



Rhodesian Services Association Incorporated

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November 2008 Newsletter

Please Note that all previous newsletters are available at

www.rhodesianservices.org/Newsletters.htm

Greetings

When I started doing these newsletters back at the beginning of 2003 I had no idea where things would lead to. I woke up this morning and looked over what I had to do to get this newsletter published. To be honest, I was daunted by the enormity of what I saw lying ahead.

Normally I start the next newsletter as soon as the first one goes out. I build it up through the month then spend about two days polishing it up. Then it goes to John Lomas who makes corrections and suggestions. It comes back to me where I strip it down completely and run it piece by piece through a small program that takes out any surplus bits and pieces in the background of the text that may mess things up at your end. The final task is to send it out to batches of 50 addresses. Then the process all starts again, initially with the ones which bounce from people who have either not advised me of a change of address or whose mail boxes are full.

So with these thoughts running through my head, as well as an imminent meeting to show a few people our museum displays, I contemplated running away and hiding! However, as always I drew strength from the wonderful feedback and encouragement that I get from you people. As you read through this newsletter you will appreciate what we, as the Rhodesian Services Association, are part of - as well as the fact that Rhodesia will never die.

The phrase "Rhodesians never die" has been around for a long time. Let me tell you folks, from where I sit, it is not some corny saying uttered by some sad 'when we's'. In this newsletter I will give you a small insight into some of what I see and deal with. I hear from people on a regular basis, some who had no direct contact with Rhodesia, some who were born after the country's name had been changed, some from countries far removed from Africa, all with a common factor of having an interest in Rhodesia. They are hungry for information and staunch in their support. The spirit of Rhodesia lives on. I would really hope that some of the morals and ideals that we had and fought for can survive this modern world.

I still want to pursue the idea of re-naming this newsletter. Ideas on a name and an artistic design for that are very welcome. Perhaps I can persuade the Committee to authorise an incentive for the best idea.

In the October issue of the New Zealand RSA Review, I noted a remit from the Hastings Branch of the NZRSA proposing that the New Zealand Defence Force introduce a New Zealand Combat Infantry Badge - "recognising the nature and exigencies of infantry combat action in line with Australian and United States parallel." It will be interesting to see if one is introduced. At this point I would like to remind you of the unofficial Rhodesian Combat Infantry Badge (see we stole a march on NZ!) which is available on application and provision of suitable details of entitlement from our CQ Store. So with that final piece of advertising (never let a chance go by) I will leave you to peruse the rest of this newsletter.

Obituaries

These from ORAFS:

*"I have recently received news, through my brother in the Cape, of the death of **Bob Annan DSO** - RAF during WWII and formerly OC 104 (Umtali) Sqn VR. He was aged 91 and died on the morning of 13 Sep 2008. He has been laid to rest in Umtali. Bob was the Father of John Annan and his late twin sister Margie, (recently deceased in Sedgfield, Cape Province) wife of my younger brother, Roy.*

Comms and access are obviously not easy to that part of Zimbabwe.

Regards,
Keith Corrans"

"Paddy Molloy died in England on October 3, 2008. He served in DRRR, 1NRR, School of Infantry and in the Rhodesian Air Force as PTI/DI"

Off The Radar

This email from Stu Gilman

*"Looking for the following officers who served with 8 Sigs Sqdn: Capt **Bob Jones**, Capt **Marianne Guerrero**, Capt **Cecil Luke**, 2Lt **Jeremy Ireland-Jones**, 2Lt **Bruce Knoble** in reference to a unit history in progress for the Sqdn."*

Reply to: Stu Gilman (8 Sigs), Email: rhodef1@iafrica.com

This email from Steve Newbold

"Hi,

*My name is Steve Newbold and I am trying to trace my aunt Avril and her brother Colin. It is with regret that I have to inform them that **Raymond Newbold** (ex champion jockey of Rhodesia) who served with RLI and with the Greys' Scouts, passed away in January 2008 in Chorley Lancs, England*

If any members of your association remember Raymond or have any information that may assist me in tracing my aunt Avril, please contact me at stevenewbold@ymail.com

I last saw Avril and Colin in 1985. My uncle Ray ran Helensdale Stud in Bromley for the Mashfords (Mashford & Sons Funeral Services). Uncle Ray was based at Inkomo Barracks. I understand that he did get divorced from aunt Avril, left Zimbabwe and spent a couple of months with my father in Zambia, then left for England. I am in contact with another ex-jockey from Rhodesia, Ian McKenzie-Smith in Ireland.

Thank you for your assistance.

Regards,

Steve Newbold (nephew)"

The following people's emails rejected the last issue of the newsletter. If you have contact with them please ask them to contact me with their new address

Ed Potterton – England. He is also the webmaster of the Rhodesian Army Association's website.

Dave Ward – Canada

Roy Gardener – South Africa

Rhodesian Services Association Inc. update

Memberships have been flowing in steadily. The end of our year is 30th September, so if you have not renewed and would like to do so, or if you want to register for the first time please contact me for details. The annual subscription is NZ\$5.

This newsletter now goes out to nearly 800 addresses world wide. Current financial membership is 103 involving people from 11 countries. Last year we reached 109, so let's see if we can reach 200 this year.

The October RV was well attended despite the tough financial times with around 70 people from all over New Zealand and two members from Ireland and Hawaii. As Stompie has written a piece on the RV I will not bore you with repetition.

Just prior to the RV I received this email:

"Greetings again,

Wishing you and all who are there with you, Best Wishes for a wonderful week-end to honour the memory of our mates who are no longer with us, and revel in the glorious company of those who still celebrate being together to share each other's company.

This week-end at Tauranga, and the next one in Durban, and the next after that in places all over the world, we will give thanks for our heritage and our cause for intense pride.

Have a few with us, and we will do the same for you.

Peter and Eunice Walls"

For those reading this newsletter who are not aware of the significance of this email (remember we have a number of associates from around the globe who support Rhodesia but may not fully understand our history), this email from our most senior soldier is something quite special for us. As I have said before "it would not happen anywhere in the world, past or future, where the biggest 'Sir' of all takes time to communicate to the troops like this. This email was read out at the RV and it was appreciated by all - thank you Peter and Eunice, you are amazing people.

42 financial members were present at the AGM. This is a fantastic attendance when you consider that of our 103 financial members, 20 live overseas. Minutes will be sent to the financial members by separate email in due course.

Photos were sent to me by Janine Walls, Tinka Mushett and John Graham. Some of these are below. The background to these photos is the Hauraki Regiment's history room and museum. Unlike previous years we did not do a complete 'make over' with our own items, instead only bringing in the Para Display as well as our CQ Store, the auction goods and various books for sale. These photos need to be viewed in context with Stompie's article below.

