

# MILITÊRE GEWOONTES EN TRADISIES/MILITARY CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

## 'Vryheid van die Stad'

Die gebruik om die 'Vryheid van die Stad' aan 'n regiment te gee, sodat sy troepe deur die betrokke stad kan marsjeer met 'n getrommel van dromme, wapperende vaandels en gevelde bajonette het aanvanklik ook die doel gehad van werwing. Die dromme moes die aandag trek en die vaandel is ontplooi om te wys dat die werwing vir die koning se diens was.

Wat betref sowel die Romeinse leërs as die Britse leërs van weleer was spesifieke regulasies van toepassing mbt toegang tot 'n stad. Na 1842 het dit bv in Londen gegeld dat wanneer 'n afdeling troepe die stadsgrense wou oorskry, hulle eers die toestemming van die Burgemeester moes verkry. So is bv ook net aan bepaalde regimente hierdie voorreg verleen.

Die 'Vryheid van die Stad' is in Suid-Afrika reeds deur verskeie stede en dorpe aan regimente toegeken. Daar blyk 'n bepaalde verband te wees tussen 'Vryheid van die Stad', 'Ereburgerskap' en 'Vryheid van Deurgang' maar dit wil tog blyk dat historiese vergunning aan regimente om met gevelde bajonette deur die strate te marsjeer nie vergelyk kan word met die betekenis wat aan 'Ereburgerskap' of 'Vryheid van die Stad' gegee word nie. Volgens die 'Seremoniële Handboek', van 1955 is die verlening van 'Vry toegang' en 'deurgang deur 'n dorp of 'n stad' aan militêre eenhede of formasies 'n tradisionele voorreg, soms as erkenning vir bewese diens en moet dit met die grootste agting eerbiedig word.

In die 1971 'Seremoniële Handboek' (Afrikaanse Vertaling) word egter gepraat van 'Vryheid van 'n Stad of Dorp' terwyl die Engelse vertaling nie heeltemal daarmee ooreenstem nie en verwys na 'Freedom of entry into a City or Town'.

## The Naval officer's sword

During the crusades the sword was used as a religious symbol, in that the pious warriors' weapons doubled as crucifixes. A crusader namely kissed his sword hilt whenever unsheathing or sheathing it, — as a prayer to God for success in battle or as a thanksgiving for victory.

This religious custom is still honoured today by bringing our hilts to our lips when drawing or returning swords on parade.

The ancient law amongst gentlemen, that a sword must never be defaced, stems from the sword's use as a sacred object. Our navy unfortunately broke this strict rule when South Africa became a Republic, and the crowns were ground off the hilts and blades. The Army, however, refused to deface their weapons, which were honourably discharged from service and replaced by a new pattern.

Such is the strength of military tradition!

In Europe the sword would appear to have been developed from the knife in Minoan Crete and Celtic Britain at about the same time between 1500 and 1100 BC, the period known as the



Die Vryheid van die dorp word aan die Kuruman kommando toegeken.

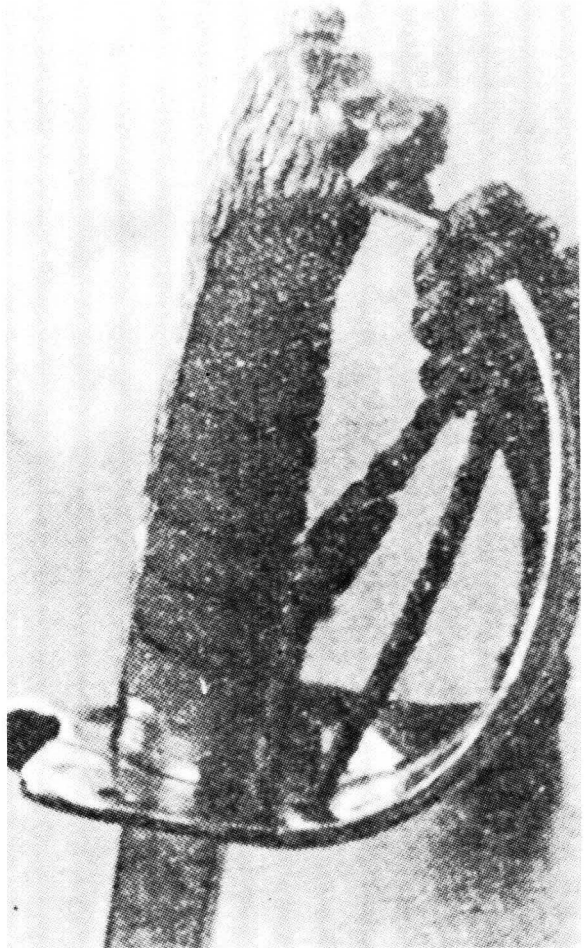
Middle Bronze Age. Towards the end of the Bronze Age these types of swords were slowly supplemented by other kinds of swords, two of which can be traced to definite areas of origin. These were the long 'Halistatt' swords and the sword of the 'Swiss type' or 'Rhône Valley' type.

