



Rhodesian Services Association Newsletter October 2006

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Greetings

'Tis the eve of the RV (almost) and with a stack of newsletter material I thought that I had better do something while I have a small amount of time available. There is still time to purchase RV tickets but you will be up for a late payment fee making the ticket cost \$30. The RV tickets are not about making a profit. Where we want to raise funds is the auction and raffle that we have during the RV. This year is the first time that we have incorporated a memento and we have had to cover the cost of this (\$5) in the ticket price. The mementos are lapel pins with the Lion & Tusk and the year on.

Many people have also ordered the pins from previous years that they have attended the RV and many of you now have the Lion & Tusk name badges as well. There are many other items of clothing, medals, number plate surrounds etc that we are stocking which we do sell for a small profit. These items make good gifts. You can view the full range on our website at www.rhodesianservices.org Look under the 'CQ Store' link then email me with your order. Profits from those sales go to the Rhodesian Services Association for museum display development.

While on the subject of gifts, also on the Assn. website, is a link to 'Books for Africa', this is my personal 'on line store'. From the sale of books I have funded the costs of getting the Assn website up and running. This includes the cost of the program, the domain name and the annual hosting fee. I appreciate your support.

Another great gift idea is a subscription to the Rhodesians World Wide magazine. This quarterly magazine has become an institution and now nearing it's 20th year (I think). The RWW magazine does not have the circulation numbers of the Woman's Weekly and relies heavily on individual subscription. RWW is personally edited and funded by the Whiteheads. Subscription is very reasonable at NZ\$34 and you can pay by personal cheque (no messing around with drafts etc which is a big saving). I have a quantity of magazines that I can send to intending subscribers in New Zealand. Email me your postal address and I will send you the latest copy which includes subscription details. You can arrange subscription as a gift, an older relative in another country for instance. The RWW website is at www.rhodesia.org

If you want to organise Christmas gifts, birthday gifts or food parcels for family and friends in Zimbabwe contact Teri on clogie@clear.net.nz or 07 574 7742 and she will do the hard work for you. She will arrange for gifts to be delivered in Harare (and possibly elsewhere which may take little longer). This is an excellent service and brightened the lives of the elderly parents of one of our NZ members last Christmas.

The Lion & Tusk, magazine of the Rhodesian Army Assn, is also another great gift for yourself or someone else. Email Iain Harper iain@umgusa.fsnet.co.uk or write to 57 Mercury Grove, Crownhill, Milton Keynes, MK8 0BY, UK for more details. The Rhodesian Army Assn in the UK also has stock of various regimental ties - Rhodesia Regiment and RAR as well as numerous other items. I can highly recommend the Lion & Tusk magazine.

Medals

For sometime we have been stocking miniature Rhodesian General Service Medals and Zimbabwe Independence Medals. We have a source for excellent copies of the Zim. Independence medals in both sizes. The copies are probably better quality than the original but are not numbered.

We used to advertise an email address of someone in the Zimbabwe Medal Society who was trying to find the owners of the 9,000 or so RGSMs that were in storage in Zimbabwe. This all came to an end a few years ago when that person emigrated. Who knows what will happen to them now, if they have not already been disposed of for an 'under the table' payment. Anyone now wanting a full size RGSM will have to source it themselves. I can recommend Michael Kaplan in South Africa medals@wirelessza.co.za who will sell you an RGSM for a very reasonable sum. Unfortunately these are all issued medals, so will have someone else's name on. This is the best that we can do for you at this stage.

This last statement will have all the medal collectors sending me emails telling me off. However what does someone do, who is entitled to the medal which was either not issued or has lost it? Most other combat medals from other wars can be replaced with a replica but not so the RGSM unless someone wants to set up a die and go into production.

This brings me to the next part of this matter which will really have the collectors in a spin.

I often get emails asking "what the bloody hell am I doing offering Zim. Independence medals for sale" - "who would want to wear them?" etc. This was exactly how I felt in 1980. I had my RGSM and that was enough. My father, however said "no" as we had all earned the medal (him included) we should wear it. So we did whatever was needed to get the medals and came to New Zealand a short time later. I had put my medals away as I was brassed off with everything. At some point in the 1980's my father and I started attending ANZAC parades in our local village. My father had his medal group remounted to include the Zim. Independence medal. He instructed the person who did the job to put the Zim. Independence medal last and reversed. He would wear the medal as he was entitled to, it but he "was bugged if it was going in front of the MC" and by reversing it he was adding further protest.

Let me digress here. My father won the Military Cross (M.C.) in Burma during WWII and I have the letter he received from General Slim on my desk as I write this piece. The Bronze Cross of Rhodesia was the equivalent of the M.C. Neither medal was handed out with out good cause.

