced during the voyage of several thousand kilometres.)*

**He landed secretly on the beach at Namibe.**

*(It is unclear why he would have to land secretly at the main USSR/ Cuban /FAPLA Naval base in the South of Angola, as he would have attracted less attention if he had marched out in broad daylight singing the Soviet National Anthem at its loudest, than he would with a “secret” landing. Also, he provided no details of how he exited the submarine alone, what he used to get to the beach, how he hid it, etcetera.)*

**He then travelled due West, “alone” (again, a familiar story), hacking his way through the “jungle” with a machete.**

*(For all colleagues who share the misfortune of having operated in the God-forsaken area of [Kaokoland](#) – which is the area he refers to – you will be aware that there is nothing there but semi-desert, desert and stone desert mountains.)*

**When he reached a “specific point”, he entered Namibia and blew up the largest secret Petro-Chemical factory in the area – alone.**

*(The “specific point” he refers to covers about 100 kilometres wide of empty Ovamboland bush on the cutline. If anyone can inform me of the location of the secret Petro-Chemical factory that was so secret that no-one who has ever been in or lived in Ovamboland then or now ever knew about it, built it, or dismantled it, or saw it or worked in it; I would be most grateful.)*

**After he had finished his demanding mission in South West Africa / Namibia, he returned to Angola – alone, and then returned from Angola to Russia – alone.**

*(He did not specify how he had carried water, food, equipment, weapons, ammunition, explosives or anything else for the entire trip in and out – alone. Fortunately, we at least know that he carried a machete.)*

This story fits the exact pattern of the stories that we have to tolerate. It seems as though the incidence of compulsive lying by people (correctly known according to its clinical classification as [Pseudologia Fantastica](#)) in order to gain attention or sympathy, to provide excuses for deviant behaviour, or seek to obtain recognition or respect for actions which were not performed anywhere except in the storyteller's own mind, knows no national boundaries. Although these stories are quite funny to us, they are damaging in respect of public opinion, and are therefore the common enemy of all of us – whatever country we are from / side we were on during the war.

**I. ANOMALY:**

The totals and statistics that the Russian Angola Veterans Union have, and that I have - for totals of all Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact personnel in Angola during the Angolan War - do not correspond. Although their Association has the complete records of Red Army and civilian personnel in-situ, I have obtained my data previously from a person who became my colleague and then my personal friend in a time after the war (Dr Oleg Dmitriovich Davydov – former [Deputy Prime Minister](#) and [Minister of Foreign Economic Relations](#) of the Russian Federation, previously Minister of Foreign Economic Relations of the USSR), and also from individuals within the Government of the Russian Federation with which I had previously liaised during my geopolitical consulting activities, as well as with veterans from GRU / Spetsnaz. The persons at the Russian Angolan Veterans Union explained to me that they did not have possession of the records from [GRU / KGB ground units](#), and that some information that they may not have may be found there.

I am therefore arranging that on my next trip to Russia I will meet with members from these organisations to attempt to clarify this matter satisfactorily. I shall also make a side trip to the Republic of Georgia to meet with the last Foreign Minister of the USSR – [Dr Eduard Shevardnadze](#) – as he was in that post during the Angolan War, and may be able to clarify this matter further. I shall provide feedback to colleagues once I have done this.

**J. PREMISES AND DISPLAY:**

The Russian Angola Veterans Union has set up their premises well, and professionally so. Inside, they have numerous photos portraying their members in various locations in Angola during the war. The photos have captions in Russian and English. They also have a [display of mannequins in uniform with weapons](#) – representing Russian / Cuban / FAPLA on the one hand and South Africans on the other hand (although we found it amusing that many of my colleagues and I had also worn the Russian / Cuban / FAPLA uniform during the war, and used their weapons). There is an entrance hall, a room with said photo display, an office and a boardroom / meeting room with the uniform / flag / equipment / weapons display.

Photos: [one](#), [two](#), [three](#), [four](#), [five](#), [six](#), [seven](#), [eight](#), [nine](#), [ten](#), [eleven](#), [twelve](#), [thirteen](#), [fourteen](#), [fifteen](#)

## K. SUBSIDIARY COMMENTS:

The members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union asked whether I was involved in veterans' associations matters in South Africa and whether I would report to South African colleagues upon my return. I informed them that I was not involved in veterans' association administration since my retirement as Chairman of the [Special Forces League](#). I explained that I am, in fact, of German heritage, and that I remained in the SADF for the duration of the war, as I believed that it was my duty to defend the country where I was born; but that after the war ended I returned to Europe, and I now live in Germany. I furthermore explained that I only returned to South Africa temporarily in the early 2000s to assist – at the request of a friend of mine (the late Johan “Roes” Terblanche) - with a specific matter in respect of the Special Forces League, as I considered this to be a duty to my colleagues. However, in order to do so, I had to put my European business activities on hold. Therefore, once the specific aim for which I returned to South Africa had been accomplished, I retired from that post and returned to Europe to continue with my business activities. I therefore undertook to rather issue a written report (this report) to the members of the Special Forces League, and - via electronic communication channels - to various other South African veterans associations.

