



Examining military heritage tourism as a niche tourism market in the South African context

Dewald Venter
Vaal University of Technology, Vanderbijlpark
South Africa
Email: dewald@vut.ac.za

Abstract

Military events have significantly influenced history, and this is why military heritage is considered to be extremely important. Many of the most significant events shaping history have associations with national defence and conflict across the globe. Preserving military heritage helps us to comprehend important societal ideals and traditions. Every country is unique with regards to its military heritage. Military heritage tourism serves as a way for people with vested interest therein or simply the casual and curious among us to learn more about a countries military history. Military heritage tourism exists because of people with similar interests who come together to honour and celebrate their shared military heritage. Much will be drawn from the well-researched field of heritage tourism and its success as a tool of mediation in mending a nation with a controversial and bloody colonial past. The purpose of this paper is to determine what military heritage entails and in which forms it is practiced. South Africa has an abundance of military heritage sites which includes inter alia, battlefields, museums, memorials, monuments, festivals, events, re-enactors, re-enactments and private military collectors. In an effort to determine the potential of military heritage tourism as a niche market in the South African context the author will analyse each component of military heritage tourism, provide South African examples of each, explain their importance and the context in which they support one another. The paper will ultimately hopefully lay the foundation for greater military heritage and make recommendations with regard to future research needed on military heritage tourism in South Africa so as to drive the sustainability of heritage as such.

Keywords: Heritage, Tourism, Heritage tourism, Military heritage, Military heritage tourism

Introduction

The Second World War is regarded by many as the catalyst to modern tourism and portrays it as a causal agent in the creation of mass tourism because of the extensive domestic and international travel by the armed forces (Eades & Cooper, 2013; Lubbe, 2003; Smith, 1998). Those who were sent to fight abroad and who survived to tell the tale saw new places which they told of when back at home. Military technological changes enabled fast and long haul air travel which made international travel viable for returning soldiers who acquired wanderlust and curiosity (Weaver, 2011). Conversely, it can be subtly argued that much of the early 20th-century tourism boom can be attributed to military heritage tourism. The concept of military heritage tourism can be described widely as a niche form of tourism which falls under heritage tourism which in turn is seen as part of cultural tourism. Robinson and Novelli (2005) observed the early trends in niche tourism and state that it acts as a counterpoint to what is commonly referred to as “mass tourism”. Due to the limited existence of academic literature related to “military heritage tourism” the paper will examine and discuss the meaning of heritage, heritage tourism, military heritage and lastly military heritage tourism. The author will highlight South African examples of military heritage sites that serve to attract military heritage tourists/day visitors. Based on site visits they will be classified accordingly as components that support military heritage tourism. The overall value of military heritage tourism in the South African context will be concluded.

The aim of the paper is to examine military heritage tourism as a niche tourism market in the South African context making use of a concept analytical literature review method which



includes primary and secondary source references from journals, books, proceedings, DVD and master's thesis on heritage tourism, military heritage. The author also conducted site visitation (2010-2016) to all component examples used in the paper with the exception of Spionkop. The author finds it beneficial to define the keywords of the study within the larger scope of the tourism industry in order to answer the following two research questions. What is military heritage tourism? What role does it play in the South African context?

Background of the study

The following section will make use of literature to explore background of keywords of this study namely; heritage, heritage tourism, military heritage and lastly military heritage tourism in order contextualise their meanings and frame their importance to the reader.

Heritage

Heritage embodies the intangible connection with a place or thing through memories which carries meaning either ingrained culturally, socially or in the case of military heritage – blood, sweat and tears. According to Oxford Dictionaries (2016a), the origin of 'heritage' is derived from the old French words "*heriter inher*" which means, to inherit. Heritage is defined by Oxford Dictionaries (2016a) as valued objects and qualities such as historic buildings and cultural traditions that have been passed down from previous generations. Heritage sites, be they traditional, cultural or military encourage an intangible attachment between an individuals and the place.

Heritage tourism

According to Ivanovic (2011), South Africa is regarded globally as a "miracle democracy" and is receiving increased interest from local and international tourists. STATS SA (2016) reports that a total of 8.9 million international visitors arrived in South Africa in 2015. During 2015, 12.4 million travel trips were taken domestically (South Africa.net, 2016). Masilo and van der Merwe (2016) state that heritage tourism is a relatively new concept in the field of tourism research. Based on internet searches, heritage tourism is at the forefront of academic research undertakings unlike, military heritage tourism.