Some serious planning going on here or are they looking for a German wallet? L-R Terry McEnery; Tammy Walls; George Walls; Steve Geach; Hugh Bomford. The background is our Para Display



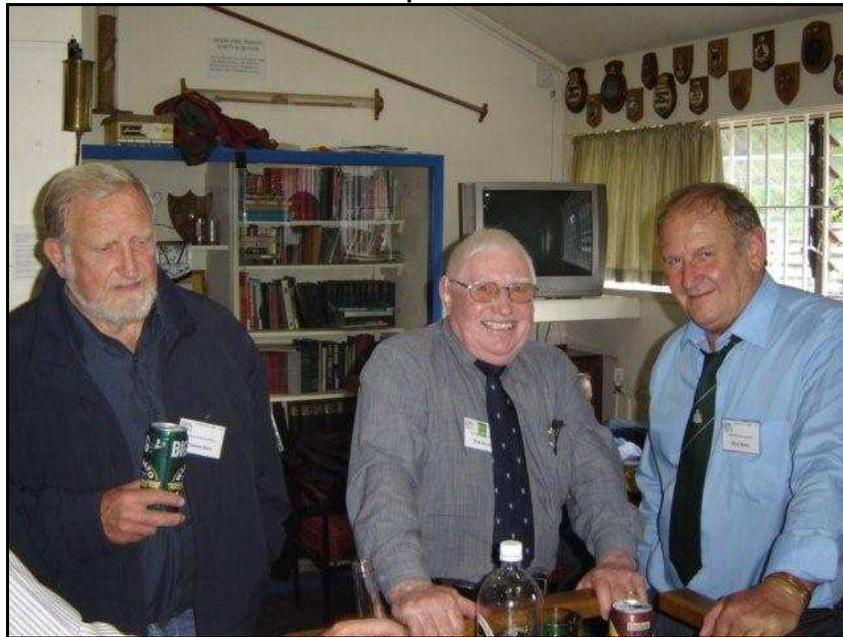
The Para Mobile Display behind the auction table



Ring any bells? Geach extracts another \$



L-R - Winston Hart wonders how long a German wallet is AWOL for; Wolf Huckle appreciates sympathetic mates; Rory Beary is wondering how much sympathy is required of him and if a German haka would also work in the pubs of Ireland.



Standing centrally Danny Hart has the attention of Lt Col. Warren Banks, CO of the 6th Battalion Hauraki Group



Regimental Rumours by 'Stompie'

Greetings all,

Well, here we are on the other side of a very successful RV in Tauranga. A good time was had by all, from what I could see, and it was good to be on site where I could obtain first hand information.

Friday night was 'Movie Night'. This kicked off with some excellent graze rustled up by Colin. Samoosas as good as anything you would find in Durban, as well as the Sloppy Joes, the troopies favourite at the WVS canteens around Rhodesia. The movies went off without a hitch which was a relief for Hugh's stress levels. We saw a broad variety of material and it was a damnable shame that there was not a bigger turnout - so few Aucklanders. This was noted - hokoyo you lot, I will be keeping an eye on you for any future misdemeanours which I will take great pleasure in rubbishing you over.

Everyone assembled at the Hauraki Regiment on Saturday and I noted a couple of late arrivals as the CO was making his welcome address. Doctors Barklie and O'Rourke snivelled in - and they were not one of the golfing group so what was your excuse guys? Maybe tardiness runs in the medical profession but we all know what happens if you're late for one of their appointments! Steve Geach was later to administer suitable punishment, you will be pleased to know.

Earlier in the day, veteran of goodness knows how many armies and wars, Wolf Hucke, demonstrated the German haka. It is similar to the Maori version in that there is a great deal of slapping of thighs and chest. The chant is somewhat different, however. The German haka is accompanied by a simple, repetitive chant which goes, "I hef forgotten my vallet, I hef forgotten my vallet" and so on. Whereas the Maori haka is a war cry, the German haka is a plea for sympathy in the absence of his "vallet" and for someone to buy him another of his favourite beverages, locally made Terminator Beer. Terminator packs a punch worse than skokiaan. At 8% you have to watch your intake. But not our mate Wolf who was later to be overheard remarking "zis 8% is much stronger zan dat 5%". Now I know how he made the SAS - it was due to his powers of observation! Anyway Wolf, you escaped being fined by Steve Geach but you will not get away from my poisonous pen!

Others were not so fortunate to escape the 'Judge Geach' fine session that saw the start to the auction. Steve's skill at squeezing the last dollar out of the audience while everyone is rolling around laughing is worth the ticket price alone. I have told Hugh before that he should double the price of the RV. There was some serious bidding going on, particularly for the Nancy Tichborne book, Watercolour World. We are all most grateful to the contributors to the auction because without you folks we would not have raised just over \$2600.00

A great feed was arranged by Diana Bomford, ably assisted by Lila Griffiths, Kim Webster and Tammy Walls. I spent some time down below where Colin and his 'braai chefs' were turning out wows by the yard as well as mouth watering steaks. Stompie heard one person criticising that a particular steak was a little overdone. I took note of your name my friend..... next RV you go down those stairs and ask nicely (and maybe offer to fetch a beer for the boys) and your nyama will be cooked to whatever particular degree of bloodiness you desire. Be careful - Stompie does not like to hear criticism of hard work.

The raffle was drawn and the top prize of the giant food hamper sponsored by Rob and Lesley Bates was won by Diana Bomford. In Stompie's opinion this was just reward for all your hard work, Diana! Good on you.

On the Sunday, the AGM was held out at the Classic Flyers. The weather was a bit of a bummer but once again the caterers rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in. Hell Colin, next year I hope they give you a medal for service beyond the call and all that. Greg O'Carroll won the draw which was a flight for two on a vintage AG-Cat bi-plane. As some of you know, Greg has jumped out of perfectly good airplanes when he was in the SAS. So, 'Biggles O'Carroll', we expect some good photos of the flight as well as a comprehensive report. Some jokers at the back of the tent were wondering if Biggles would do a wing walk. Now THAT I would like to see.

Don't forget to let me have any snippets of interesting information that come your way. Just send them to me at stompie@rhodesianservices.org

Until next time, cheers!

In Search of the Lost Battlefield - My adventure in Libya May 2008 by Brendan O'Carroll

I am delighted to be able to include this article which is the basis of a programme that will be shown on TV One on the next ANZAC Day, 25th April 2009. Brendan O'Carroll has published a number of books on the Long Range Desert Group and contributed to others. You will recall from a previous newsletter that soldiers from Rhodesia and New Zealand were part of this unit during WWII. Alf Page, the sole known Rhodesian WWII veteran in New Zealand served with the LRDG when they were operating in Europe. Alf laid the wreath at our last ANZAC Day parade at Hobsonville, Auckland. This then is Brendan's story.