The members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union expressed great interest in the capabilities and range of the [G5 artillery pieces](#), and I informed them of details to do with their range and capabilities, as well as the methodology of calling in artillery strikes from G5s which I did on a few occasions together with Anton Boshoff and Piet Fourie. They were similarly very interested in the [\\*127mm Multiple Rocket Launchers](#), (which they call “Valkyrie”), and asked if we had copied them from BM 21s. I therefore informed them of the MRL's capabilities, airburst functionality, etcetera, as I also had reasonable experience of calling in strikes from them. They were impressed with the capabilities of both weapon types. I told them that their own [BM 21 “Grad” / “Stalin Organ”](#) were not bad, although on the occasions when I had come under fire from them I found that the soft Angola sand masked a lot of their shrapnel when the rockets exploded on ground impact. An airburst capability like we had with our 127mm MRLs, would have made them far more effective. I then informed them that their [D30 artillery pieces](#) were not bad either, and although they were out-ranged by the G5s that it was nevertheless very unpleasant to be under their fire when in their range – especially as they had substantially larger quantities of artillery pieces than we did. (*\* Note: the MRLs in the video are not of the Valkyrie model, but the later Bateleur model. However, with the exception of minor differences, they are generally the same as those used in the 1987 / 1988 war*)

Furthermore, the members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union asked me about UNITA. I informed them that I had been responsible for training the Special Forces of UNITA for a while, in the covert training bases in Cuando Cubango Province of Angola (*this information is no longer considered to be secret, and it is not subject to legislation related to the Protection of Information Act*). I informed them that this was a lengthy subject to discuss, and it would have to wait until our next meeting. The members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union requested that I provide all of their assembled members with a lecture in Moscow on the events of 1987 in Angola, which I agreed to do at a future date.

## L. COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS:

1. The members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union are very well disposed towards their South African counterparts, and would like to further extend their contact and relationships with South African military veterans' organisations that would like to contact them. Individuals are also welcome to contact them directly for communication or comment.
  
2. Their display in respect of South African SADF uniforms, equipment and weaponry can be improved. That which they currently have is two sets of browns, a chest webbing, a rucksack, an old-style "staaldak" steel helmet, an R1 and an Uzi. It would help if they could have as accurate a representation as possible, and as they have gone to a lot of trouble to try to represent the South African side realistically, it would be good if colleagues could assist them by sending them some correct items to add to their display. By correct items, I refer to:
  - A set of browns perhaps with cloth wings or other cloth badges, Kevlar helmet, and the standard SADF webbing from 1987;
  - A set of 32 Bn camou uniform (with camou bush hat), with the webbing or webbing combinations and rucksack that 32 Bn or the Recce wing used, and perhaps ops takkies.
  - Some Special Forces kit (i.e. camou of various patterns), Bergen, Niemoller webbing, camou hat, waxies, and / or anything else that anyone may have spare;
  - Some SWATF uniforms and / or kit;
  - Any other artefacts such as flags, unit insignia, unit flags, berets, unit flashes or other items that anyone may wish to send, including a period South African flag (*as they have period flags of Angola and the USSR from the time of the Angolan War. These have, like the South African flag, changed subsequently*).

As I have mentioned, they have an interest in the South African and SADF involvement, and go out of their way to represent it correctly, so it would be nice to assist them in representing this in the most accurate manner possible. They will acknowledge the name of the person / organisation that has donated any items.
  
3. If any colleagues wish to exchange photos with them, the Russian Angola Veterans Union will display photos from the South African perspective in their premises, with credits provided for the photos, and subtitles in Russian and English.

I would also like to mention that – other than veterans' affairs – Russia is in a very good position economically and business-wise at this point in time, as are all the countries of the CIS. It is therefore my opinion and suggestion that, as the members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union are well-disposed towards South African colleagues, and as both they and South African colleagues are well-known for enterprising and innovative ways of doing business, that colleagues can also consider approaching or discussing with these persons potential mutually beneficial [commercial and / or business opportunities in Russia](#) and the CIS. South African veterans are respected and welcome in Russia, and – through the members of the Russian Angola Veterans Union – they have friends who are similar to them in their outlooks and views due to their shared history and experiences, who are very well-placed to help them / facilitate business activities in Russia / the CIS (as South Africans are well-placed to assist Russian colleagues in Africa).



## **M. MESSAGE FROM THE RUSSIAN ANGOLA VETERANS UNION TO THE SADF VETERANS OF THE ANGOLAN WAR:**

I have asked the Russian Angola Veterans Union to send a personal message to their South African SADF counterparts, from all units, who participated in the Angolan War, in all units and in all capacities. It is here:

*Dear South African veterans of the Angolan War,*

*Many years ago we first met, and the circumstances of our first encounter can hardly be called happy.*

*We lived in the era of the Cold War, but for many of us the mere word “cold” sounded like irony or even mockery. What could be hotter than the hotbeds of the Angolan War or Border/Bush War the way you used to call it.*

*Some of our fellow veterans on both sides are still refighting the old battles seeking to reinforce their winning stance, but... we are living in a brand new world.*