According to George (2015a) heritage tourism is regarded as a special interest tourism opportunity which is a growing trend in tourism with offerings built around particular themes or niches. Various authors (Henderson, 2001; Graham, 2002; Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Gravari-Barbas & Jacquot, 2013) have stated that heritage tourism has evolved from simply being a representation of the past to an all-inclusive concept offering both tangible and intangible aspects. Mourad (2015) is of the opinion that heritage should not just be conserved based on aesthetics but should also nurture the intangible attachment between the individual and the place\artefact. According to Hou (2009) heritage tourism is primarily motivated by the travelling to sites such as monuments, museums with which a visitor shares a heritage linkage. As stated by Halewood and Hannam (2001), heritage tourism involves a wide variety of themes which generally include museums, landscapes, artefacts and aspects of the past. Heritage tourism has evolved into a world-wide trend which offers significant economic and social benefits for the host country (Beeho & Prentice, 1997; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009; Garrett, 2012). However if gone unchecked could lead to the commercialization of heritage (Addo, 2011). More recently Hamber (2012) stated that primary heritage tourism sites such as memorials and museums provide an opportunity for cultural exchange, knowledge building and reconciliation. Some of the driving forces of



heritage tourism are entertainment (Caton & Santos, 2007) curiosity, personal discovery, nostalgia (Hlongwane, 2008) and to experience the destination offering (Masilo et al, 2016).

In the South African context, heritage tourism holds particular promise and as such has been recognised by the government as a vital sector. Various authors (Binns & Nel, 2002; Marschall, 2012; Masilo *et al.*, 2016; Mgxekwa, Scholz & Saayman, 2017; Rogerson, 2002; Rogerson, 2015) have cited the benefits of heritage tourism which includes creating employment, fuel economic growth, generate employment, reduce poverty and more specifically in the South African context speed up racial transformation of the tourism sector through empowerment of previously excluded communities. Furthermore, heritage tourism can help bridge cultural and historic gaps between different national, ethnic and racial groups to inspire reconciliation, improve inclusiveness and boost national and international identity and unity (Teeger & Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2007; Trinh, Ryan & Cave, 2015; Marschall, 2012; Meskell & Scheermeyer, 2008; Grobler, 2008; Khumalo, Sebatlelo, & van der Merwe, 2014). Go *et al.* (2015) cautions that the potential impact of heritage tourism has both positive and negative effects on local communities. On the supply side, heritage tourism can both help reinforce cultural identity and preserve existing heritage or lead to destruction thereof and damage the values and traditions of the communities involved (Go, *et al.*, 2015). On the demand side heritage tourism contributes significantly towards tourist's perception of themselves and the world around them (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). It is therefore argued that military heritage be developed and promoted as a niche market in tourism.

Military heritage

According to Emerson and Guarante (2009), military heritage is a subset of heritage tourism. Military heritage encompasses elements of appreciation, wonder, nostalgia and emotional attachment with which an individual can associate with through past experience, culturally or shared history. According to Baldwin and Sharpley (2009), there is some debate regarding the promotion of military heritage sites such as battlefields because of their association with death and atrocity. TOURISM NT (2015), report that there is a growing interest internationally in military heritage. Lemelin *et al.* (2013) strongly convey the importance (especially where colonial conquest took place) of the indigenous narrative when interpreting military history and military heritage sites. According to Lemelin and Baikie (2012) and Schwenkel (2006) the repercussions from some of these events (eg. Battles of Isandlwana, Rorke's Drift and Blood River) have been the reinforcement of cultural imperialism through the grand narratives of colonialism, where hegemonic ideologies of progress and democracy had led the erasure of indigenous narrative, until quite recently, virtually unchallenged. Lemelin *et al.* (2013) point out that indigenous peoples were actively recruited in various colonial and imperial conflicts, and in the South African context included the First and Second South African War, First and Second World War, Korean War and the South African Border War. This gap in the narrative has led to various research studies being undertaken in the field of South African military history.

Logan and Reeves (2009) state that there is a growing interest in heritage associated with dark events on both a national and international level. Magee and Gilmore (2015) describe these dark events as places and institutions that stand as a legacy to painful periods in history which includes; massacre and genocide sites, places related to former penal institutions, prisoners of war, battlefields and much more are important parts of heritage. Traditionally only military history enthusiasts, veterans and their families showed an interest in military history by partaking in military heritage tourism. Lemelin *et al.* (2013) believe that for military heritage to grow the inclusion and discussion of indigenous people and their perspectives is timely and necessary despite centuries of colonial injustices. Recent there

has been a rise in the desire to experience the stories, lives and experience of those who lived and died during specific conflicts. Tourism NT (2015) reports that institutions such as military museums, monument and battlefields who redevelop their attractions and military theme offering such as the Imperial War Museum London, have successfully increased their visitor numbers and level of engagement. Venter (2011) points out the benefits of well managed and marketed (military) heritage as magnets for domestic and international tourists. However, according to Oh *et al.* (2007), tourists may be motivated by pre-existing mental and emotional images of what they expect to experience rather than the physical traits of the destination, which leads to the question “what is military heritage tourism?”

