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Magazine Section

FRIENDSHIP, FELLOWSHIP AND FUN

Who Dares Wins - RIP Mike Sadler, 103, the oldest survivor of the early SAS, who fought his way through the unforgiving deserts of North Africa

I was born in London in 1920, while my family was passing through the city.

Two weeks later, with me a babe in arms, we moved to Gloucestershire, where life was hard – but we didn't see it that way.

Today, of course, everyone's lives are so different, but one thing remains similar. People have always had dreams of one kind or another; from a very young age, mine was to have an interesting life and see the world. I was looking for adventure.

When I was 15, I cycled around Germany with a friend, staying in youth hostels. We visited little cafés; in one, the waitresses discovered we were English and they thought it was a great joke to stand around saying '*Heil Hitler*' to us, laughing. They paid no mind to our startled faces.

There were clear signs of what was going on: our youth hostels had 'Jews not welcome here' signs. And out in the countryside we saw young people working on the land, marching together with their spades over their shoulders in a militaristic way.

We were struck by the level of organisation. People seemed to know what they were doing and where they were going. It was a stark contrast with Britain at that time.

None of us knew what the forthcoming war would bring. But long before that, in 1937, when I was just 17, I boarded a ship and set out for Rhodesia, where I worked on a farm. I joined the Rhodesian artillery when the war began and became an anti-tank gunner in the Western Desert.

On leave in Cairo, I met some members of the Long Range Desert Group, who asked me if I would be willing to join them. That was how I learned the magic art of navigation and began working with the SAS.

The SAS was born in the hot and unforgiving deserts of North Africa. On the basis of a simple yet revolutionary idea that small groups of highly trained and determined men operating deep behind enemy lines could wreak untold damage on the enemy, the SAS were to prove themselves time and again one of the most potent pound-for-pound forces throughout the rest of the war.

Nowadays the SAS has a fearsome reputation, but I don't remember ever wanting to kill anybody. However, I found a life in the SAS that suited me. I got a bit of an education – albeit an unorthodox one. I enjoyed the organisation's unusual kind of discipline. And I became friendly with all sorts of people from all manner of backgrounds.

In fact, in central Libya we captured a few Italian prisoners who were agreeable chaps. They became, in a way, friends – so that when a German aircraft came over, they hurried to help us get out mountings for our guns.

When we got back to Cairo, we took them for a drink in one of the bars before handing them over. It was quite difficult to see these Italians as being on the other side, but they knew very well that we would have shot them had they tried to escape.

Of course, the technical context then was quite different. We had no support from satellites or other wonders of communication that people take for granted today. We were wholly dependent on one another and on our mental and physical resources and aptitudes.

Looking back, I suppose the war in the desert was quite different from the war in Italy and France. Once we were in France, we were fully aware of the Nazi evil and the Gestapo-style grip on German behaviour. Hitler had issued his instructions that people like us were to be shot.

Our attitudes changed. And I ended up investigating the murders of friends in France. This wasn't a good time as far as I was concerned.

Much has been written about the early formative years of the SAS – and I still remember them clearly – but now, for the first time, an illustrated history provides a compelling photographic record of that period.

Drawing on previously unpublished material from the SAS regimental archives, these pictures of the SAS fighting across North Africa, up into Italy and through Western Europe tell their own captivating story.

I can no longer see but I know these pictures would bring back memories of hardship, danger, sacrifice and loss, as well as great friendships and much laughter.

I hope they serve as an interesting and illuminating reminder of a small group of young men who, by daring to win all, played their small part in defeating the tyranny of Nazi Germany.

Who dares wins.

This piece is from the foreword of Joshua Levine's SAS: The Illustrated History of the SAS *(William Collins,*

Supermarkets

Retailing has changed immeasurably in the last 70 years, but if there is one constant it is the enduring rivalry between Woolworths and Coles.

The two retailers had been vying for supremacy since before World War II, but the fight became serious in the 1950s, when the invention of modern packaging and the rise of the two-car family inexorably changed the nature of food retailing.

Woolworths and Coles both started life selling general merchandise. The first Woolworths Stupendous Bargain Basement, "a handy place where things are cheap" – opened in Sydney's Imperial Arcade in 1924, 10 years after the first Coles store opened in Smith Street, Collingwood, with the slogan 'nothing over 2/6'.

Both retailers turned their attention to food and groceries as the self-service supermarket model started taking off in the 1950s.

Former Woolworths chief executive Roger Corbett, a 60-year veteran of the Australian retail scene, said individually packaged groceries quickly replaced bulk foods, enabling shoppers to serve themselves.

