

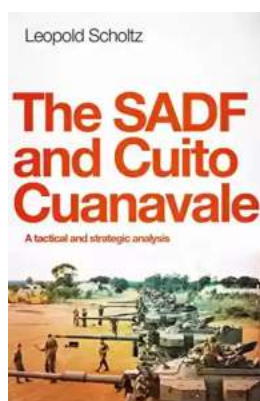
The SADF And Cuito Cuanavale: The Untold Story

Discover the gripping tale of The South African Defence Force (SADF) and the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, a monumental conflict that has remained mostly hidden from the world's attention. This article aims to shed light on this historic event, its significance, and the heroes who fought on both sides.

The Origins: Understanding the Conflict

The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, fought between South African-led forces of the SADF and Cuban-backed forces supported by the Angolan military, started in 1987 and lasted until 1988. It took place near the small town of Cuito Cuanavale, located in southeastern Angola.

The conflict emerged as a result of regional power struggles during the Cold War era. South Africa, at that time, upheld an apartheid regime and aimed to prevent the growth of communism in Angola. Meanwhile, Cuba saw an opportunity to support Angola's socialist government while also gaining influence in the region.



The SADF and Cuito Cuanavale: A Tactical and Strategic Analysis by Leopold Scholtz (Kindle Edition)

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Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

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Print length : 223 pages



The Battlefield: Cuito Cuanavale

Cuito Cuanavale was a strategic town located near the Angolan-Namibian border. It served as a crucial supply line for Angolan forces as well as a launching pad for potential offensives. The town's geographical significance made it a perfect target for South African-led forces.

What followed was a fierce and protracted battle that would shape the course of southern African history. The SADF launched several large-scale attacks, attempting to capture Cuito Cuanavale from the Angolan and Cuban forces. However, these assaults were met with stiff resistance and high casualties.

The Aftermath: Turning Point in the Conflict

Despite enduring heavy losses, the SADF managed to prevent the capture of Cuito Cuanavale by Angolan and Cuban forces. This marked a significant turning point in the conflict, as it shattered the myth of South African invincibility, which had been bolstered by previous successful operations in the region.

The battle forced South Africa to adopt a more defensive stance, and negotiations for a ceasefire soon followed. This event also put pressure on all parties to engage in peace talks, ultimately leading to the withdrawal of South African forces from Angola and paving the way for Namibia's independence from South Africa.

The Forgotten Heroes

Throughout the conflict, brave soldiers on both sides exhibited immense courage and determination. The SADF soldiers fought with tenacity, fully aware of the greater significance of their actions in the struggle against communism. On the

opposing side, Cuban and Angolan troops displayed their strength, demonstrating their commitment to preserving Angolan socialist ideals.

Unfortunately, these heroes have often been overshadowed by the broader political context of the Cold War. However, it is essential to acknowledge their sacrifices and the impact their actions had on shaping the future of the region.

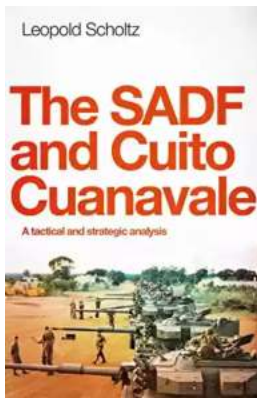
The Legacy: Lessons Learned

The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale left behind a lasting legacy. It proved that even a relatively small country like Angola, with the support of Cuba, could resist and eventually defeat a powerful military force like the SADF. This victory had broader implications, emboldening other liberation movements and hastening the end of apartheid in South Africa.

Moreover, the conflict also marked the end of the era where southern Africa became a battleground for Cold War proxies. It served as a wake-up call for both superpowers involved, highlighting the devastating consequences of their actions and leading to more considerable efforts for regional stability.

The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale stands as a testament to the resilience and determination of those who fought in this forgotten conflict. While it may have been overshadowed by bigger events during the Cold War, its significance cannot be ignored.

This article aimed to shed light on The SADF and Cuito Cuanavale, bringing the untold story to the forefront. By recognizing the bravery of the soldiers involved and understanding the broader impact of the battle, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of this historic event.



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“A shooting war is often followed by a second war. This war is not fought with bullets or artillery shells, not with tanks or bombers, but rather with words. The war is, in effect, fought again on paper.”

In 1987–1988 the dusty Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale was the backdrop for the final battles of the Border War. Ever since the war ended, the fighting around Cuito has been the subject of a fierce public debate over who actually won the war.

While the leadership of the former South African Defence Force (SADF) claims it was never defeated, the supporters of the Angolan MPLA government, Cuba and SWAPO insist that the SADF was vanquished on the battlefield. They contend that the SADF wanted to overrun Cuito Cuanavale and use it as a springboard for an advance on Luanda.

But was Cuito Cuanavale ever really an objective of the SADF? Leopold Scholtz tackles this question by examining recently declassified documents in the SANDF archives, exploring the strategic and tactical decisions that shaped the six main

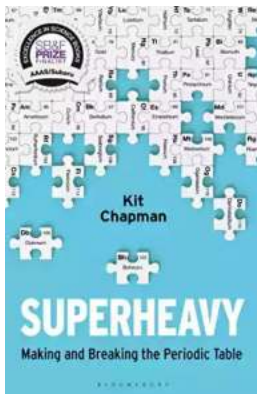
battles, from the SADF's stunning tactical success on the Lomba River to the grinding struggle for the Tumpo Triangle.

His incisive analysis untangles what happens when war, politics and propaganda become entwined.



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