Military heritage tourism

As illustrated in Figure 1.1 military heritage tourism can be categorised as a subset of heritage tourism which falls under the umbrella of mass tourism (Huh, 2002; Chhabra, Healy & Sills, 2003; Daun, 2008). Military heritage tourism isn't clearly defined in the literature, which produces terms such as blood tourism, dark tourism and thanatourism which are covered by various authors (Biran & Hyde, 2013; Farmaki, 2013; Foley & Lennon, 1996; Raine, 2013; Ryan & Kohli, 2006; Sharpley & Stone, 2009; Stone, 2006).

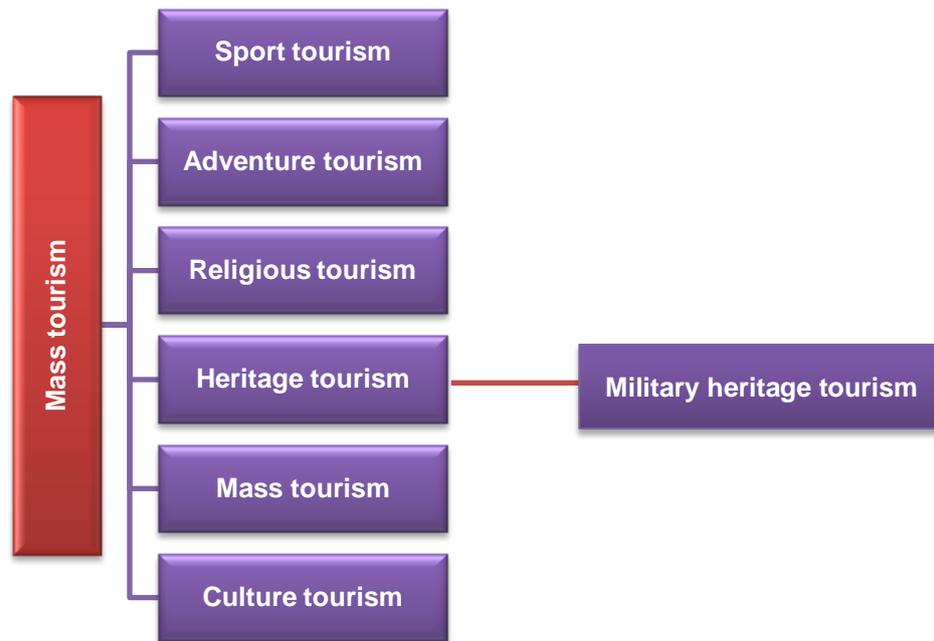


Figure 1.1: Types niche tourism

Source: Adapted from Chhabra *et al.* (2003), Daun (2008), Huh (2002), Mancini (2010) and author's own compilation

The later encompass occurrences of death, disaster and depravity (Skinner, 2012). According to Tarlow (2005), dark tourism can be described as the visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy deaths have occurred and that continue to impact our lives. Seaton (1999) describes thanatourism as the travel to a location wholly or partially motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly but not exclusively, violent death, which may, to a varying degree be activated by the person-specific features of those whose death are its focal objects. The principle difference between dark tourism, thanatourism, blood tourism and military heritage tourism is that the former three deal with any form of death or tragedy while the latter deals specifically with military history and its lasting heritage.



The motivation to visit military heritage sites are described by Raine (2013) as factual specific, mythical specific, factual-social context and ethnic-social context.

- Factual specific - Military heritage sites are visited to gain an objective and factual view thereof. Mostly of importance to scholars or historians who seek detailed military facts such military strategies, movements, unit strength and make-up, equipment specifications etc.
- Mythic specific - Where military heritage is based on blurred factual interpretation of the events (battle) or characteristics of equipment (such as the German Tiger tank from the Second World War) which later becomes mythical and skewed from reality. Mythic specific are often linked with acts of heroism, patriotism or a last stand.
- Factual-social context - Military heritage is portrayed in a way that explains the facts with an academic interpretation which accommodates all views. The popularity of such military heritage change from time to time depending on their interpretation and usage.
- Mythic-social Context - Military heritage is used to uphold a mythic perception to sustain a socially justified status quo or cause. In other words, the military heritage has an important meaning to a nation or groups beliefs.

Magee and Gilmore (2015) identified three categories of visitors\tourists who travel to (military) heritage sites namely:

- Those with personal relations to the military heritage site, for whom the site carries personal and emotional significance, personal heritage and a feeling of being connected to their own personal heritage (Biran, Poria & Oren, 2011). These individuals don't regard the visit as leisure based (Biran *et al.* 2011) but rather seek a profound (military) heritage experience (Slade, 2003).
- The second group are regarded as ordinary tourists by Muzaini, Teo and Yeoh (2007:29) as they have no personal link to the (military) heritage site, and only view it as a leisure activity. These tourists are primarily seeking education and knowledge.
- Lastly, Biran *et al.*, (2011) describe ambivalent' tourists who visit sites to 'see it to believe it'.

