



# *The Sentinel*

*Newsletter of the Rhodesian Services Association*

What a time it was,  
With so few friends to turn to,  
What a time it was  
When all we did seemed wrong.  
We'd broken all our bonds  
And the battle plan was drawn,  
What a time, what a time it was.

Now I don't say we were right,  
And I don't say we were wrong,  
I'm just trying to tell it like it was, in simple song.  
You see when people love their homeland,  
They regard it as their own land,  
And they fight whether they're right, or they are wrong.

~ From *What A Time It Was*, by Clem Tholet

The Rhodesian Services Association was formed from a basis of people who served, or whose family served, in forces loyal to Rhodesia. The origins of the Association date back to the 1980s, when the late David Turner formed a branch of the Rhodesian Army Association in New Zealand.

Registering on our mailing list is free, but we're always seeking to increase our financial membership, in support of the Lion & Tusk Museum (established in May 2018) and the Rhodesian Forces Archives Project.

We have been made welcome and supported in New Zealand, by the Hobsonville Returned Services Association in Auckland, the 6th Battalion (Hauraki) Group, the 6th Battalion (Hauraki) Regimental Assn Inc. in Tauranga, and the Classic Flyers Museum in Mount Maunganui.

Please spread the word among your family and friends. To register on our mailing list and/or become a Financial Member, they can email [theeditor@rhodesianservices.org](mailto:theeditor@rhodesianservices.org)

People are welcome to join our Facebook group at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/RhodesianServicesAssociation> and The Lion and Tusk Museum page at: <https://www.facebook.com/TheLionAndTuskMuseum/>

### **From our Inbox:**

- Sincere thanks to financial member, Kevin Smith, for generously donating to the Association over the past year. Kevin is a former American serviceman, with an interest in Rhodesian military history. His company, Dragoon Unlimited, sells outdoor gear and clothing:

<https://dragoonunlimited.com/>

One of his bestsellers is a Rhodesian camo woobie, a sleeping bag/poncho liner with a zip, that provides additional warmth and can also be used as a blanket:

[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B08TRCDJ2K/ref=cx\\_skuctr\\_share?smid=A15S4OH3TEFD6P&th=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B08TRCDJ2K/ref=cx_skuctr_share?smid=A15S4OH3TEFD6P&th=1)

All items on the website are available from Amazon.com

- Calling all BSAP members - a BSAP memorial service at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire, UK, is planned for Sunday, 31st July 2022. The provisional schedule is as follows: arrivals from 10:30-11:00; service to start at 11:30; finger buffet lunch at noon. The cost for the lunch is £15 per head. This is open to all ex-Rhodesian forces who wish to attend.

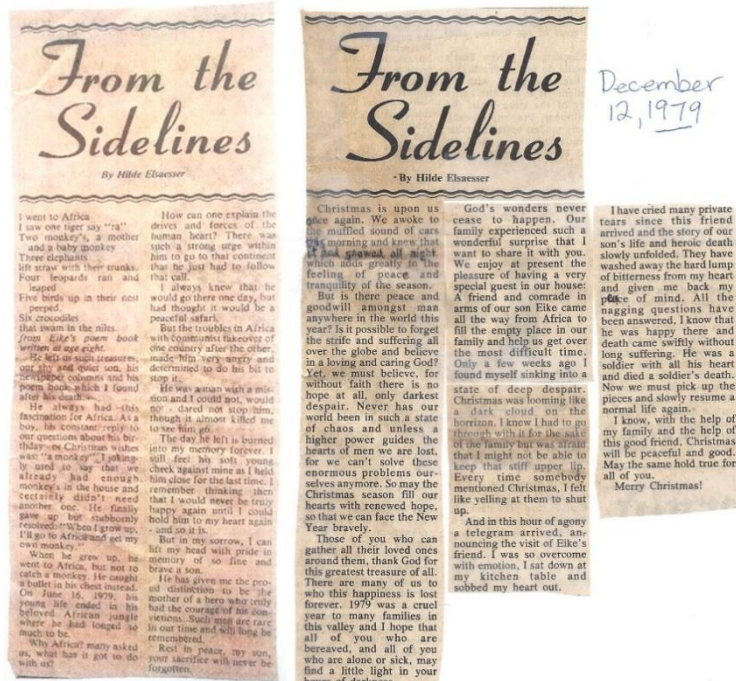
Please email Glenn Seymour Hall: [glennseymourhall@gmail.com](mailto:glennseymourhall@gmail.com)

- If anyone is aware of any Finnish nationals who took part in the Bush War as volunteers, or if there were known soldiers who had Finnish ancestors, please contact Otso Pohjalainen at: [otso.pohjalainen@gmail.com](mailto:otso.pohjalainen@gmail.com)
- In this issue, we decided to feature a story on the Crippled Eagles, a loosely organised group of US expatriates who fought for Rhodesia during the Bush War. Just as this decision was taken, we received an email from Rhodesian Services Association member Alan Balson, who wrote to us about his Canadian brother-in-law, **Eike Elsaesser**:

*I served with 1 (Indep) Coy RAR and was later transferred to Support Commando RLI. My brother-in-law, Eike Elsaesser, served with 3 Commando RLI and we were together at the School of Infantry. Eike was killed in action on 16 June 1979, during Operation Mulligan. Eike's family lived in Merritt, BC, Canada and he had 4 brothers and 3 sisters. His dad owned the local weekly newspaper, The Merritt Herald, and both Eike and his mother, Hilde, wrote for the newspaper.*

*A lot has been written about that day but, on his mother's passing last year, the family was going through her personal effects and came across the newspaper cuttings of Hilde's column, 'From the Sidelines'. Now, every morning, my sister-in-law sends out one of these columns to the rest of the family.*

*The columns on the right were written before and during a visit I paid to the family in December 1979, to tell them how Eike was killed in action. I kept it as simple as possible to reduce the trauma. These are his mother's thoughts that she bravely wrote for the world to read:*



This is Eike's story:

Upon honourable release from the Canadian Army, Eike Elsaesser, fiercely opposed to the communist takeover of Africa, volunteered to fight as a regular with the Rhodesian Army. Eike was Intake 161 and was accepted onto the Officers' Course at the School of Infantry in Gwelo. He passed out as a Corporal and was posted to 2 (Indep) Coy RAR. After a short

stint there, he was transferred to the RLI and was a trooper in 3 Commando, where he served for about a year, before being killed in action.

### Operation Mulligan

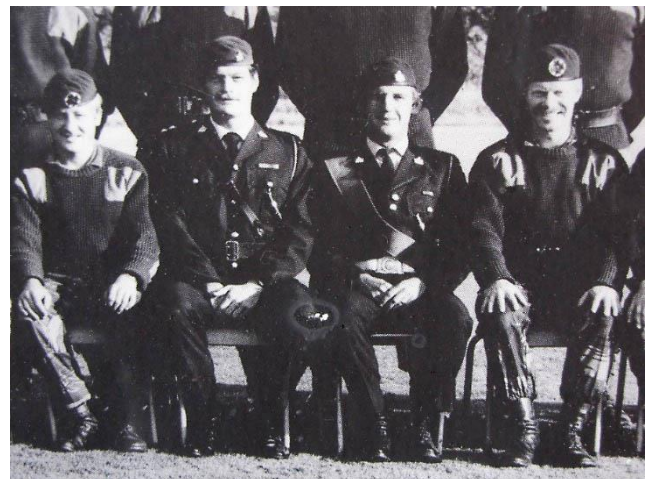
On 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1979, a group of ZANLA-affiliated *mujibas* (young collaborators), armed with grenades, kidnapped farm manager's wife, Yvonne Mulligan, from Strathlorne Farm in the Goromonzi District. The abduction was presumed to be for propaganda purposes. Mrs. Mulligan was a large lady who had difficulty walking, so her captors pushed her in a wheelbarrow into the Chikwaka TTL (Tribal Trust Land). Combined Operations deemed her recovery a top priority and a 'Jumbo Fire Force' of RLI and RAR soldiers was dispatched to rescue her. Among them was Eike's 13 Troop, members of 3 Commando RLI.

At Gwamura Kraal, one of the Fire Force sticks was ordered to begin a sweep towards the huts at the north-western end of the kraal. Troopers Elsaesser and Bruce McKend moved alongside a brick building but were killed instantly by a ZANLA RPD gunner who was inside the hut and firing out of the windows. The building was quickly lit up by a hail of machine gun fire, nearly levelling it. The RPD gunner died instantly and a number of insurgents attempted to escape but were dispatched by the waiting Fire Force sticks outside.

During the fierce firefight, Alouette Aircraft R5732 (a helicopter gunship) took a direct hit, caught fire and crashed in a sandy field. The pilot, Ian 'Hendo' Henderson, had sustained damage to his hands from the control panel, and a senior Special Branch officer flying with him, received a head injury from shrapnel. Both men were casevaced and the site was secured for the night; the downed chopper was picked up the next day.

But before the day was over, in an act of brotherly compassion and respect, a young RAR soldier, Private Emmanuel Thomas Mukonoweshuro, who was Captain Russell Fulton's batman, quietly approached the bodies of the two young troopies, pulled out his groundsheet and covered the fallen men.

It later transpired that Mrs Mulligan had left the previous night and was taken to Chimoio in Mozambique, where she remained until November. Her freedom was secured by the Red Cross and she later sold her story to 'Scope' magazine.