"I'd go shopping with my mum, and she'd end up with a dozen brown paper bags, and she'd be served every item she wanted to buy," recalls Corbett, now 79.

"People bought almost daily because their ice chests, and then the Silent Knight refrigerator – which was anything but silent – were not very effective," Corbett says.

"After World War II we then started to see real change that led to the retailing we have today," he says.

Woolworths opened its first self-service store in 1955 in the Sydney suburb of Beverley Hills, its first dedicated food store in Dee Why in 1957, and its first supermarket in Warrawong in Wollongong in 1960. By 1964, sales had reached £125 million.

Not to be outdone, Coles opened its first supermarket in North Balwyn in 1960 and launched "a new world of shopping" in 1962, unveiling its first New World supermarket in Frankston in Victoria – complete with a giant rocket on the awning – selling meat, vegetables, frozen food and dry groceries under one roof.

The rise of the second family car in the '50s and '60s was another major force for change.

"No one had a second car until the '50s; in most families there was one car and the father drove it to work," Corbett says.

The second car enabled women to drive to the shops rather than walk and led to a shift away from neighbourhood food stores close to railway stations to the development of shopping centres with supermarkets as anchor tenants.

Over half a century, Woolworths and Coles consumed dozens of competitors, including S.E. Dickins, Beilby's, Brisbane Cash & Carry (BCC), John Connell, John Wills, McIlwraiths, Cox Brothers, Crofts, Nancarrows, Broadhead & Barchham, Matthews Thompson, Bi-Lo, Flemings Food Stores, Roelf Vos and Safeway.

The fight for supremacy between Woolworths and Coles led to the development of new store formats, house brands (the 1970s); loyalty schemes and online shopping (the 1990s); and the adoption of new technology including the barcode (1979), which enabled other transformative technology such as scanning (1982) and computerised warehouses and automated replenishment.

It also saw Coles and Woolworths expand into new sectors, including liquor, fuel retailing and department stores, to increase their clout. Coles opened its first Kmart store in 1969 and acquired the Myer Emporium in 1985, while Woolworths opened the first Big W in 1976.

Shopping Bags

The first machine to mass-produce paper bags was invented in 1852 by a Pennsylvania schoolteacher.

In 1853, James Baldwin, papermaker of Birmingham and Kings Norton in England, was granted a patent for apparatus to make square-bottomed paper bags. Thereafter he used an image of a flat-bottomed bag as his business logo.

In 1883, Charles Stilwell patented a machine that made square-bottom paper bags with pleated sides, making them easier to fold and store.

In 1912, Walter Deubener, a grocer in Saint Paul, Minnesota, used cord to reinforce paper bags and added carrying handles. These "Deubener Shopping Bags" could carry up to 75 pounds at a time, and became quite popular, selling over a million bags a year by 1915. Paper bags with handles later became the standard for department stores and were often printed with the store's logo or brand colours.

Plastic bags were introduced in the 1970s, and thanks to their lower cost, eventually replaced paper bags as the bag of choice for grocery stores.

In 2002, the Australian federal government studied the use of throwaway plastic bags and threatened to outlaw them if retailers did not voluntarily discourage their use. In 2003, the government negotiated with the Australian Retailers Association a voluntary progressive reduction of plastic bag use which led to a number of initiatives, including the widespread distribution and promotion of Green Bags.

2015: The **European Union** adopted directive (EU) 2015/720, that requires a reduction in the consumption of single use plastic bags per person to 90 by 2019 and to 40 by 2025.

"Green" Bags

Introduced in the 1990s, these bags are known as green bags due to their

relative environmental friendliness and usual (though far from universal) green colour.

A non-woven polypropylene "green bag"

Green bags and similar reusable shopping bags are commonly distributed at the point of sale by supermarkets and other retail outlets. They are intended to be reused repeatedly to replace the use of hundreds of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastic bags. Most green bags are made of 100% non woven polypropylene (NWPP), which is recyclable but not biodegradable.

Some companies claim to be making NWPP bags from recycled material; however, with current manufacturing techniques this is not possible. All NWPP bags are made from virgin material. A typical base insert is generally made of a stiff plastic.

Reusable bags require more energy to produce than common plastic shopping bags. One reusable bag requires the same amount of energy as an estimated 28 traditional plastic shopping bags or eight paper bags. A study commissioned by the United Kingdom Environment Agency in 2005 found that the average cotton bag is used only 51 times before being thrown away. In some cases, reusable bags need to be used over 100 times before they are better for the environment than single-use plastic bags.