Taking into account the views of Raine (2013) and Magee and Gilmore (2015:901) it is clear that military heritage tourism does allow and can attract a wide range of visitors and tourists with various levels of interest. No universally accepted definition for military heritage tourism has been developed and scholars continue to debate the proposed criteria. The author of the paper would like to propose a definition for military heritage tourism in order to facilitate a more structured academic discussions:

The travel to, exploration of or participation at a military heritage site or event which has personal historic meaning, resonance or interest for the visitor or tourist which doesn't involve remuneration.

Now that military heritage tourism has been defined an investigation of military heritage tourism in South Africa can be undertaken. The next section will discuss the scope and scale of military heritage tourism in South Africa.



Military heritage tourism in South Africa

South Africa is a diverse country with different races, politics and language groups and a controversial and bloody colonial past. The South Africa of today would be a product of 400 years colonial expansion by settlers from the Cape of Good Hope, along with the east coast and towards the central interior of the country. The expansion saw many battles between the indigenous peoples, settlers which later became breakaway Voortrekkers Republics against the entire British Empire, not once but twice, now known respectively as the First and Second South African War. During the 20th century, South Africa (being part of the British Commonwealth) participated in the First and Second World War on the side of the Allies. The role of indigenous South African soldiers during both World Wars have only recently begun to come to the forefront.

South Africa also took part in the Korean War and later became embroiled in the well documented “South African Border War” which led to the establishment of a thriving arms industry, which till today sets the standard for many military technologies and innovations. All these conflicts serve as the basis for much of South Africa’s military heritage tourism. This shared history of conflict has left deep wounds among many groups of South Africans, a fact that many politicians don’t hesitate in exploiting. Magee and Gilmore (2015) are of the opinion that military heritage sites (and events) primary purposes should be to reinforce the responsibility of each person for a more humane and caring world, through learning about these dark events, remembrance, reflection and self-introspection. Military heritage tourism can serve as a platform to better appreciate the dynamics of globalisation and expansion, thus empower individuals with an understanding of the world they live in.

When speaking of military heritage attractions the first things most likely to come to mind are battlefields, military museums, memorials and monuments. It could be argued that the aforementioned are the quintessential elements on which military heritage tourism is based. Events also play an important role in human society (Shone & Parry, 2013), which serve as an escape from the toils and efforts of daily life. Events are an important sector of the tourism industry (Kruger, Saayman & Ellis, 2014) and a multitude of military heritage events are hosted in South Africa each year that support the military heritage tourism industry which include amongst other Zwartkop Air Show, Voortrekker Monument Military Festival, SA Armour Museum Open Day, SAAACA Arms Fair at the South African Museum of Military History, all of whom encourage and host military heritage tourism.

Not well known but of equal importance are military heritage re-enactors who participate in re-enactments of historic military battles. Not only do these re-enactors travel to perform re-enactments but also attract military heritage tourists. Two South African examples of such re-enactor groups are the Nutria Reenactors and Collectors Group (NRCC) and the Dundee diehards. The following section will investigate each the proposed components around which the author believes military heritage tourism is built. Each component’s (Figure 1.2) military heritage components will be explored, a South African example discussed and if available the number of visitors/tourist it has received during 2016 provided.

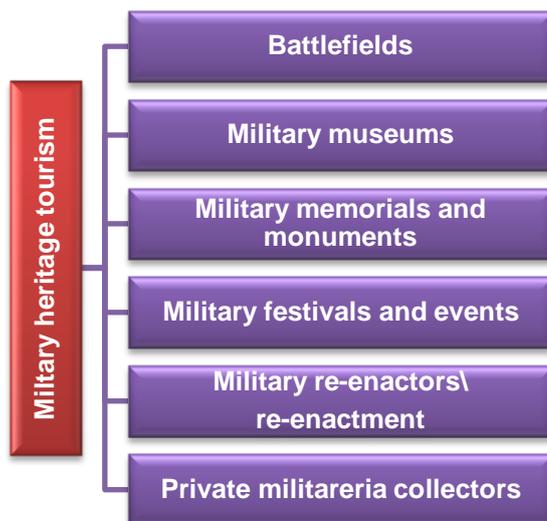


Figure 1.2: Components of military heritage tourism
Source: Author's own compilation

Battlefields

Depending on who the victors were, battlefields have inspired the imagination of generations that followed with tales of heroism and remembrance of those who died. Battlefields serve as echoes of the past by preserving for later generations its history and sacrifices. Battlefields shaped the future of a country and dependent on the way they are portrayed, how its citizens view themselves. Venter (2011) cautions that too often individuals accept the ramblings of uninformed politicians or those who wish to obscure the truth of the past for their own gain. Battlefields play an important role in the advancement and dissemination of knowledge about the military history of a country by offering historical documentation, material evidence, guided tours and exhibits serving as a vital source of living history for the military heritage tourist's benefit (Venter, 2011). In order to understand a battle, one has to understand the battlefield (Rayner, 2006).