*In the older days politicians had used ideology to set us against each other, and we as military people, on both sides, discharged our duty with courage and pride. We have nothing to regret and reproach ourselves for.*

*Those politicians are gone. But we are here, in this new world. And there is nothing capable of setting us against each other again. On the contrary, in these new circumstances we are finding out how much in common we had in the past and have now.*

*Ironically, we are coming to understanding that, despite all differences, our former societies, even our army service conditions were very much alike. Moreover, today we live in the same economic formation called BRICS where the “R” stands for Russia and the “S” stands for South Africa.*

*But most importantly, we have common history. There is a saying, “the history is written by winners”. We are in a unique position in this sense – there are no losers among us.*

*It means, that we can write our history together.*

*Probably, for the first time the history of a war stands a chance of being written by former adversaries together in an unbiased manner. And there are good examples of this to be followed: a documentary filmed by a South African film-maker featuring Russian veterans, a book written by a South African author based, among other stories, on reminiscences of former Russian military advisors, a South African web-site using Russian materials to reproduce combat situations of the Angolan War in miniature – this list can be continued.*

*The visit of Stuart Sterzel to the office of the Russian Angola Veterans Union and the great discussion that we had is yet another contribution to this important and inevitable process and confirmation of the fact that in any situation good human intentions and common sense can oust confrontation based on improper political motivation.*

*With this in mind, I would like to say thank you to all our South African friends for what they are doing to bring us even closer together.*

*We, Russian veterans of the Angolan War, say: may, at all times, the Sun shine bright for South African fellow veterans and their near and dear ones.*

*On behalf of the Russian Angola Veterans Union*

*Maxim Gladkov*

*Board member, Russian Angola Veterans Union*

## N. CONTACT DETAILS:

The contact details of the representative of the Russian Angola Veterans Union are as follows:

### Mr Maxim Gladkov

Member of the Board of the Russian Angola Veterans Union

Email address: maximgladkov (at) hotmail.com

Telephone number: +7 916 741 9096 / +1 904 377 2896

(To be contacted for any questions relating to the Russian Angola Veterans Union)

## CONCLUSION:

The People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) armed wing of the [SWAPO](#) organisation was a USSR sub-[proxy](#). It did not conduct, or have the capability to conduct, strategic operations against the SADF or SWATF.

During the Angolan War, the armies / organisations that conducted strategic combat operations against South African forces were those from the USSR, FAPLA and Cuba. Indeed, the presence of the USSR / Warsaw Pact forces in Angola and the [potential threat](#) that they posed towards South Africa was the primary reason for the positioning of the South African Defence Force on the Namibian / Angolan border, and its actions between 1975 and 1988.

Of these forces, the Cubans were in Angola only as [the Castro dictatorship was paid by the USSR](#) to provide soldiers (i.e. he turned his country into the [USSR's mercenary state](#)), in various countries during the Cold War period. *(Cuba had absolutely no significant military, strategic transport, manufacturing, logistical, equipment, fuel, food production, financial or other independent capabilities of its own, at all, and the Cuban dictatorship could [not even feed](#) its own [population](#) in Cuba without the USSR.)*

Similarly, the MPLA government in Angola and its FAPLA army (who were [not a legal or elected government](#) as they had seized power in a USSR-backed [military coup](#) in 1975) was [fully funded and supported by the USSR](#) (which was why within 2 years after the withdrawal of USSR and Cuban forces from Angola, UNITA was operating in over 70% of Angola). The soldiers from other USSR proxy countries that participated in the war were in small numbers, and did not play a strategic role.

As such, during the Angolan War, the Principal Party on the USSR side was the USSR itself – which has since ceased to exist. However, as the former USSR was run by Russia, and the current Russian Federation comprises the successor-in-title (as well as comprising the majority of the territory of the former USSR).

Therefore, at this time, the Principal Party from that war on the USSR side is Russia.

Similarly, although UNITA was supported, funded or trained by (besides South Africa) Morocco, the USA, other [NATO](#) countries and Western-aligned African countries; the South African training and logistical support was the key to its success.

Other than this, although South Africa was supported in various ways by the USA, France, and many NATO and NATO-orientated African countries, it was the South Africans and the SADF that fought the Conventional Warfare battles, and led / co-ordinated all of the other countries' activities in the defence of the Republic of South Africa and also of NATO / Western interests in the region.

As such, during the Angolan War, the Principal Party on the Western / NATO side was South Africa.

Therefore, it is only correct that the members of the two principal parties to that war – being the Russians and the South Africans - lead the way in showing, through their post-war friendship and co-operation, the proper way in which honourable and correct military men and women behave once hostilities are over.

That is, in a manner which recognises the correct and honourable conduct of one's former adversaries during hostilities, which then develops naturally into friendship and co-operation after the cessation of hostilities, between people who have far more in common than they have differences.

This is, of course, only my personal view.

Kind regards.

Stuart

**Stuart Sterzel**  
**Retired Special Forces Operator**

**NOTE**

I have been requested by various colleagues to re-issue this report with Appendixes attached to it, in order to contextualise the Angolan War in terms of historical, geopolitical and geostrategic considerations relating to the Cold War. An extended Report with Appendixes will therefore be issued in the near future.