My father passed his thoughts onto our curator and medal mounter, Tony Fraser, along with his view that court mounted medals were not his style and that medals should 'jingle'. Sadly my father passed away in 2001 but Tony Fraser continues to mount (unless otherwise requested) the Zim. Independence medal last and reversed. I am also pleased to note that he mounts medals for Rhodesians, free hanging, and not Court Mounted.

There has been queries as to which way around the RGSM goes and I see some absolute rubbish being put up on internet auction sites - wrong ribbon etc etc so this picture below shows the RGSM and Zim Independence medal (reversed - showing the Zimbabwe bird taking flight from the flames engulfing its perch)



These views expressed are my father's and mine, you may not agree, I respect that. People may choose to wear the Zim Independence correctly - that is fine by me. Medals are a very personal thing and it is pleasing to see the interest emerging amongst our people who for some time have had their tails between their legs.

There is another important note here and that is the uniqueness of the Zim. Independence medal. It is the only medal ever to have been issued to both sides in a conflict.

Our association has stock of RGSM and Zim Independence medals in miniature as well as full size Zim Independence medals. We also have stock of full size ribbon for both medals in good quantity (the RGSM ribbon was specially made in the UK for our Assn. and so can boast the biggest current stock in the world). We can supply miniature ribbon for Zim Independence and hopefully soon, the RGSM miniature as well. The medals and ribbon that we stock are competitively priced but we make no bones that we are here to turn a profit all of which goes to the association's Museum Fund. Both miniature medals are \$35 each; full size Zim Independence medal is \$50 and medal ribbons are \$10 per length (15cm for full size and 10cm for miniature)

Top Secret - For Your Eyes Only

What you are about to read is very secret and you must imagine a fake French accent and leesen verry carefulee, because I weel onlee ze zees wunce.

From a secret location somewhere in the Bay of Plenty has emerged the man code named 'Mr Le Bomba'. But first some background.....

When planning the current museum project at the Classic Flyers Museum we decided that the Alpha and Golf bombs had to be part of the display. Both bombs were unique Rhodesian inventions which worked very well - ask the gooks. They were locally invented and locally produced. There are misconceptions about these bombs so for the best quick description the following is reproduced here for you from Prof J.R.T. Wood's article at <http://www.rhodesia.nl/firefor2.htm> titled Fire Force 2 - Helicopter Warfare in Rhodesia: 1962-1980:-

The Golf bomb was a 460 kilogram Amatol percussion bomb with a metre long probe in the nose to detonate the bomb above the ground.

The Alpha Mk II bouncing bomb - a football size round bomb, 300 of which would be carried by a Canberra and when dropped would devastate an area of one hundred metres wide and a 1 000 metres long. The Alpha bomb had a double casing with 250 hard rubber balls between the inner and outer casings. This produced a forward bounce of some 18 metres at a maximum height of four metres before an ingenious three-way detonator exploded the bomb at three metres above the ground. Forty-five per cent of the casing - against seven and a half per cent of the conventional anti-personnel bomb - would saturate the target.

Further information is in the books Winds of Destruction and Pride of Eagles both of which are obtainable from the writer (good plug!)

So, we have a museum project with a focus on the Blue Jobs (Rhodesian Air Force) which is being done by a bunch of Brown Jobs (army types) who know little about planes and bombs. What to do?

Emails go out around the world with requests for details of armourers, bombs and the like. One of the Browns is a welder and volunteers to create models of the Alpha and Golf bombs. So he sets to on the internet. His long suffering wife enquires as to his late nights in front of the computer. Suspecting he has developed an interest in porn, she is more shocked to learn that he is "building some bombs". She then sees that he has been writing to people asking for details of 'bombs'. 'Mr Le Bomba' is born.

Fearing that his emails will be intercepted by the SIS, FBI, CIA, etc etc, 'Mrs La Bomba' now lives in fear and trepidation (or does she?11) that the men in black will appear in the dead of night and cart 'Mr Le Bomba' off for interrogation and incarceration in Guantanamo Bay to be fed a diet of Harry Potter books (if the press is to be believed). 'Mrs La Bomba' is further

disturbed by 2 dubious characters who frequently go to her shop and ask her to "leesen verry carefulee becoze, we have a messaage for Le Bomba" not only are their French accents very suspect but they are frightening off the customers. There is a third character who only goes to her shop to look at the magazines on the top shelf but that is another story all together! He is (so he says) buying these magazines for a friend in Afghanistan to exchange for other museum exhibits. Believe this and you will believe anything - even the Tui beer adverts!!

Below is the only photo in existence of 'Mr Le Bomba' at work on the Alpha bomb in his secret workshop. This photo is designed to self destruct in 5 seconds but do not be alarmed if it fails to do this (if it does please let me know). Please note that he is not holding his left hand over his heart in some form of 'leftist salute' it is actually to cover up his employer's insignia so that they are not implicated.