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In May 2008, I took a month's long service leave from work to spend three weeks in the rocky regions and Saharan sand seas of southern Libya, one of the most hot and arid places on earth. The majority of the county's population sensibly live along the northern Mediterranean coast, where things are much cooler and the land more fertile.

This trip was the pinnacle of my many years interest in researching and writing NZ military history. Since 1998 I have specialized in compiling the stories of the New Zealanders who served in one of the first Special Forces of WW2, namely the Long Range Desert Group. Consequently, I wrote three internationally published books on the subject, Kiwi Scorpions 2000, Bearded Brigands 2002 and Barce Raid 2004.

The LRDG were experts in desert survival and warfare, operating behind enemy lines undertaking reconnaissance, intelligence gathering, and mapping the vast desert regions of Libya. In addition, they took on the role as raiders, working often alongside other forces such as the SAS, Free French and Popski's Private Army; employing hit and run tactics they attacked enemy forts, airfields, towns and supply convoys.

They travelled in small columns of heavily armed especially desert modified Chevrolet trucks that carried enough stores of fuel, water, ammunition and rations to enable them to operate independently for weeks behind the lines, spying on and harassing the enemy then disappearing in the desert. The interesting fact was that initially the majority of its members were New Zealanders, who came from a very cool temperate climate yet adapted remarkably well to the very hot and harsh environment of the Libyan Desert. Later, patrols from the British Guards (G Patrol) and Yeomanry regiments (Y Patrol) joined the force; along with a Rhodesian patrol (S Patrol).

A Swiss email friend Kuno Gross, who has worked in Libya for nine years managing construction development projects, had an interest in military history and spent his leave exploring the desert, looking for wartime wrecks and battlegrounds. In 2006 on one of these trips, he sought and found the remote location of Jebel Sherif, the site of a NZ LRDG action that took place in January 1941. This is where three of their armed trucks were put out of action in a running battle against the elite Italian desert specialist unit, the Compagnia Autosahariana di Cufra. This was most likely the first clash of Special Forces in WW2. The opposing forces surprised each other among the hills of Jebel Sherif, with the Italians having the advantage of an aircraft spotting for them. They also had the greater firepower with their Fiat and SPA trucks mounting automatic 20mm Breda guns plus 12.7mm and 7.7mm machine guns. The LRDG only had heavy .303 Vickers machine guns and Lewis guns, and a cumbersome truck mounted single shot 37mm Bofors gun.

Two days following the battle, a column of Free French soldiers entered the area and discovered the burnt out remains of three LRDG vehicles and one Italian Fiat 634N truck. In addition, two bodies were found and buried.

However, sometime later the engines were removed from the trucks, it is unknown by whom, but most likely the Free French. Apart from that, the vehicles remain today, just as they were left after the action.

Kuno was very excited about the discovery and extended an invitation to Roberto Chiavetto, an Italian military historian friend, and myself on an expedition to visit Jebel Sherif. It sounded like a WW2 military historian's equivalent of an Indiana Jones adventure looking for lost treasure; the prospect was very exciting. Thus, we began the very long process of preparation and obtaining travel visas. In the meantime, a NZ film production company heard about our plans and thought it would make a significant and fascinating documentary, this being the only New Zealand related battle site that still remains today, left virtually as it was after the battle. Perhaps even the only WW2 battle site anywhere that remains so.

When we arrived at Tripoli airport, a gloomy place with lots of serious looking officials about, three men in dark suits and sunglasses met us off the plane. They looked sinister, and said they were from the Government Media Dept and were expecting us. Despite their appearance, they welcomed us, proved very friendly and personally dealt with our passports, easing us through the border process. They even gave us permission to film at the airport, usually strictly forbidden in Libya, as is filming of police stations, army posts, petrol stations and government buildings or places considered strategic. We met Kuno who told us the good news that the Libyan officials decided because we came from New Zealand, (perhaps a benign country in their mind) we were not considered such a threat after all, so only required us to have two minders while in Tripoli and only one when we were in the desert. This was good news, as too many government minders would have caused lots of restrictions and cost us a fortune.

Our expedition consisted of 16 people travelling in five Toyota Land cruiser 4 x 4 vehicles; these were all owned and operated by Libyans, who were highly skilled as mechanics and in desert driving. We had two cooks, a Government minder and our Libyan tour leader Khaled, in charge of all the Libyans. My fellow Europeans were a German engineer who works in Libya, Roberto our Italian historian, and three Kiwis from the film crew, the director, a camera operator and a soundman. Kuno was overall leader and navigator. He used GPS and plotted charts to find our way, and along with Khaled, undertook the important role of carefully monitoring the fuel, water and food consumption for the group.

Over the three weeks, we endeavoured to retrace the LRDG route taken during the December 1940/ January 1941 Fezzan campaign in southern Libya. This was a combined force of 76 men from the New Zealand T and the British G patrols travelling in a column of 24 vehicles led by Major Pat Clayton. They were later joined mid desert by a small Free French attachment of 10 men led by Lt. Colonel Jean d'Ornano.

Our trip started in Tripoli, down to Sheba, then to Murzuk, where Clayton's patrols had attacked the airfield, town and fort. The remains of the concrete hanger still stand today, displaying hundreds of bullet holes from the T Patrol machine guns. Three Italian aircraft were set on fire in the building and 25 Italians captured, most of whom were left behind because they couldn't be carried on the trucks. During this action however, the French colonel and NZ T Patrol Sergeant Cyril Hewson were killed and several others slightly wounded.

From there we travelled over all types of desert terrain visiting Tmissa, Waw el Kebir, Tazerbo, Kufra, Bishiara, Buzema, Bir Zighen, Zella and Hon, then back to Sheba returning to Tripoli. Along the way, we spotted some wonderful wartime wrecks just sitting in the middle of nowhere. Overall, we saw Two Ford and two Chevrolet trucks, which appeared to be Free French vehicles, all well preserved in restorable condition. On the outskirts of Kufra we found a Honey light tank, also in great condition. As much as I wanted to examine the inside, I did not for fear of disturbing what appeared to be a good home for scorpions and snakes. The most interesting find was in the middle of a flat desert plain, a 1930s Italian Ro1 biplane. The skeleton airframe and engine were all reasonably intact despite what looked like a forced landing. This aircraft was used in the fight against the Senussi, whose last stronghold at Kufra was taken in 1931. Exploring these old wrecks is great fun, with all sorts of bits and pieces found, such as ammunition, ration, fuel and water tins and pieces of equipment. The desert preserves everything so well.