Driving forces behind battlefield tourism are the need to understand better, to experience the sensation of the place and to stand in the shoes of those who were there. Guided tours often take tourists on the same route as those that fought and died. Such an experience offers an unparalleled potential for learning and understanding for domestic and international tourists if presented responsibly. By visiting battlefields in person an individual will be better able to provide for themselves a clear ethical and moral compass. Venter (2011) argues that visiting battlefield sites raise the intellectual capacity of those who visit them as they gain a fresher perspective of history and come to understand the globalised connections between various countries histories. Rayner (2007) notes that many battlefields are serviced by commercial tour operators to assist with the interpretation of the sites. Furthermore, Rayner (2007) points out that there has been a remarkable growth in tourism focused on battlefields and associated sites.

In the South African context, battlefield sites are especially important as they provide lessons which resound with people from all walks of life and can improve understanding among various groups in South Africa. According to Venter (2011), the "Battlefield Route" in Kwazulu Natal is South Africa's premier military heritage route. It contains some of the most influential battlefield sites which have had a lasting impact on South Africa's history. Viljoen (2017) highlights that the Battlefield Route feature 83 battlefield sites that shaped the history of South Africa during the 19th century which involved the British Empire, Boers and the



mighty Zulu Kingdom. According to Venter (2011), the purpose of the Battlefield Route is to promote local and international tourism to these famous sites. The support of local residents for these sites plays a critical role in their long-term sustainability and also serves to boost the cultural heritage of the area. Arguably some of the most famous battlefields in South Africa are Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift, Blood River and Spioenkop which will be discussed in short.

Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift

Venter (2011) describes the battle of Isandlwana which saw 20 000 Zulu Impi (soldiers) overwhelmed 1000 British soldiers on 22 January 1879. At the hand of the Zulu's the British suffered their greatest historic defeat ever against a native force. The Zulu's put up a heroic fight and slaughtered the British soldiers where they stood. Later that day 3000 Zulu's attacked the 150 strong nearby supply station at Rorke's Drift. After a lengthy battle which lasted the night the British emerged victorious, suffering only 17 casualties. Much blood was spilt when the British invaded the Zulu Kingdom. Today tours of these battlefields are offered by local guides.

Blood River

The battle of Blood River saw a small contingent of Boers (470) battle the Zulu Kingdom of the then king Dingaan. The Boers set up a defensive position with 64 ox waggons into a *larger* next to the Ncome River. Pre-constructed wooden barriers were set up between the waggons completing the defensive position. On 16 December 1838, the Zulus Impi attacked with 15 000-21 000 men. Wave after wave of attacks broke against laager as the Boers with their front loading muskets mowed down the attackers. According to Venter (2011), some historians estimated that up to 3 000 Zulus Impi were killed while it is well documented that only three Boers were wounded. After the Battle of Blood River, prince Mpande (second to Dingaan's throne) and Potgieter (the Boer leader) battled Dingaan at Maqongqo where he was defeated. Dingaan fled and Mpande was crowned as king of the Zulu Kingdom. King Mpande became the founder of the contemporary Zulu dynasty which lasts to this very day. The battle of Blood River was commemorated as a national South African holiday every year on 16 December up until 1994 when it was renamed the Day of Reconciliation.

Spionkop

During the Second South African War, the British and Boers clash at Spionkop on 23 and 24 January 1900. What was to be a British military success turned into a military massacre. Of the estimated 1700 British soldiers who defended Spionkop, 650 died and a further 554 were wounded while 170 were taken, prisoners. The Boers suffered few casualties and was a resounding victory for the Boers.

Military museums

There is a wide range of heritage attractions that tourists can visit which include museums (Graham & Lennon, 2002). According to Nicolaides (2011), military history museums exhibit a wide range of important historical artefacts that are fundamental sub-elements in any tourism system. According to Venter (2014:1) museums have always been tourist attractions and have served as an educational tool to learn more about the past. Retired Lt. Col. Oosthuizen (2015) writes that military museums around the world are becoming a worthy norm of education. According to Nicolaides (2011), museums should be places that stimulate interest and play a key role in anchoring modern society and enlightening visitors



about history. Venter (2014) is of the opinion that there is something captivating and thrilling when viewing military machines whose power and grace inspires the imagination of great battles fought long ago. For those who have served in their countries armed forces, a military museum can bring back memories of camaraderie, friendship, hardship and more sombrely destruction, loss and death. Military museums are dedicated to preserving the military heritage of a country and by doing so honour the men and women who served.