The bronze swords of Scandinavia form a separate group because of their superlative quality. Another very rare Bronze Age sword is the Zealand sword from Denmark, which is one-edged and totally isolated style-wise.

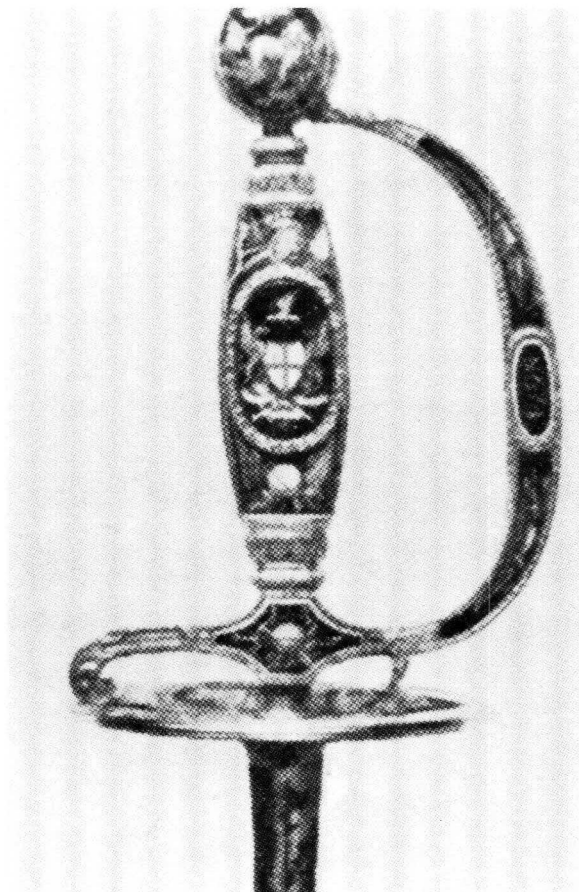
With the passing of time the steel and iron swords as we know them today evolved.

Although our Navy is young, the officers' sword is a direct descendant of the first uniform sword introduced by the British Admiralty in about 1801.

People often seem surprised to see Naval Officers wearing swords in this age of guided



This hilt belongs to the SAN sword of 1969. Photograph: Commando 1969



Small sword presented to Rear-Admiral Nelson in commemoration of his victory at the battle of the Nile 1793. Photograph: Commando 1969

weapons, but it serves as a reminder that the bearer is an officer.

### **Soldaat**

Die woord soldaat het in Italië ontstaan en is afkomstig van die woord 'soldato' wat beteken 'die in diensgenome'. Die woord 'soldato' is op sy beurt weer afgelei van die Italiaanse woord 'soldo' wat soldy of loon beteken en dit is weer afkomstig van die Latynse 'solidus' — wat sterk, stewig of deeglik beteken.

Duitse Vrywilligers van 1813 wou egter nie 'soldaat' heet nie aangesien die woord te veel aan soldy en huursoldate herinner het. Veel eerder wou hulle bekend staan as 'Krygers'. Die woord soldaat het in 1550 geleidelik inslag begin vind in Duitsland aanvanklik, soos aangetoon met 'n ietwat diskriminerende konnotasie maar mettertyd is met groot erkentlikheid gewag gemaak van 'soldatedeugde' en 'soldatetrou'.

## **The military wedding**

The military wedding is like other weddings — except that the officers in the bridal party are in uniform, and the bride and groom usually leave the chapel or church under the traditional arch of swords, consisting of ten to twelve members.

Permanent Force Members do not have to obtain special permission for the wearing of uniform at a

military wedding. The type of uniform worn will be in accordance with the kind of wedding planned — formal or informal.

The bestman should not be of a higher rank than the groom and whereas senior officers may be asked to participate in the arch of swords ceremony if too few officers of equal or lower rank are available, the Officer in Charge and his Second in Charge should not participate as this does not befit their status.