Throughout the journey, to avoid heat exhaustion or dehydration, our advice was to drink 2-3 litres of water a day. In the afternoon, due to the heat, the water was hot and unpleasant, but that was when you needed it most. You drank a lot, but urinated very little; the body absorbed most of it. The average afternoon temperature was 42-43 degrees, with one afternoon reaching 51! You kept in the shade of the vehicle, or under a palm tree, and wore a hat or Arab headdress to shade the head when exposed to the fierce sun. I have no idea how the men of the LRDG and SAS drove in the desert in open topped vehicles, the heat must have been very oppressive and debilitating. I couldn't have done it. We certainly had a small taste of what these tough desert warriors had to live and fight through.

Unfortunately, two of our party succumbed to heat exhaustion; Roberto was seriously affected and had to be evacuated home to Italy, while our minder from Tripoli had to spend two days recovering in the desert town of Kufra before he could travel again. Strangely enough it was the Mediterranean's who suffered, I think they may have been too confident they could take the heat and did not drink enough water, whereas the Kiwis who came from temperate climates where 27 degrees is considered an extremely hot day, religiously drank plenty of water and coped amazingly well in the conditions. None of us got sick, not even the 'Tripoli Trots'.

After seven days travelling across vast magnificent desert plains, sand seas, over large sand dunes and then rocky terrain, we encountered a blinding dust storm. This halted our progress and was a frustrating setback, as that evening we had hoped to find and camp at our target, Jebel Sherif, the location of the lost battlefield and to film the sunset and sunrise there. We decided to stop near an old well at Maaten Bishiara, where the LRDG had originally camped on their way to Jebel Sherif. Over the years, the bones of many dead camels had accumulated around there creating a fascinating image in the red wind blown sand. It appeared they could smell the water, but could never reach it. Lucky for us, not far from the well was a metal shelter, about the size of a 20ft sea container. This had been used at some time as an army checkpoint, yet despite the broken windows, dried human waste, scarab beetles and bullet holes, it now provided a welcome shelter from the constant blowing dust and sand.

By the next morning, after a miserable afternoon and night, the storm had gone, and we set off in anticipation of finding our lost battlefield. After driving for a couple of hours across a beautiful red coloured desert plain, we came upon a group of rocky hills and valleys. It was like an island in the middle of a great sand sea. Our navigator's calculations were spot on, and as we entered a spectacular beige/orange sand valley surrounded by the colourful hues of a cluster of red and orange rocky hills, we sited the three NZ trucks, still resting peacefully after nearly 70 years. Fire, time, sun and 'sand blast' had bronzed the colour from the metal, yet there was no rust. These vehicles, now surrounded by their scattered equipment, stores and munitions, once proudly bore the Maori names Te Paki, Te Aroha and Te Anau along with green Kiwis painted on their bonnets.

My heart was pounding with excitement as I walked up to these spectacular relics, examined the surroundings and litter around them, plainly understanding the violence that took place here so long ago, evidenced by the many brutal 20mm, 12.7mm (.50") and 7.7mm (.303) jagged bullet holes in the metal and the remains of the burnt tyres and supplies. We saw plates, cups, broken rum jars, ammunition, Lewis gun magazines, ammo boxes, tins of fuel, water and rations, cigarette tins, mortar bombs, grenades, parts of rifles and Lewis guns, and remains of web equipment. Best of all we found a NZ Army tunic button, which gave the site a direct link to our country, and for me a particularly moving moment, making that connection. We spent a day filming and photographing the historic place and its treasures, treading very carefully around a number of grenades and mortar bombs that were still alive and probably unstable.

We also found two rocky grave mounds, one of New Zealander Corporal Rex Beech, the other of Signor Colicchia, the Italian postman captured at an earlier raid on the town of Murzuk. We could not ascertain whether the body of the Murzuk postman was still buried there or not, but we knew from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records that the remains of Corporal Rex Beech were moved to the Acroma War Cemetery in April 1951. Nonetheless, we laid flags and poppies and paid our respects to the men fallen in battle. However, the Italian flag upset our Libyan friends, who after some discussion, agreed that they would only allow the flag to stay for photographs, but then removed. The New Zealand flag could remain. Libya suffered an oppressive and at times a very brutal occupation by the Italians from the early 1920s to 1943; it was interesting that such strong feelings remained. It was probably a good thing that Roberto my Italian friend, did not have to witness this event, as he had gone home sick prior to reaching Jebel Sherif.

Corporal Rex Beech had made a brave stand in his truck Te Anau to allow the rest of the column to escape. He stopped his vehicle in a small depression in the wadi and using his heavy .303 Vickers machine gun fired on the pursuing Italians, slowing them down enough to enable most of T Patrol to get away. However, in doing so Beech was hit in the chest by a 20mm shell and killed outright. His truck also caught on fire and burnt out. The remains of Te Anau grimly portrays evidence of the firepower directed at the New Zealander, with the panel behind where he was standing riddled with bullet and splinter holes.

Notably, it was from this battle site that NZ's first DCM of WW2 was earned. Trooper Ron Moore and his three crew, Guardsmen John Easton and Alexander Winchester, plus ROAC fitter Alfred Tighe, had to abandon their burning truck Te Aroha and run into the hills for cover. Moore had a shell splinter in his foot and Easton suffered a fragment lodged in the back of his throat. They had been left behind after the action, the patrol thinking they had been killed or captured; consequently, it was from that point that Moore began his famous 10-day, 336-kilometre trek. After much hardship and despite his foot wound, he successfully led his men out to eventual rescue, though Easton, suffering terribly from his throat wound, died in the later stages of the march.

Furthermore, this battle also led to the capture of the first two NZ soldiers in WW2. Lance Corporal L Roderick and Trooper W R Adams became POWs along with Major Pat Clayton the English commander, who while escaping Jebel Sherif, had their Ford V8 command car Te Rangi shot up by Italian aircraft and were forced to surrender to ground forces.

The Jebel Sherif relics survived mainly because of the isolation of the area, in a small group of rocky hills on a vast desert plain; the trucks, which are sited on opposite sides of a wide wadi, tended to blend into the landscape. In the 1960s and 70s the Libyans cleaned out most of the wartime wrecks from the main battle grounds of the Western Desert in the north for export as scrap to Japan. Generally, it was only the Special Forces, the Free French and the Sudan Defence Forces that fought in the south, but only as small units. Consequently, and because of the remoteness of the area, some wartime wrecks from those forces can still be found.

