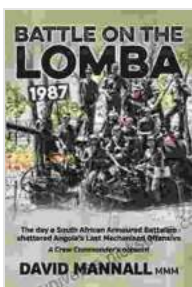


Battle on the Lomba: A Turning Point in the Angolan Civil War

The Battle on the Lomba, fought in November and December of 1987, was a pivotal engagement in the Angolan Civil War. It pitted the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), led by Jonas Savimbi, against the Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA), commanded by Eduardo dos Santos. This clash marked a turning point in the conflict, shifting the balance of power in favor of UNITA and its Western allies.

The Angolan Civil War, which began in 1975, was a proxy conflict between the Cold War superpowers. The Soviet Union and its allies supported FAPLA, while UNITA received backing from the United States and South Africa. The war had been raging for over a decade, with both sides making significant gains and losses.

In 1985, FAPLA launched a major offensive, aiming to crush UNITA's stronghold in the southeastern province of Cuando Cubango. However, UNITA, with assistance from South African special forces, managed to repel the attack and inflict heavy casualties on FAPLA.



Battle on the Lomba 1987: Battle on the Lomba 1987

by David Mannall

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 78093 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

X-Ray : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 607 pages
Lending : Enabled



In 1987, FAPLA launched another offensive, this time targeting UNITA's supply lines and bases around the town of Cuito Cuanavale in the southern Cuando Cubango province. FAPLA forces besieged the town, cutting off supplies and communications. UNITA, commanded by Savimbi, dug in and resisted the assault, supported by South African military advisors and aerial support.

In November 1987, UNITA launched a counteroffensive, aiming to break the siege of Cuito Cuanavale. The battle took place near the Lomba River, east of the town. UNITA forces, supported by South African artillery and airpower, engaged FAPLA troops in fierce fighting.

FAPLA, unable to withstand the combined onslaught of UNITA and South African forces, suffered heavy casualties and was forced to retreat. UNITA, buoyed by its victory, tightened its grip on Cuito Cuanavale and effectively ended FAPLA's siege.

The Battle on the Lomba marked a significant turning point in the Angolan Civil War. UNITA's victory boosted its morale and consolidated its position in the south. The defeat of FAPLA exposed the weaknesses of the Soviet-backed regime and emboldened UNITA and its allies.

The battle also shifted the balance of power on the international stage. The United States and its allies hailed the victory as a setback for Soviet

influence in Africa. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, saw it as a humiliation and a blow to its prestige.

The Battle on the Lomba paved the way for peace negotiations, which eventually led to the end of the Angolan Civil War in 2002. However, the legacy of the battle continues to shape Angolan politics and society to this day.

Jonas Savimbi: The charismatic leader of UNITA, Savimbi was a skilled military commander and a master of guerrilla warfare. His determination and leadership were instrumental in UNITA's success on the Lomba.

Eduardo dos Santos: The president of Angola and commander-in-chief of FAPLA, dos Santos inherited a war-torn country and faced immense international pressure to end the conflict.

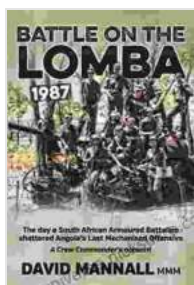
Helmut Schmidt: The former German chancellor played a crucial role in mediating peace talks between UNITA and FAPLA. His efforts helped bring an end to the civil war.

Mikhail Gorbachev: The General Secretary of the Soviet Union at the time, Gorbachev played a key role in reducing Soviet military support to Angola, which weakened FAPLA's position.

UNITA: UNITA employed a combination of guerrilla tactics, ambush, and hit-and-run attacks to wear down FAPLA forces. They also utilized the support of South African aircraft and artillery, which proved decisive in the Battle on the Lomba.

FAPLA: FAPLA relied on conventional tactics and heavy weapons, such as artillery and tanks. However, their reliance on Soviet advisors and equipment made them vulnerable to UNITA's guerrilla warfare and South African airpower.

The Battle on the Lomba was a pivotal moment in the Angolan Civil War. UNITA's victory shifted the balance of power in favor of the rebels and paved the way for a negotiated settlement to the conflict. The battle also had a profound impact on international relations, demonstrating the limits of Soviet influence in Africa and the growing assertiveness of the United States and its allies. Today, the Battle on the Lomba remains a significant historical event, studied and remembered for its military significance and its role in shaping the course of the Angolan Civil War.



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