Food Safety

Most reusable bag shoppers do not wash their bags once they return home, and the bags may be leading to food poisoning, according to Dr. Richard Summerbell former chief of medical mycology for the Ontario Ministry of Health.

Because of their repeated exposure to raw meats and vegetables, there is an increased risk of foodborne illness. A 2008 study of bags, sponsored by the Environmental and Plastics Industry Council of Canada, found mould and bacterial levels in one reusable bag to be 300% greater than the levels that would be considered safe in drinking water.

From Queensland Government website…

Queensland has banned all single-use grocery bags. This is a win for the environment but also means a change in our shopping habits.

Reusable bags are made from a range of fabrics ranging from natural cotton to woven synthetics. The idea is to reduce the burden of plastic bags on the environment and reduce the amount of plastic waste ending up in a landfill.

Aside from remembering to bring your bags to the store, there are also some food safety tips worth keeping in mind.

Wash reusable shopping bags regularly.
Did you know that your reusable grocery bags can harbour nasty bacteria? Not only this, but most people have never washed their bags!
If your bags have labels with washing instructions follow these. Otherwise, cloth bags made of natural fibres can usually be washed in the machine with your regular laundry detergent. Synthetic bags should be cleaned by hand in warm soapy water. Hang both types out to dry on the line. Make sure your bags are thoroughly dry before using or storing them again.

Only use your bags for groceries
Avoid using your reusable shopping bags for other purposes like as a nappy bag, gym bag or beach bag. This way you will avoid introducing bacteria to the shopping bags which could contaminate your food later.

Pack with care to avoid cross-contamination.
Place your fresh produce and ready to eat foods in separate bags, away from frozen and raw meat, poultry and fish. Dedicate totes for high-risk items and use the same ones for each shop.

Use chiller bags and refrigerate promptly.
Cold foods should be refrigerated within two hours. Keep your frozen and chilled foods cool by using specially designed chiller bags which are insulated.

Wipe down all areas where your reusable bags are placed, like your kitchen counter or dining table, after you have removed your bags. This helps to reduce cross-contamination when you prepare or eat food on those surfaces later.

Store your bags in a clean and dry location.
Although it may seem convenient, avoid storing your shopping bags in the car as this is the perfect breeding ground for bacteria. Instead, choose a clean, dry and well-ventilated location like a cupboard.

Bypass storing bags in the baby seat of your trolley. Generally, the baby or child seat is the most contaminated part of a shopping trolley so avoid this area altogether.

Who invented 24 hours in each day?

Ever wondered why there are 24 hours in a day? We have the ancient Egyptians to thank, at least in part. The basis for our modern calendar dates back to the New Kingdom period of ancient Egypt, around 1550 BCE to 1069 BCE. During this era — about a thousand years after the construction of the Great Pyramids of Giza — the Egyptians became the first civilization to divide the day into 24 smaller parts — though with a couple of key differences to how we do it today.

For starters, the ancient timekeeping system tracked daytime and nighttime separately, with each divided into 12 parts. Also, these parts — which were measured in various ways, including sundials and water clocks — were not hours as we think of them today. Known as temporal hours or daylight hours, their length changed with the total amount of daylight at different times of year: For instance, the daytime hours would be longer in the summer than in the winter. So why 12?

There are a couple of theories. Ancient astronomical tables suggest that nighttime was divided into 12 hours based on how the stars moved across the sky over time, as well as the cycles of the moon. It's also possible these Egyptian timekeepers were following the duodecimal system, which is based on the easily divisible number 12, and was used in many ancient cultures.

It wasn't until the second century BCE that the idea emerged to break the day into 24 parts of equal length, a concept first introduced by the ancient Greek astronomer Hipparchus. The 24-hour day became the standard for tracking time throughout Europe in the Middle Ages and remains so to this day.

29 February

A Leap Day, February 29, is added to the calendar during leap years. This extra day, also called Leap Year Day, makes the year 366 days long – not 365 days, like a common year. The next leap day is **February 29, 2024**.

Leap days are needed to keep our calendar in alignment with the Earth's revolutions around the Sun.

It takes the Earth approximately 365.242189 days – or 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 45 seconds – to circle once around the Sun. This is called a tropical year.