On our return journey, having just crossed the Rebiya Sand Sea from Kufra, we passed Zighen, and by pure chance came across the site of the 1941 camp of the Rhodesian S Patrol; an oasis with nice palm trees, gentle dunes and wild camels wandering about. The place was identified by the remains of hundreds of flimsies, the tins used to carry water and fuel. S Patrol was based there for about three months and had established a comfortable camp. The flimsies were filled with sand to build shelters and a swimming pool; they had even erected a basketball court with the hoops made of cut outs from 44-gallon drums attached to steel poles, still standing today. We found their rubbish dump, a large area of sun-blackened food tins lying in the sand. Digging below the surface we discovered to our amazement, dozens of cans of butter, sardines, herrings, bully beef, meat and veg, fruit, etc., plus bottles of fruit drink, beer, gin, whisky, pickles, broken SRD rum jars, cups, plates, cartridges and bits of webbing, blankets, sacking and cigarette packets. The incredible thing was that everything found below the surface looked as if it had just been dumped the week before. Most of the drink bottles and pickle jars still had their paper labels, the cardboard cigarette packets were still intact and readable, and the tins were mostly rust free, intact and identifiable. This evidenced that the LRDG, or certainly S Patrol, ate and drank very well. They were said to have been issued the best rations in the Middle East.

Zighen basketball court



Butter and bully



Other items from S Patrol camp at Zighen



Sadly, we were in a hurry to reach a further destination before dark, so could only spend about an hour at the site. We photographed what we could, but given more time who knows what wonderful treasures we may have found. If I ever return to Libya that is one place I would want to spend a couple of days to conduct a proper LRDG archaeological dig. This proves how dry the desert environment is, a paper label remaining intact, keeping its colour after 67 years, amazing!

After three weeks in the wilderness we managed to get back in one piece, though within our five vehicles we had one blown gearbox, a radiator gone, various minor engine problems, carburettors choked with dust, three flat tyres, stuck in the sand a number of times and over-heating problems. At one point, we were very low on fuel after crossing some difficult sand dunes, so our Libyan tour guide went ahead to a nearby army post for assistance and they gave us 100 litres to get us out of trouble. We were prepared to pay, but they wouldn't accept it, they were happy just to help us out. Great people the Libyan Army. It helps though, that petrol in Libya is only 15 cents a litre!

After three weeks in the most arid and hottest land in the world, NZ is like the Garden of Eden. The trip gave me a small appreciation of what the men of the Special Forces and 2NZEAF went through, though for me tough at times, it was a breeze compared to what those men had to experience. All I had to suffer was the extremes of the environment, not being hungry, thirsty, or shot at.

Our expedition was most likely one of the last to visit the Jebel Sherif site, as the Libyan government has as of October 2008, closed off the area to tourists.

With southern Libya now closed to foreigners, we were very fortunate to have comprehensively gathered a fine film archive of a virtually untouched NZ Special Forces battle site. It is unknown when access to the Jebel Sherif will be available again. There was concern that once the proposed book and documentary were in the public domain, the location of the site would become more widely known and thereby possibly pillaged by some future travellers or because of the interest, the Libyan government may decide to take the trucks away to a dusty Kufra 'museum'. All of that appears to be no longer an issue and Jebel Sherif can remain undisturbed. However, if the Libyans ever decided to remove the trucks, I feel the NZ government should negotiate to have one of the Kiwi Chevrolets brought home to a final resting place at the Army Museum.

The documentary film crew recorded 14 hours of film for an hour programme, so there will be some serious editing to get the best work. It is due to be shown on Anzac Day 25 April 2009, on Television One.

For further information about the discovery of Jebel Sherif and the history behind it, Kuno Gross is publishing a book in Europe called Incident at Jebel Sherif, The Search of the First Clash of the Special Forces 1941/2006, which is due out early 2009. Roberto Chiavetto and I are contributing authors. It will contain over 400 pictures and 180 A4 size pages. See the website for details www.jebelsherif.org In addition, my book Bearded Brigands published in 2002, tells the story through the eyes of Trooper Frank Jopling who kept a diary record of his LRDG service and records in great detail the Fezzan campaign and the battle at Jebel Sherif. This is available from the author for \$35. Email ocarrolds@xtra.co.nz

As a late addition to this article I am grateful to Roan Gouws who took these photos below at a recent Arms and Militaria Show in Cambridge, New Zealand. This Chevrolet truck that has been built as an authentic replica of what the Rhodesians used in the LRDG. The owner is a Kiwi.

The Rhodesian Patrol was designated 'S' so this vehicle it was named Salisbury. The other 'S' Patrol trucks would have also been named after Rhodesian towns beginning with the letter 'S' – Shamva, Shabani etc. Likewise the New Zealanders named their vehicles using town names beginning with the letter of their Patrols 'R' and 'T'.





The Origins of the Remembrance Poppy (extracted from www.defence.gov.au with thanks to Lt. Col. John Dick former CO 6th Hauraki Battalion Group who sent the article to me)



Colonel John McCrae, who was Professor of Medicine at McGill University in Canada before WW1 (joined the McGill faculty in 1900 after graduating from the University of Toronto), first described the red poppy, the Flanders' poppy, as the flower of remembrance.

Although he had been a doctor for years, he served in the Boer War as a gunner, but went to France in WW1 as a medical officer with the first Canadian contingent.

It was impossible to get used to the suffering, the screams, and the blood there, and Maj. John McCrae had seen and heard enough in his dressing station to last him a lifetime. As a surgeon attached to the 1st Field Artillery Brigade, Maj. McCrae had spent seventeen days treating injured men, Canadians, British, Indians, French, and Germans, in the Ypres salient.

It had been an ordeal that he had hardly thought possible. Maj. McCrae later wrote of it:

"I wish I could embody on paper some of the varied sensations of those seventeen days seventeen days of Hades! At the end of the first day if anyone had told us we had to spend seventeen days there, we would have folded our hands and said it could not have been done".

One death particularly affected Maj. McCrae. A young friend and former student, Lt. Alexis Helmer of Ottawa, had been killed by a shell burst on 2 May. Lt. Helmer was buried later that day in the little cemetery outside McCrae's dressing station, and McCrae had performed the funeral ceremony in the absence of the chaplain.

The next day, sitting on the back of an ambulance parked near the dressing station beside the Canal de l'Yser, just a few hundred yards north of Ypres, McCrae vented his anguish by composing a poem. At the second battle of Ypres in 1915, when in charge of a small first-aid post, he wrote in pencil on a page from his despatch book a poem

that has come to be known as "Flanders' Field" which described the poppies that marked the graves of soldiers killed fighting for their country. The major was no stranger to writing, having authored several medical texts besides dabbling in poetry. In the nearby cemetery, McCrae could see the wild poppies that sprang up in the ditches in that part of Europe, and he spent twenty minutes of precious rest time scribbling fifteen lines of verse in a notebook.

