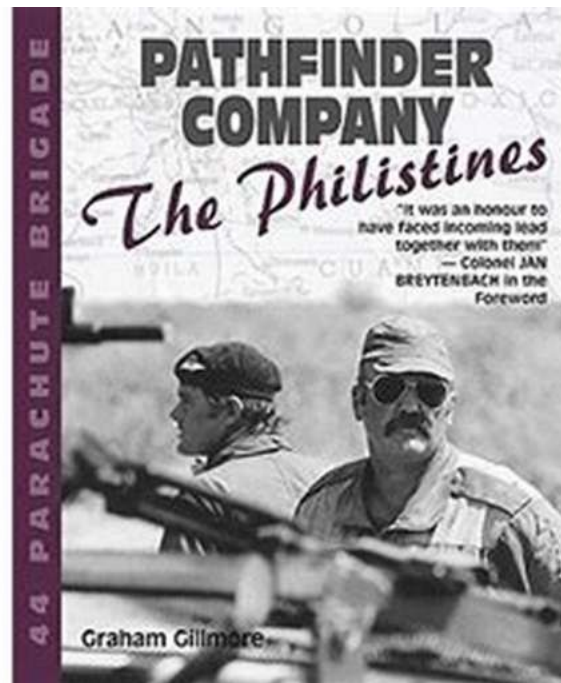


Unveiling the Untold Stories of Pathfinder Company: The Philistines in the 44 Parachute Brigade



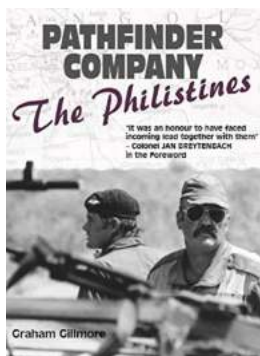
The Importance of Pathfinder Company in the 44 Parachute Brigade

The 44 Parachute Brigade of the military is known for its remarkable achievements and contributions to various operations. Among the many units that have made a substantial impact within this brigade, one that often remains shrouded in secrecy is the Pathfinder Company, famously known as The Philistines. This article aims to shed light on this extraordinary group and their crucial role within the renowned 44 Parachute Brigade.

Who Are the Pathfinder Company: The Philistines?

The Pathfinder Company, also known as The Philistines, is a specialized unit within the 44 Parachute Brigade. Unlike other conventional infantry units, The

Philistines are an airborne force specially trained to undertake daring missions with precision and execute unconventional tactics. Their primary objective is to establish landing zones for follow-up forces, ensuring their safe arrival during high-risk parachute operations.



Pathfinder Company: The Philistines 44 Parachute Brigade by Graham Gillmore (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language	: English
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Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
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The History of Pathfinder Company

Pathfinder Company: The Philistines can be traced back to the early 1970s when the concept of Pathfinder units was introduced within the South African Defense Force. The main inspiration behind creating Pathfinders was the need for specialized personnel who could perform reconnaissance, surveillance, and guide follow-on forces during airborne operations.

The Pathfinder Company evolved over time and gained recognition for their exceptional skills in leading the way for the 44 Parachute Brigade. Their training involved advanced navigation techniques, clandestine operations, and expertise in setting up drop zones or landing zones. While their operations were primarily

focused on parachute missions, they were also adept in conducting heliborne missions when required.

Pathfinder Company Training and Selection

Joining the Pathfinder Company is no easy feat. The selection process is rigorous and ensures that only the best soldiers make it through. Prospective candidates undergo a series of physical and mental assessments to test their endurance, leadership skills, and problem-solving abilities. The training includes extensive navigation training, weapons handling, advanced tactics, and other specialized skills needed for their role.

Mission Execution and Responsibilities

Pathfinder Company: The Philistines play a crucial role in military operations. Before any airborne operation, they are deployed to secure a designated drop zone or a landing zone. Their responsibilities include reconnaissance of the area, setting up beacons or markers, and ensuring it is suitable for the following paratroopers' arrival. Additionally, they gather vital intelligence, assess threat levels, and communicate essential information to the command center and follow-on forces.

During operations, The Philistines maintain constant contact with the incoming aircraft, providing real-time updates on weather conditions, terrain changes, or any potential obstructions that might affect a safe landing. Their mission is to ensure a highly coordinated and effective arrival of the follow-on forces, enabling them to quickly engage with the mission objectives.

Contributions to the 44 Parachute Brigade

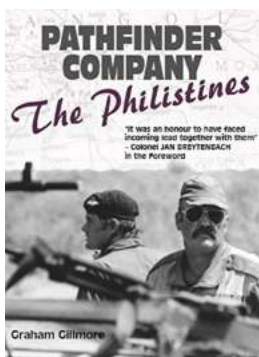
The Pathfinder Company: The Philistines have played a significant role in the success of numerous operations within the 44 Parachute Brigade. Their expertise

and unwavering commitment have contributed to several high-profile missions, including covert insertions behind enemy lines, counter-terrorism operations, and support for peacekeeping missions.