Without an extra, or intercalary day on February 29 nearly every four years, we would lose almost six hours every year. After only 100 years, a calendar without leap years would be off by approximately 24 days. Seasonal days such as the vernal equinox or the winter solstice would, therefore, shift in relation to the months in the calendar. For example, in 100 years, the Northern Hemisphere's autumnal equinox, which falls in late September, would fall in late August, and in a few centuries, August would become a spring month.

Roman general Julius Caesar implemented the first leap day in his Julian Calendar, which he introduced in 45 BCE. A leap day was added every four years. At the time, leap day was February 24, and February was the last month of the year.

However, adding a leap day every four years was too often and eventually, in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII introduced the Gregorian Calendar. This calendar, which we still use today, has a more precise formula for calculation of leap years, also known as bissextile years.

Leap day as a concept has existed for more than 2000 years and it is still associated with age-old customs, folklore, and superstition. One of the most well-known traditions is that women propose to their boyfriends, instead of the other way around.

The right of every women to propose on 29th February each leap year goes back hundreds of years when the leap year day had no recognition in English law (the day was 'leapt over' and ignored, hence the term 'leap year'). It was decided that the day had no legal status, meaning that a break in tradition on this day was acceptable.

Because leap years are rarer than normal years, they have become lucky omens. Anything started on this day is sure of success.

Certainly February 29th in the leap year of 1504 was very successful for one Christopher Columbus.

The famous explorer had been marooned for several months on the small island of Jamaica. Though the island natives had initially offered food and provisions, Columbus' arrogant and overbearing attitude had so annoyed the natives that they stopped this altogether.

Facing starvation, Columbus came up with an inspired plan. Consulting a shipboard almanac and finding that a lunar eclipse was due, he called together the native chiefs and announced to them that God would punish them if they did not supply his crew with food. And as an omen of God's intent to punish them, there would be a sign in the sky: God would darken the Moon.

Right on cue, the lunar eclipse started. Columbus dramatically disappeared into his cabin as the natives began to panic and begged him to restore the Moon. After more than an hour, Columbus emerged from his cabin and announced that God was prepared to withdraw his punishment if the natives agreed to supply him and his crew with everything they needed. The native chiefs immediately agreed, and within minutes the Moon started emerging from shadow, leaving the natives in awe of Columbus' power. Columbus continued to receive food and supplies until he was rescued in June 1504.

It was only a sunny smile
And little it cost in the giving
But like morning light
It scattered the night
And made the day worth living

F. Scott Fitzgerald

FOR LOVERS OF PUNS:

- Dad, are we pyromaniacs? Yes, we arson.
- Why do bees stay in their hives during winter? Swarm.
- If you're bad at haggling, you'll end up paying the price.
- Just so everyone's clear, I'm going to put my glasses on.
- A sergeant major walks into a bar and orders everyone around.
- I lost my job as a stage designer. I left without making a scene.
- Never buy flowers from a monk. Only you can prevent florist friars.
- How much did the pirate pay to get his ears pierced? A buccaneer.
- Why is it unwise to share your secrets with a clock? Well, time will tell.
- When I told my contractor I didn't want carpeted steps, they gave me a blank stare.
- Bono and The Edge walk into a Dublin bar and the bartender says, "Oh no, not U2 again."
- I'm trying to organize a hide and seek tournament, but good players are really hard to find.
- What do you say to comfort a friend who's struggling with grammar? There, their, they're.
- What did the surgeon say to the patient who insisted on closing up their own incision? Suture self.
- I've started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes. It's all about raisin awareness.

With thanks to Roger Morrow

How to make amazing sand castles

— A sand sculptor must learn about sand quality and how it affects a sculpture. **Use "clean sand"** that is free of stones or shells and has grains that are about the same size. The finest grains of sand will allow for the crispest carving of details.

— Every sculpture begins with a "pound-up." **Make a pound-up** using a pile of sand 12 to 18 inches high and approximately 24 inches in diameter. Thoroughly soak it with water and pack it as tight as you can with your hands.

— **Use forms to create height.** You can buy them or create your own using a bucket with the bottom removed. If the bottom is not removed, the bucket will not lift off smoothly. Place the bucket on the base with the narrow end up. Fill it with sand and lots of water, packing it down tightly as you go. Every grain should be wet.

— After the sand has settled, **lift the bucket** and smooth the sand.

— Place the buckets of sand close together and **keep adding to the width and height** until you have a block of sand that is the size you want to sculpt. Have an idea of what you want your sculpture to look like before you start.

— Make sure to **start sculpting at the top** and work your way down to the bottom of the structure.

— **Take your time.** Carve smart, meaning take chances, but use caution.