Cyril Allinson, a twenty-two year old sergeant major, was delivering mail that day when he spotted McCrae. The major looked up as Allinson approached, then went on writing while the sergeant major stood there quietly. "His face was very tired but calm as he wrote," Allinson recalled. "He looked around from time to time, his eyes straying to Helmer's grave." When he finished five minutes later, he took his mail from Allinson and, without saying a word, handed his pad to the young NCO. Allinson was moved by what he read:

"The poem was an exact description of the scene in front of us both. The word 'blow' was not used in the first line, though it was used later when the poem later appeared in Punch. But it was used in the second last line. He used the word 'blow' in that line because the poppies actually were being blown that morning by a gentle east wind. It never occurred to me at that time that it would ever be published. It seemed to me just an exact description of the scene."

In fact, it was very nearly not published. Dissatisfied with it, McCrae tossed the poem away, but a fellow officer - either Lt. Col. Edward Morrison, the former Ottawa newspaper editor who commanded the 1st Brigade of Artillery, or Lt. Col. J.M. Elder, depending on which source is consulted, retrieved it and sent it to newspapers in England. "The Spectator," in London, rejected it, but "Punch" published it on 8 December 1915.

McCrae's "In Flanders' Fields" remains to this day one of the most memorable war poems ever written. It is a lasting legacy of the terrible battle in the Ypres salient in the spring of 1915.

In Flanders' Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' Fields.

Col. McCrae was wounded in May 1918 and was taken to one of the big hospitals on the coast of France. On the third evening he was wheeled to the balcony of his room to look over the sea towards the cliffs of Dover. The verses were obviously in his mind, for he said to the doctor "Tell them, if ye break faith with us who die we shall not sleep." That same night Col. McCrae died.

Each Remembrance Day the British Legion lays a wreath on his grave, a tribute to a great man whose thoughts were always for others.

The wearing of the poppy to keep faith began when an American, Miss Moira Michael, read the poem "In Flanders Field" and was so greatly impressed that she decided always to wear a poppy to keep the faith. Miss Michael wrote a reply after reading "In Flanders Field" entitled "We Shall Keep the Faith":

Oh! You who sleep in Flanders' fields,
Sleep sweet – to rise anew;
We caught the torch you threw;
And holding high we kept
The faith with those who died.
We cherish, too, the Poppy red
That grows on fields where valour led.
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies,
But lends a lustre to the red
Of the flower that blooms above the dead
In Flanders' Fields.
And now the torch and poppy red
Wear in honour of our dead

Fear not that ye have died for naught
We've learned the lesson that ye taught
In Flanders' Fields.

Miss Michael worked for the YMCA in America and on Saturday 9 November 1918 hosted a meeting of YMCA wartime secretaries from other countries. When several of the secretaries presented her with a small gift of money to thank her for her hospitality, she said she would spend it on poppies and told them the story of McCrae's poem and her decision to always wear a red poppy.

The French secretary, Madame Guerin, conceived the idea of selling artificial poppies to raise money to help needy soldiers and their families, and she approached organisations among the countries of the world that had fought as allies in Europe to promote the concept.

In England in 1919, the British Legion was formed to foster the interest of ex-servicemen and their dependants, and the late Field Marshal Earl Haig, the first Grand President, sought an emblem which would honour the dead and help the living. He adopted the Poppy as that emblem, and since then the Red Poppy has been accepted as the Emblem of Remembrance. The day chosen for the wearing of the emblems was 11 November, a Day of Remembrance to honour the dead of both World Wars, Korea, Malaya and Vietnam.

Although the Red Poppy of Flanders is a symbol of modern times, legend has it that the poppy goes back even to the time of the famous Mongol leader, Genghiz Khan, as the flower associated with human sacrifice. In the 12th and early 13th centuries, the Mongol Emperor led his warrior hordes on campaigns south to the conquest of India, and west to envelop Russia as far as the shores of the Black Sea.

The modern story of the poppy is, of course, no legend. It is a page of history to which many thousands still with us can testify.

*Rhodesians also remember the 11th of November for the day that we declared UDI in 1965. I received this email from Grunter Robertson which sums up our additional respect for this day:
A day for remembering, for reflecting and for thanking God for what made us Rhodesians. Here's wishing you a good one.*



CQ Store visit www.rhodesianservices.org/The%20Shop.htm to see what is in store for you

For a better description and pictures of the items below please use the link above.

We have an ever increasing selection of goods available. When you purchase from us you know where your money is going and you can be assured that profits from that sale are put towards the preservation of Rhodesian history. This is the primary objective of our Association. We are an Incorporated Society and a Registered Charity.

Here are some recent comments:

"Dear Hugh

Just to advise the medals received today safely. Thank you - they look great and the RGSM so much more meaningful with its ribbon.

Kind regards

Jim"

"Hugh,

My rugby jersey arrived. Thanks very much for your efforts and have already worn it with pride which produced a lot of comment - all good.

Regards

Kevin"

"Hi Hugh

I thought you'd like to see my brother Mike in your jersey - it fits really well. He is very proud, as I am, to walk around in a quality Rhodesian jersey.

Check me out Boet!!



*Thanks very much for the service and great product.
Cheers,
Rob"*

And lastly, this one I love as it shows that I am doing a good job!

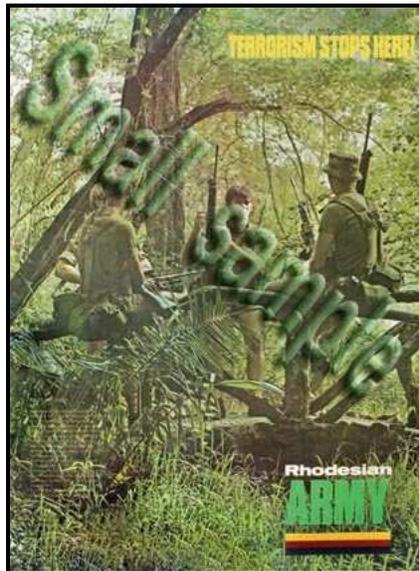
"Hi Hugh,

Just to say got the items OK. The Rhodesian Flag is great, BUT the army recruitment poster (you made me buy!) is fantastic!!!! I have only seen the small rubbish -copies they sell in the UK, this one is very good and I'm going to get it framed.

Anyway that's all must go before you sell me more items

Chas"

Our latest project is a high quality reproduction of the Rhodesian Army recruitment poster shown below. The image below has been made poor quality with the overprint in order to discourage people making free use of our work and costs. Only just visible on this image, on the left hand bottom side is the original text which was on the back of the poster explaining that Rhodesia does not employ mercenaries etc. This is a quality product. It is printed on 280 Micron Photo-Matt Heavyweight paper. It measures approx 400mm x 580mm. Price is \$50, plus postage (which will be in a tube).