At the School of Infantry, Gwelo - from the left: Eike Elsaesser; Lt Mark Adams, Course Officer; Sgt Hennie van Vuuren, Course Instructor; Alan Balson

## Sources:

Alan Balson: personal recollections

Captain Russell Fulton

Mike Norton: Fighting Men of Rhodesia, Episode 37, March 22, 2021

[https://youtu.be/7Vj\\_Rpm89YM](https://youtu.be/7Vj_Rpm89YM)

## **The Crippled Eagles**

(With thanks to Pete Baston)



The Crippled Eagles was the informal name of a group of American volunteers who served in the Rhodesian Security Forces during the Rhodesian Bush War. The name and emblem came from author Robin Moore, who offered a house in Salisbury as a meeting place for the Americans who served in all units of the security forces, but never had their own unit. Some were Vietnam veterans who believed they had been abandoned by the U.S. government - this was symbolised by their name and their badge. Robin Moore and Barbara Fuca tried to publish a book with the same title, but because of political controversy the book was refused by publishers and only appeared in 1991, when it was published as *The White Tribe*.

One of the reasons for many of the American citizens who joined the Crippled Eagles was the *Soldier of Fortune* reports about both the Rhodesian Bush War and the means of entry into the Rhodesian Army. From 1976 to 1980, almost every issue contained one or more articles about the ongoing conflict. The first issue of the magazine in 1975 contained two such articles, prompting some Americans to travel to Rhodesia. After 1980, their attention turned to Angola and other hotspots around the world.

Approximately 300 Americans volunteered to fight as ordinary soldiers in the Rhodesian Security Forces during the Bush War, earning a pay packet in local currency, equal to that of a Rhodesian regular and under the same conditions of service; several joined the Selous Scouts. The Americans suffered seven combat fatalities and many others were wounded in combat, some maimed for life.

Source: [https://www.wikiwand.com/en/The Crippled Eagles](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/The_Crippled_Eagles)

### Crippled Eagle fatalities

From the Roll of Honour of the Rhodesian Forces Archives Project -

#### **Corporal John Alan Coey**

2 Commando 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion RLI

KIA: 19 July 1975

Killed by a gunshot wound Masoso TTL near Rushinga, Op Hurricane. After elements of the Rhodesia Regiment had initiated a contact, RLI Fire Force from Mount Darwin was flown to the scene. Rhodesia Regiment soldier WO2 Taz Bain and RLI Rfn Hennie Potgieter had been wounded in the initial contact but it was not known if they were still alive. As a medic (attached to 2 Cdo RLI from the Rhodesian Army Medical Corps), John was sent into the riverbed to attend to the soldiers when he was also shot and killed. Sadly, the two soldiers he went to assist had already succumbed to their wounds. John was a Vietnam Veteran and also served with C Sqn Rhodesian SAS, which he joined in 1972. He came from Columbus, Ohio, USA. He died aged 24. John as a qualified combat medic and participated in over 60 Fireforce missions. He was buried in the Fourie family plot in Que Que, having been engaged to Louis' eldest sister Frances Fourie. At the request of John's parents, Phyllis and George, Louis' family arranged for John's body to be exhumed in 1979 for burial in the Lutheran Church Cemetery, Hide Away Hills, West Liberty, Ohio, USA, where a small American flag marks his grave. He had always maintained that his destiny was in Rhodesia. John was the first US national to be KIA in the Rhodesian Bush War. Posthumous author of 'A Martyr Speaks' (1988). Sources: Louis Fourie; The Saints; death notice. Listed on the Que Que Municipal Roll of Honour. Lt Joe du Plooy, who was also wounded in this action, was later killed in action when a Puma helicopter was shot down in Mozambique on 6 September 1979.

#### **Trooper George William Clarke**

Support Commando 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion RLI

KIA: 15 May 1977

Killed in a contact near the Rogogo airfield, east of Mayo, Makoni district, Op Thrasher. Fireforce had been deployed by helicopter and Dakota to a suspected ZANLA camp situated among large rocks and boulders. Stop groups 2 and 3 engaged and killed three CTs, but in

the firefight George was badly wounded. He died in the helicopter whilst being casevaced to Mtoko. Late that afternoon a Canberra bomber neutralised the CT stronghold. He was born in Canada and came from a large family of 9 children. He was a Vietnam veteran, serving in the United States Marine Corps and was twice decorated with the Purple Heart during his Marine career. Aged 28 when he was KIA. Tpr Earl MacDonald was killed in the same action. Source: *The Saints* and Wikipedia.

### **Acting Sergeant Sergeant Richard L. Biederman**

C Squadron SAS

KOAS: 6 December 1977

Killed in an accidental shooting in Mozambique at the age of 26. SAS operators were on covert operations, aimed at disrupting ZANLA and FRELIMO logistical lines, when the accident involving another SAS patrol occurred. He was an American national. Source: *The Elite*.