Whether it is guiding paratroopers during a nighttime drop in a hostile environment or providing essential intelligence for Special Forces, the Pathfinders have proven their worth time and time again. Their remarkable skills, adaptability, and ability to work under extreme pressure make them an invaluable asset to the 44 Parachute Brigade.

Pathfinder Company: The Philistines, an elite unit operating within the 44 Parachute Brigade, play a critical role in ensuring the success of airborne operations. Through their highly specialized training and extensive experience, they carry out daring missions with strategic precision, including establishing landing zones and providing vital intelligence.

While the stories of The Philistines may remain relatively untold, their contributions to the 44 Parachute Brigade are invaluable. Their unwavering dedication, courage, and ability to overcome tremendous challenges make them true unsung heroes within the military.



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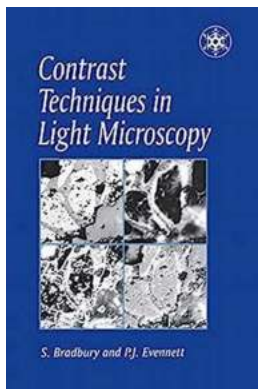
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Colonel Jan Breytenbach writes in the foreword: “On Ascension Day, 1978, a composite South African parachute battalion jumped onto the tactical HQ of SWAPO’s PLAN army, based at Cassinga, 250 kilometres north of the Angolan border to destroy the facility, their logistics, and to wipe out a strong concentration of SWAPO guerrillas.

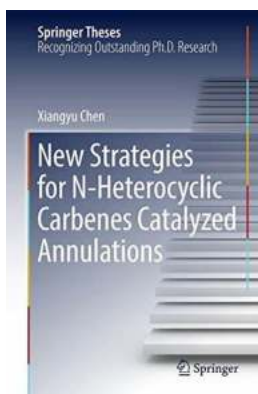
The airborne assault, part of Operation Reindeer, was an unqualified success; the whole base was destroyed. 608 PLAN fighters were killed, with many more wounded which pushed the final SWAPO death toll to well over a thousand. We lost only four paratroopers killed in action plus a dozen or so wounded. According to airborne experts in Britain and Australia, this was the most audacious parachute assault since the Second World War; the mounting airfield was well over 1,000 nautical miles away. I was the commander of that airborne assault, which although successful above all expectations, also highlighted many shortcomings, some of which nearly led to a disastrous outcome.

” 44 Parachute Brigade was formed later that year, with the need for a specialist Pathfinder Company patently clear. Into the ranks came professional veterans from the UK, USA, Australasia, Rhodesia and elsewhere, from such Special Forces units as the SAS, Selous Scouts and the RLI. “This is their book, a collection of stories about the founding and deployment of a unit of ‘Foreign Legionnaires’, from different parts of the world who became welded together into a remarkable combat unit, unsurpassed by any other South African Defence Force unit in their positive and aggressive approach to battle. For me it was an honour to have faced incoming lead together with them.”



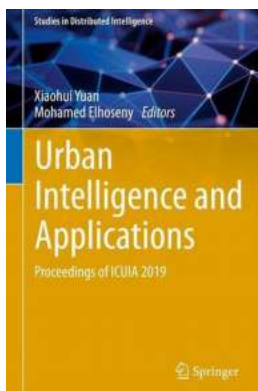
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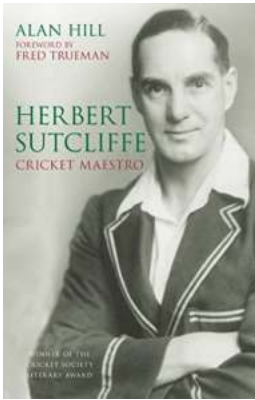
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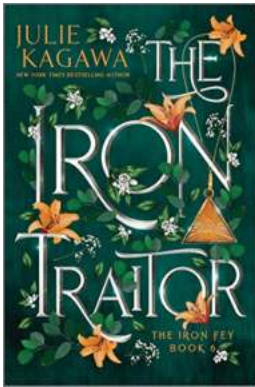
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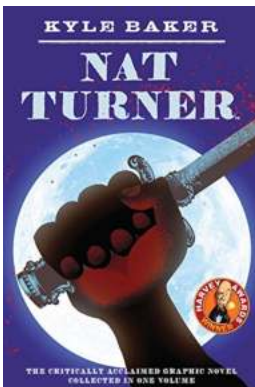
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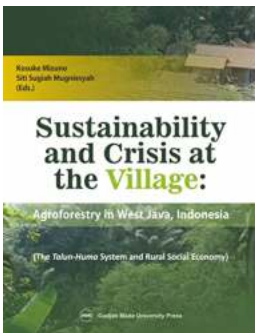
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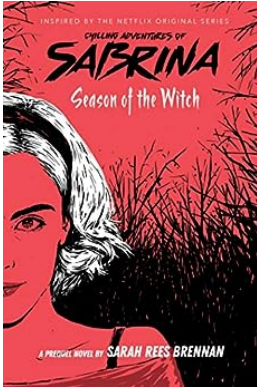
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