CQ STORE INVENTORY

ITEMS EXCLUDING POSTAGE	PRICE in NZ\$
4RR Hackles	\$17.50
'Bumper' Stickers, Rhodesia/NZ or Australia flags; Rhodesian flag; Rhodesian Services Assn Lion & Tusk	\$3 each or 2 for \$5
Bullion wire blazer pocket badges	\$100
Business Card Holder – stainless steel with Lion & Tusk engraved	\$20
Berets	\$50
Lion & Tusk Baseball Caps	\$23
Lion & Tusk Beanies green, black or other (even pink!) on request	\$20
Lion & Tusk Dog Tags 'silver' or 'gold'	\$30
Lion & Tusk Polar Fleece jackets – long sleeved in green, black, navy	\$60
Lion & Tusk Polo shirts - black or green	\$36.50
Lion & Tusk T-shirts - black or green	\$30
Lion & Tusk Women's v-neck stretch shirts - black	\$30
Medal Pouch	\$30
Name badge – resin coated	15
Number plate surrounds – 4 styles to choose from	\$12
Pocket Insert Medal Holder	\$15
Regimental Cap Badges – RLI, Intaf, RAR, RDR, BSAP, Grey's Scouts, RRR, RR, Service Corps, Staff Corps, RWS, DRR and more	Priced from \$20 – inquire for details
Regimental ties – Rhodesian Light Infantry	\$35
Regimental ties – Rhodesia Regiment	\$40
Regimental ties – Rhodesian African Rifles	\$40
Regimental ties – SAS	\$55
Rhodesian Army Recruitment poster copy "Be a man amongst men"	\$10
NEW Rhodesian Army Recruitment poster copy "Terrorism Stops Here!"	\$50
Rhodesian General Service Medal full size medal copy with ribbon	\$100
Rhodesian General Service Medal full size medal copy (solid silver) with ribbon	\$125
Rhodesian General Service Medal full size ribbon	\$10/length
Rhodesian General Service Medal miniature medal with ribbon	\$35
Rhodesian General Service Medal miniature ribbon	\$10/length
Rhodesian replica rugby jerseys – short or long sleeve	\$110
Rhodesian Flag, embroidered 110mm x 50mm	\$20
Unofficial Rhodesian Combat Infantry Badge	\$22.50
Various medal ribbons – please inquire	POA
Various small embroidered badges (RLI, BSAP & Nyasaland Police)	\$5
Zimbabwe Independence Medal full size copy with ribbon	\$50
Zimbabwe Independence Medal full size ribbon	\$10/length
Zimbabwe Independence Medal miniature medal with ribbon	\$35
Zimbabwe Independence Medal miniature ribbon	\$10/length
'Zippo' type lighter	\$25

Watch this space for new items coming on stream in the future



The Rhodesia Regiment – From Pioneer Column to Independence 1890 – 1980



Alex is requesting the following material:

- Contributions from TA & NS for the period 1971-75
- Can anyone provide me with the make-up of a RR battalion?
- TA & NS awards & citations.

If you can help with any recollections or information about this or any other aspect of the Rhodesia Regiment, please contact me:

Photos and illustrations are to be sent to me:
PO Box 13003, Tauranga 3141, New Zealand or email hbomford@clear.net.nz

Please Note: If you do the scans yourself we need them done at 300 DPI.

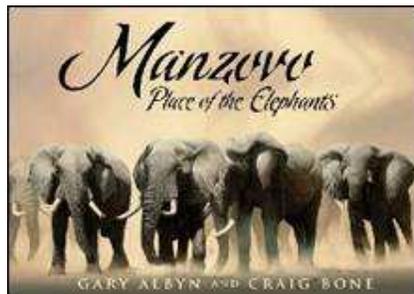
This is a unique chance to get your memories and experiences recorded for posterity, I urge you to become part of this project.

Books for Africa

I again remind you that all the books and audio visual disks that I stock and sell are listed at www.rhodesianservices.org/Books.htm These sales are my own hobby and income from sales is directed to me and not the Rhodesian Services Association. However, the Association does benefit indirectly from these sales.

New titles in stock:

Manzovo - Place of the Elephants by Gary Albyn and Craig Bone. Price excluding postage is \$85.00



This would make a unique and wonderful gift. It is a hardcover book of 300mm x 220mm with 191 pages containing an exquisite 107 verse poem. The book is lavishly illustrated throughout and includes a 30 minute audio CD of the poem read by acclaimed South African actor John Whiteley.

Nestled like a rare jewel in the inhospitable but alluring Zambezi Valley, Mana Pools, provides the early setting for this episodic story. The story portrays the epic travels of a herd of elephants through Mana Pools, Kariba, Victoria Falls and ultimately southward to the Kruger National Park at a time in our past when elephants were able to range with relative ease across the timeless plains of Africa. Both subtle and compelling, the story weaves in the arcane rhythm that pounds like a tribal drum deep in Africa's chest.

Gary Albyn was born in the old Rhodesia in 1960 and grew up in Umtali on the eastern border with Mozambique. The International Library of Poets has honoured some of Gary's previous poems, one of which was recently featured in a published anthology, Forever Spoken.

Craig Bone was born in Salisbury, Rhodesia in 1955, where he grew up. He joined the Rhodesian Light Infantry in 1977. He was critically wounded in a Frelimo mortar attack while on operations in Mozambique and it was only some desperate flying from the casualty-evacuation helicopter pilot that saved his life. While recuperating he started painting, initially military-themed works, and in a short time he was to be recognized as an artist of some repute. With his passion for wildlife, and the Zambezi Valley, he was to become an internationally acclaimed artist with his paintings being sold worldwide. A painting of his was recently auctioned on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Association and fetched US\$106,000. It now hangs in the Pentagon. www.craigbone.com

Vlamgat - The story of the Mirage F1 in the South African Air Force by Dick Lord. Price excluding postage is \$35



Vlamgat, literally meaning 'flaming hole' in Afrikaans, was the nickname the South African Air Force (SAAF) gave to the Mirage F1, its formidable frontline jet fighter during South Africa's long Border Wars in South West Africa (Namibia) and Angola from the late 1960s to the late 1980s.

Battling Soviet MiG-21s and -23s over African skies, the 'Vlammies' as the Mirage pilots were affectionately known, acquitted themselves with distinction and honour.

Vlamgat - The story of the Mirage F1 in the South African Air Force is a gripping account of these pilots and their deeds of bravery; their experiences are authentically related with accuracy, humour and pathos by the author, himself a Vlammie.