According to Venter (2014), military museums play an important role in preserving South Africa's military history not just through displays of military vehicles and equipment but also by imparting knowledge and record keeping for either formal or informal learning. Importantly retired Lt. Col. Oosthuizen (2015) points out that museums must become more inclusive to foster and support intercultural dialogue, participation and dialogue. Several prominent military museums are found in South Africa namely the South African Armour Museum, South African Air Force (SAAF) Museum and the Ditsong Museum of Military History which tells the stories of past conflicts South Africa, where involved in showcases the equipment's used.

The South African Armour Museum

Located in Bloemfontein the SA Armour Museum opened its door in 1996 with the sole purpose to preserve South Africa's armoured history as well as the restoration of armoured vehicles. Viljoen (2017) writes that the museum consists of the main building which features an indoor exhibit showing the history of the armour corps in South Africa dating from the early mounted riders of the South African War, both World Wars and the South African Border War. The SA Armour Museum includes a research library, a collection of rare photographs, a variety of indoor and outdoor exhibits, an auditorium, function venue and a visitors' shop named the Gun Barrel. Lesakeng (meaning corral for old horses) is an open air space, housing examples of armoured vehicles used by the South African Defence Force (SADF) and such as Saracen, Ferret, Eland and Rooikat. Visitors can also see unique examples of experimental armoured vehicles and armoured vehicles captured during the South African Border War such as the T-34/85, T-55. Furthermore, the museum has the only collection in the world of all three variants of the famous Sherman medium tank dating from the Second World War. A wide variety of British, American, Canadian, Soviet and South African tanks, armoured cars, infantry combat vehicles, support vehicles, trucks and ambulances are on display all conveying the military heritage of South Africa's armour corps. The SA Armour Museum also holds an annual open day at which time visitors may explore functioning military museum vehicles up close. According to the chairman of the South African Armour Museum Lt. Col. Hohls (2017) the museum received an estimated 4000 visitors during 2016, spread across various events hosted at the museum.

The South African Air Force Museum

The SAAF holds the honorary title of being the second oldest air force in the world (after the Royal Air Force). What could have been a rare collection of vintage aircraft on display today was unfortunately lost as no effort was made to preserve the aircraft used by the SAAF during the First World War. Likewise, most aircraft used during the Second World War were not preserved with most being destroyed. The then War museum rejected numerous historical aircraft donated to them due to a lack of storage and display space. Due to a lack of storage and display space the then War Museum had to reject several historical planes such as the rare Tutor, Wapiti and Fury. Other historical pieces suffered from neglect and environmental exposure. It was only during the SAAF's 50th-anniversary celebrations in 1970 that it was realised that little evidence existed of the SAAF's rich military heritage.



Under the direction of Col. PJM McGregor, the SAAF Museum was established in 1973 with its headquarters located at the Zwartkop Air Force Base, Pretoria.

Two satellite museums were also created at Ysterplaat Air Force base, Cape Town and Air Force Base Port Elizabeth. After the museum was opened in 1973 many aircraft were rescued from scrapyards nationwide. Some aircraft were also donated to the museum by local and international donors. These museums enabled the SAAF to preserve its military heritage hosting various artefacts, aircraft and other memorabilia from the Air Force as well as private donations from the public who have South Africa's military heritage at heart. By preserving its military heritage the SAAF can present an informative insight into its history. Various programmes are run by the museum to educate visitors on the military heritage and importance of the SAAF.

The SAAF museum's displays are sequential and subjective which adds to the realism and depth of the museum experience. The aircraft on display enable visitors to get 'up-close and personal' in order to experience the size of the aircraft as well as allow tangible contact. Museum aircraft such as the Mirage III and Cheetah are excellent examples of fighter jets used by the SAAF and in the case of the latter, South Africans ingenuity. The SAAF museum receives over 5000 foreign and local visitors/tourists each year. The museum also operates a fleet of retired SAAF aircraft which fly on the first Saturday of each month, drawing military heritage enthusiasts both locally and international.

National Museum of South African Military History

The museum opened its doors in 1947 and originally opened as a memorial for all South Africans who died in any military actions. The museum is the principle military museum dedicated to South African military history and heritage and contains artefacts and equipment used in conflicts throughout South Africa's history. On display are many unique military pieces such as a night fighter version of the first operational jet plane the German built Messerschmitt Me 262 (the only one in existence). It was termed the Schwalbe (Swallow) and made its first flight on 18 July, 1942. This twin-engine fighter and attack aircraft was essentially the first operational jet-powered fighter in world history.

The museum is also tasked with the safekeeping of historic military documents for academic use. According to the museum administrator Sebonjane (2017), the museum received an estimated 20 000 local and international visitors during 2016. It can clearly be seen from the examples provided that South Africa has invested substantial resources into military museums in order to preserve its military heritage.