Classic Flyers Museum Display

Seriously now - the display will be 80% complete in time for the RV. We are most grateful to our hosts and we ask that you do whatever you can to support them - use the Avgas Café if you are in Tauranga; use their conference and function facilities if you are in management or business in the area; use this link for more detail www.classicflyersnz.com We are also grateful to the numerous people who have helped with material and information. We are especially grateful to the good folk from Msasa Enterprises whose site is at www.rhodesianvideos.mazoe.com who have been very good to us and supplied us with A1 material at no cost. Simply put - Msasa Enterprise DVDs are the best there are.

The display is a work in progress and will be about 80% complete at the time of the RV. Still to come will be the Golf bomb model, a .50 Browning and some additional Rhodesian and Rhodesian Air Force information. Below are recent photos - please excuse the rear view of the 'Top Shelf' man mentioned earlier (some will be surprised to actually see him appearing to be doing some work).



We have spent a lot of time and money on this display and we are very please with the results so far. You can hopefully get some idea from these photos of the quality of the prints we had made for the background. To get the best view you must come and see it 'in the flesh' though.

Maori Battalion Haka

I always endeavour to present to Kiwis the parallels of Rhodesian and New Zealand military history (as well as the fact that Rhodesia beat the All Blacks in Bulawayo and drew with them in Salisbury in '49). Amongst parallels are that the Hauraki Regiment and the Rhodesia Regiment both trace their roots back to the same year, 1898; the Boer War, the Long Range Desert Group comprising of Kiwis and Rhodesians, the RAF, Malaya and so on. So it was with a great deal of interest that I was given a copy of the Maori Battalion haka used during WWII that contained reference to Rhodesia. Here is the translation:-
Italy, 1944

FIRST VOICE.

When dawn into the shades
These hectic days have gone,
And presences recede and memory fades
Still, in the dim recesses of the mind,
The ghosts of Italy will linger on.

SECOND VOICE.

You will hear the sound of cannon,
You will see the ghosts of men,
And across your inner vision
Will come Sherman, Bailey, Bren-
Indescribable confusion;

All the panoply of war,
Drunkenness and sports and travel,
Women, and the vino jar.
Here the tent that marks the living,
There the cross that marks the dead,
And the long road, still unfolding,
And the voice that pleads for bread.
You will see the flash of gunfire;
Hear the roar of plane, or shell;
Tread the rubble of the ghost town,
Cratered where the big bombs fell.

THIRD VOICE.

The shattered tank beside the road,
The ancient fortress on the hill;
Naples and Rome; the streets we strode
Their ghosts will stir the memory still.

ALL VOICES

In the dark blue Adriatic,
Or amid green olive trees,
Ornate church, or pillaged attic,
Dwell the phantom memories
Of the soldiers of all nations,
Sikhs, Mahrattas, Canucks, Greeks,
Poles, Italians, Yanks, Rhodesians:
Eyes of coal, or copper cheeks.
These will haunt the days that follow,
These - and a million more beside:
And when we're gone, still will the swallow
Swoop past graves of friends who died.

Frederick Beere

Off The Book Shelf

The Assn. has been given a copy of a new publication 'Rhodesia Medal Roll - Honours and Decorations of the Rhodesian Conflict 1970-1981' for the RV auction for which we are most grateful. This book written by David Saffey and available from www.jeppetown.com It lists over 12,000 separate awards. The book is fully indexed by surname. There are no citations nor illustrations.

There is a pile of new books that are being published or about to be. The ones I know of:-
Alex Binda is working on two - one on the RLI and the other on the RAR. Enquiries info@30degreessouth.co.za

Tony Ballinger (my former Platoon Commander) is about to release 'A Walk Against The Stream'. Enquiries tony@ballinger5422.freeseve.co.uk

Charlie Warren BCR (ex RLI) has published 'At The Going Down Of The Sun' which is available from www.booksurge.com

RLI Association

Calling all RLI skates. The RLI Association is being resurrected with branches around the world. The object is to help maintain the RLI history, to coordinate and organise reunions and to develop affiliations with appropriate organisations. For more information on this, as well as the intended reunion to set to coincide with the 2007 ANZAC Day in Sydney, email Chris at info@30degreessouth.co.za or Tony at ozemedic@bigpond.net.au If you served with the RLI

please make contact. If you know someone who was in the RLI please pass this information on to them.

Selous Scout Association

If you served with the Selous Scouts and you are not a current member please contact the secretary Tom Thomas by email thomas@selfcopypapers.co.za

Until next time

Cheers

Hugh Bomford

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