As Willem Hechter, former Chief of the SAAF, says: "Vlamgat deserves a place of pride in the long history of this, the second oldest air force in the world."

The Global Forked Stick

Calling all Aucklanders

Wolf and Alison Huckle will be sending an email to all known members in the Auckland area in due course with the intention of having regular gatherings at the Hobsonville RSA. Please contact Wolf and Alison direct on email whuckle@xtra.co.nz if you want to be included. This is a good opportunity to have a quiet drink with some mates or meet up with new people as well as supporting the RSA that has welcomed and supported us for many years.

A message from John Edmond and the crew at Roan Music:

"Dear Friends, Rhodies, Countrymen,

John, Teresa and all the staff of Roan Antelope Music and Kunkuru Bush Lodge would like to take this opportunity to thank all our friends scattered far and wide for your great support in the past and during the year. It is unbelievable to think that 2008 is soon coming to an end. It's been awesome to get phone calls from so many people from all over the globe and even to hear Afrikaans being spoken from the States and the UK! You guys in Alaska and Japan never cease to amaze us! Thank you!

As a Christmas gesture, all products in our Roan Antelope Catalogue will have a 10% discount tag on it. CD's, Books, DVD and Caps. See the web site for product availability www.johnedmond.co.za This offer will run for November and December 2008. So take this opportunity and get your gifts early!

Well folks, wishing you and your families peace and goodwill for a wonderful festive season and the very best for 2009! Those of you having a white Christmas ENJOY!

John, Teresa, Annemarie, Yours in Music - The Roan Antelope Team."

RLI Troopie Rededication and AGM

The RLI Regimental Association has an extensive website which is kept up to date. Rather than me repeating a lot of material that many of you get already I recommend that you register with the RLI Assn. You do not have to have served with the RLI as they welcome associate members. This message from George Dempster:

"Hi Guys

I have updated the website www.therli.com with information on the annual AGM held in London on September 26th and the Troopie rededication. The website includes images and a Members Feedback section.

Kind Regards

George Dempster

RLI RA - Webmaster www.therli.com

Email to gd@e2.co.za "

These images are reproduced below with grateful thanks from Paul Dubois and the RLI website.

A tranquil setting for the Troopie



About to be unveiled



Standing Proud once again.



Ben Bezuidenhout writes:

*"Dear Hugh,
Greetings. I subscribe to the Rhodesians Worldwide Magazine and this is where I discovered your email. I was born in Fort Victoria and educated at Chaplin School in Gwelo. I now live in Grahamstown S.A. with my wife, Norma.*

My reason for writing is to introduce you to my web page www.rhodesianbooks.co.za I have written four books on my life in Rhodesia - the flagship book being the true story "My Mother's Kitchen was a Baobab." The book is now close to 7000 copies sold worldwide and we are very excited about it. Just maybe you would like to take a peek and who knows, these may just be the Christmas presents you would like to send to yourself or a family member or even some Rhodesian out there in the big pond.

Kind regards

Norma and Ben Bezuidenhout.

Email : info@blaauwkrantzours.co.za

Web: www.blaauwkrantzours.co.za "

Rhodesian Air Force (Blue Jobs) in New Zealand

John Pringle is the front man for all you Blue Jobs. He has organised a gathering in Auckland, unfortunately the information was received too late for publication in the last newsletter. Please contact John so that you can get information direct:

Ph: (09) 410 5700

Mob: 021 047 0557

Fax: (09) 410 5712

Email PRINGLE.JP@xtra.co.nz

Information required for Rhodesia Regiment National Service intake in Feb/March 1979

Shane Pretorius writes:

"Hi Hugh,

Hope all is going well with you and the Association. I wonder if you could help or point me in the right direction. I am looking for details of the Intake that went to Llewellyn Barracks in Feb/Mar 1979, C Coy. In particular the Intake number and or any other details that you may have.

Many thanks and kind regards

Shane"

Please direct replies to email rshane@xtra.co.nz

Once Upon a White Man

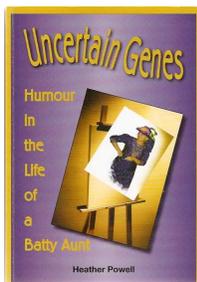
The following was received after we had run an article on this book.

"My apologies, on my previous e-mail to you promoting this book, one of the links (the one to the author's website) was incorrect. Here are all the correct links:

International buyers to preview chapters and/or buy a copy please click on the following secure link www.lulu.com/content/2521342 To view the author's webpage, please click on the following link <http://stores.lulu.com/onceuponawhiteman> The book is also available from our associates at Books of Zimbabwe www.booksOfZimbabwe.com"

Books by Heather Powell

Heather has recently published "Uncertain Genes – Humour in the Life of a Batty Aunt". This is another wonderful insight into this amazing woman's attitude to life. Give her adversity and she turns it into humour. We could all do to follow this 'batty woman's' lead! Heather was one of the staff at Tsanga Lodge and if you read her first book Tsanga Place of Reeds, Place of Healing, you will not want to miss her new book which details more of her life story. This book is an absolute pleasure to read. A really relaxing read and recommended Christmas material. Email Heather for more details and orders powellh@acr.net.au



Books by Prop Geldenhuys

Prop, a Rhodesian Air Force pilot, has been very busy making a remarkable record of his own and Rhodesian history. To get more details use this link www.pey.co.za



Can you assist Pey?

I do not normally do this sort of thing in this newsletter but one good turn deserves another. Pey Geldenhuys (son of Prop and Rina) is in the process of migrating to New Zealand. I recently had the pleasure of his company and said that I would try and help him by broadcasting his details. Essentially he needs to find an employer. This is his brief outline. If you can help Pey please contact him directly.

"I am an experienced and ambitious Project Manager/Business Analyst/Software Development Manager with over 17 years experience looking for a challenging role in this industry in New Zealand.

I have operated a successful Software Engineering business in South Africa for 17 years. I have good relationship management skills and understand and "worked" the full Systems Development Life Cycle (SDLC).

I have managed teams from 4 to 25 of various skills and attributes and have managed the relationships between the client and the development team.

I am currently living in Auckland but have no preference for where I work.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely
Pey Geldenhuys
Mobile: 021 0279 1229
Home: 09 889 0371
Email: pey@peysoft.co.za

Until next time - go well.

Cheers
Hugh

This newsletter is compiled by Hugh Bomford, Secretary of the Rhodesian Services Association. It contains many personal views and comments which may not always be the views of the Association or Committee.

If for any reason you would like to be removed from the mailing list, please send an email to hbomford@clear.net.nz with the word 'remove' in the subject line or body.