Military memorials and monuments

According to Oxford Dictionaries (2016b), memorials originate from the late Middle English: from Late Latin "*memorial*" record, memory, monument and from Latin "*memoralis*" serving as a reminder, from "*memoria*" memory. Memorial are said to include a statues or structure established to remind people of a person or event Similarly Oxford Dictionaries (2016c) describes monuments as a statue, building, or other structure erected to commemorate a notable person or event. Therefore military memorials and monuments serve the same purpose as dedications to historic battles or events and the soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and died.

According to Ryner (2006), memorials and monuments can range from ancient trophies dedicated to the gods to a modern plaque put up by a regimental association. In the South



African context memorials and monuments are dedicated to the various conflicts mentioned earlier which South Africa has been involved in. Monuments and memorials are often found on battlefield sites itself such as the memorial at Fugitives Drift and the piles of white rocks honouring the British soldiers killed during the Battle of Isandlwana. Another example is the laager of 64 cast bronze ox waggons arranged in a circle that depict the Battle of Blood River and has also come to include the Ncome Zulu Cultural Museum located nearby commemorating the Zulu Impi (warriors) who died during said battle. Others such as the South African Air Force (SAAF) Memorial which is dedicated to the airmen and pilots who have lost their lives serving in SAAF, is located on a hill overlooking the Zwartkop Air Force Museum. Others such as the 61 Mechanised Battalion Group and Anglo-Boer War Memorial who are located at the National Museum of South African Military History. Worth mentioning are military tragedies which have occurred during military operation but not directly through combat. One such South African example is the sinking of the *SS Mendi* near France in 1917. The *SS Mendi* was transporting mostly indigenous South African soldiers to Europe during the First World War when the cargo ship *Darro* collided with it during thick mist, killing 616 crew and passengers. The sinking of the *SS Mendi* is commemorated by a number of monuments in South Africa, Britain, France and the Netherlands.

It can be seen from the above that the terms memorial and monument in a military context always involve death during military actions. Also, they are often located at or very near battlefields and military museums. Due to the sheer number of these memorials and monuments of which some require no admission fee or registration in South Africa, it is almost impossible to determine the amount of visitors and tourist who frequent them accurately. However, it can be confidently said that they are part and parcel of military heritage tourism.

Military heritage festivals and events

Events have always had a significant role to play in a society like breaking up the dull routine of daily life or to emphasise some important activity or person (Shone & Parry, 2013). Historical examples show that there have long been specialists of various kinds to organise events temple priests for the Greek Games, Lord Chamberlain's department for Queen Elizabeth. Even today the military is often called on for the organisation of state ceremonies and events. Military heritage events and festivals are held to bring interest groups together around the common theme of military heritage.

The Zwartkop Air Show is a military heritage event organised annually by the SAAF Museum which attracts on average, 30 000 visitors over a two day period. The air show mostly showcases flying vintage aircraft used by the SAAF as well as more modern fighter planes. Various forms of militaria are sold by exhibitors as well. Two prominent examples of festivals are the Arms Fair and Convention held annually at the National Museum of South African Military History hosted by the Southern Africa Arms and Ammunition Collector's Association (SAAACA). SAAACA's main aims are to represents the interests of collectors in South Africa with a special interest in arms, ammunition, militaria and other collectables. According to Cronje (2017), the total number of visitors who attended the annual SAAACA Arms Fair and Convention during 2016 was 1397 visitors. The other is the Voortrekker Monument Military (VTM) festival held at the Voortrekker Monument. According to Paulsen (2017), the VTM festival started out very small with only 24 traders during its origin in 2004 to celebrate the birthday of the Jameson raid of the ZAR Republic in 1896 at Fort Schanskop which is located near the Voortrekker Monument. Initially, the festival was focused around the First and Second South African War while the South African Armour Formation, Air Defence and SA Air Force participated with static displays. The VTM had grown to 45 traders and saw



over 5000 visitors attend, which is indicative of a strong interest in military heritage festivals and events. On display during 2016 was several different re-enactor groups which represented several eras in South Africa's military history. The Dundee diehards and the Nutria Re-enactors and Collectors Club will be discussed next.

Military re-enactors\re-enactment

Military re-enactors not only preserve military heritage but bring it to life through re-enactments of famous battles. South Africa has most notably two such re-enactment groups, each specialising in different eras of South African military history which include the Aglo-Zulu\Boer Wars and the South African Border War.

