

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 74 (2008)
Heft: [6]

Artikel: Sahara crossing by Andrea Vogel
Autor: Werthmüller, Paul
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-943658>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 09.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Sahara crossing by Andrea Vogel

It is 150 years since the last Europeans completed this route across the Sahara desert. In medieval times and up to the early 20th century, Bedouins used this route to transport salt and other goods on camel back across the desert. But over the last decades the desert has increased a great deal, some of the once active wells have dried out and oases just vanished in the sand. Another problem are the different war lords.



Andrea Vogel came up with the idea of crossing the Sahara on foot a while ago. He had great difficulties to find local guides experienced enough to lead him through the desert. He started in Timbuktu, Mali, and walked to Marrakesh, Morocco, in 71 days. He was accompanied by two Tuareg

guides and a number of camels carrying their luggage. On the way he climbed the highest peak of Northern Africa, Mt. Jebel Toubkal 4167 m, and crossed the Erg Chech, the greatest sand sea on earth. In Marrakesh he was welcomed and congratulated to his outstanding achievement by a representative of the king of Morocco and the Swiss ambassador.



Andrea Vogel was born in 1958 in Grünsch, Kanton Graubünden. He was leader of several expeditions. He is also a photographer, writer and lecturer. He also has an entry in the Guiness Book of Records for climbing eleven peaks in the Swiss Alps within 24 hours. Another outstanding athletic and mental achievement was the solo surrounding of Switzerland, along the Swiss border. The reason for his adventures is to encourage others to give way to personal longings and go for the impossible.

Paul Werthmüller



Thousands of army guns are lost

More than 4'300 army guns have been lost or stolen over the past decade, the Swiss defence ministry has confirmed. The guns had been stolen or lost outside military service. In addition, around 260 have been reported stolen and then recovered. Assault rifles disappeared the most frequently, followed by pistols, according to the defence ministry. Weapons are also lost or stolen during service, but this is much more rare. Since 2005 this has been around ten per year, apart from in 2006. In that year 82 rifles were stolen from an army depot in Marly in French-speaking Switzerland, bringing the 2006 total to 84 rifles plus 15 pistols.

The army does not keep statistics that make a distinction between lost or stolen weapons. Those that simply disappear are categorised as lost.

According to some estimates there could be as many as 1.5 million army weapons in circulation.

Questions have been raised in the country over whether the practice of keeping guns at home should be continued. Those against it point to the fact that army-issued weapons are said to be involved in the deaths of more than 300 people a year in the country.

Parliament last year banned the keeping of ammunition at home. But centre-left Social Democratic Party and pacifist organisations have gone further and launched a people's initiative to ban army guns and rifles at home. They want these weapons to remain in the barracks and a national gun register set up, arguing that keeping guns at home no longer has a military purpose.

But opponents – including the strong gun lobby – argue that decommissioning weakens Swiss security and is a vote of no confidence in soldiers.

from swissinfo