Dundee Diehards

According to Slater (2017), the Dundee diehards was formed in 1999 to commemorate the centenary of the Battle of Talana, which was the first major battle of the Second Anglo-Boer war and the first time in South Africa where colonial forces wore khaki uniforms. Slater (2017) explains that the Dundee diehards are involved in several types of military heritage displays. Firstly a full re-enactment with as many re-enactors as possible. Secondly a standard display most often in the traditional red British uniforms which requires a minimum of 16 men who conduct amongst other a parade and volley fire. Thirdly a talking display for touring groups where a red coat officer, red coat soldier, Khaki soldier, Boer and Zulu warrior would step forward and talk about the weapons that each man uses, followed by questions and inviting the audience to come forward to hold the weapons and take photos. Lastly a static display in a 6 x 3-metre carport type gazebo with mounted rifles, bayonets etc. and talk to the public as they come through. Slater (2017) states that the battle re-enactments are historically accurate as possible and a brilliant way of learning history and should be encouraged at all levels. The Dundee diehards' authentic portrayal of the Anglo-Zulu\Boer era has not only been noticed internationally but allowed them to take part in several movies, television (TV) series, documentaries and TV and film adverts. Slater (2017) is of the opinion that it's such a shame that the young people of today are not interested in South Africa's past and their own (military) heritage. Slater (2017) makes the following statement:

As far as I'm concerned, and as stated in a recent television interview at Isandlwana by myself, history is a collection of past facts, and regardless of which side you take and your outlook on events and reasons behind events we need to remember our past and work together to ensure that mistakes of the past are not repeated in the future.

Nutria Re-enactors and Collectors Club

According to Haydon (2017), Nutria Re-enactors and Collectors Club (NRCC) is a Gauteng based club of like-minded militaria collectors and re-enactors, who do South African Border re-enactments through the medium of airsoft (replica firearms shooting small plastic balls at high velocity) and static displays. The airsoft simulations replicate the South African Border War patrols with unexpected engagements to either one or both parties. At events, the NRCC conduct static or live displays of the South African Border War and militaria which is of growing interest to NRCC members. Haydon (2017) states that on average the NRCC either re-enacts the Border War or event display once per month. Haydon (2017) emphasises the importance of ethical portrayal and not to glorifying anyone side of the conflict while keeping military history alive. Haydon (2017) concludes that the biggest forms of flattery for us is when someone mistakes one of their photos (some of which are shot on



period correct 35mm film and cameras) as original photos or when visitors and tourists commend us on our displays and collections.

Based on the examples given it is clear that re-enactors are an essential contributor to military heritage and tourism. Not only do they travel to attend re-enactments but they are a highlight of any military heritage event.

Private militaria collectors

There are many private military collectors in South Africa however, one stands out above the rest and can be found at the Sandstone Heritage Estate (SHE) operating as part of the Sandstone Heritage Trust (SHT). The SHE consists of a large agricultural estate which amongst others features a significant collection of South African and foreign military equipment in private hands. A special supportive relationship has formed between the SHT and the South African armour museum which according to Mole (2015) is a particular successful example of public\private sector partnership. Tourists and visitors are taken on simulated military convoys along the Lesotho border (which the SHE borders) and treated to tank ride and various military vehicle demonstrations.

The military collection celebrates the unique South African military heritage and quality of South African engineering (Venter & Kruger, 2017). There is also a dedicated group of aviators who make use of the SHE grass airstrip to land their pre-World War Two bi-planes, Harvard's and other light aircraft. The SHE is positioned to preserve a unique piece of South Africa's military heritage through restoration, safeguarding and education. The need for military heritage preservation is best described by Mole (2015) when pointing out the fact that one has to come to terms with the fact that the old soldiers will die and when gone all that will be left are old books on dusty shelves and metal (referring to military equipment) which is durable and will last as long as people will want it to. He (2015) further states that such equipment can be seen as the most dramatic form or representation of what past soldiers used and had to endure. According to Mole (2017) the SHE receives on average 3000-4500 tourists a year.

Conclusion

Visitation to museums and attractions that display military heritage is progressively increasing. In days gone by, only military veterans and history enthusiasts would have been fascinated in learning about military history. Lately, however, there is a growing interest in the stories, lives and experiences of those who fought and lived and those who died during times of war in far-away places. Such heritage tourism helps visitors to immerse themselves in a destination.

The paper has used an extensive literature analysis of heritage tourism to show the potential of military heritage as a tourism niche market to act as a mediator to bridge social, economic and cultural gaps in South Africa. The concept of military heritage was unpacked and a definition proposed which led to the proposed components of military heritage namely: battlefields, museums, memorials, monuments, festivals, events, re-enactors, re-enactments and private military collectors. A breakdown and description of each contributor was provided and South African examples given with a description to contextualise its importance to South African military heritage as a whole. The examples provided are indicative of the rich military heritage found in South Africa and tourists and visitors interest therein, which range from the casual to the more academic.



Given the examples provided, military heritage tourism is a well-established niche market in South Africa which has yet to be fully researched academically. However due to the lack of research in the field of military heritage tourism, further commenting is not possible and this in a sense is a limitation. In order to better understand the state of the military heritage tourism market, the author proposes an extensive research undertaking utilising the most prominent research in tourism namely travel motivation, quality of life, brand loyalty, happiness, subjective well-being and the creation of a structural equation model. A standard market segmentation analysis and spending patterns of military heritage tourist and visitors is also recommended for future research endeavours in this exciting area.

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