### **Trooper Frank P. Battaglia**

14 Troop 3 Commando 1st Battalion RLI

KIA: 6 March 1978

Killed during Op Turmoil, a combined SAS/Selous Scouts/RLI/RhAF and 2RAR attack on the ZIPRA camp at Kavalamanja in Zambia. After Hawker Hunter and Canberra aircraft of the Air Force had 'softened' the target, ground troops moved in and in the engagement, Frank was shot and killed. He was an avid poker player and would give some young Rhodesian soldiers poker lessons, while playing for matches. Frank was a Vietnam veteran, having served with the US 81st Airborne. In Rhodesia, he did his training with the SAS. Frank's younger brother, Dennis, had also joined the RLI, serving with 3 Commando. Frank's wife served with the Rhodesian Air Force, packing parachutes.

### **Trooper Joseph Patrick Byrne**

14 Troop 3 Commando RLI

KIA: 26 October 1978

Joseph Patrick Byrne was Irish-American from Kearny, New Jersey. He joined 3 Commando RLI on 24 March 1978, from Recruit Intake 162 and was a regular in the crowd of foreign volunteers who socialised in the Monomatapa Hotel; he was also a friend of American author, Robin Moore. Trooper Byrne was killed during Operation Repulse when his patrol came under fire in an area devoid of cover, in a contact SE of Birchenough Bridge, in the Mutema Tribal Trust Land, Chipinga District. He is buried in the Holy Cross Cemetery, North Arlington, New Jersey, USA.

### **Trooper Stephen Michael Dwyer**

11 Troop 3 Commando 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion RLI

KIA: 16 July 1979

Died from wounds received in action west of Buffalo Range, Op Repulse, aged 27 years. Elements of 3 Cdo Fireforce from the FAF at Buffalo Range had been deployed by helicopter and Dakota into an area of thick undergrowth flanked by hills. Sgt Hugh McCall's stick dropped in by helicopter and quickly engaged the enemy, but a young lone CT managed to inflict fatal head gunshot wounds on both Sgt Hugh McCall and Tpr Steve Dwyer, before he was himself killed later. Steve had been the stick's second radio carrier and at the time of his death was trying to come to the assistance of the wounded Hugh McCall. Steve was a US national from Boston Massachusetts who had served a tour with the U.S. Marine Corps in Korea. Source: *The Saints*; Wikipedia; SAWGP.

### **Acting Sergeant Hugh John McCall**

11 Troop 3 Commando 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion RLI

8 May 1935 – 16 July 1979

Died from wounds received in action, west of Buffalo Range, Op Repulse, aged 44 years. Hugh, a Vietnam veteran, had served with the US Army 173rd Airborne and was on the last day of a six-week stint, before planning to leave with his Rhodesian wife and new baby, to go to New York. A book on the Rhodesian Bush War, *Fireforce*, by Chris Cocks, is dedicated to his memory. He is buried at the Warren Hills Cemetery, Salisbury. Source: *The Saints*; Wikipedia; SAWGP.

## **HONOURS AND AWARDS**

### **Sergeant Cornelius Johannes DU PREEZ**

7 Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

The award of the Distinguished Flying Medal was recorded in the *London Gazette Supplement* of 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1942

Died aged 25. Son of Cornelius Johannes du Preez and Catharina Albertina du Preez of Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia. He was killed during air operations when his aircraft crashed on the Baaler Bruch, approximately three nautical miles SSW of Goch, Germany. The award of his Distinguished Flying Medal is recorded in the London Gazette, as follows: "One night in April, 1942, this airman was the rear gunner of an aircraft which attacked Hamburg. On the return journey his aircraft was engaged by an enemy fighter. Sgt du Preez was seriously wounded in the neck, the wound being some 6 inches long and so deep that the jugular vein was exposed. Gallantly remaining at his post, this airman continued to use his guns, repelling subsequent attacks until he was rendered unconscious by a bullet which grazed his scalp. Throughout, Sgt du Preez displayed great devotion to duty and, although so seriously injured, he contributed, materially to the safe return of his aircraft." He is buried in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery near Kleve, Germany.

## **Rifleman Nicolau DA-SILVA CALHEIROS**

A Coy 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Rhodesia Regiment

Military Forces Commendation-Operational awarded posthumously, on 29/10/1976

Died from gunshot wounds in a vehicle ambush at the 116.5 km peg on the Ft Victoria/Beitbridge road, Nuanetsi district. Rifleman da Silva was driving the lead vehicle in a 5-vehicle convoy when they came under heavy rocket machine gun and rifle fire. His vehicle took most of the hits, killing B.J. Edwards and wounding da Silva. He refused help from his platoon commander, stationed next to him, and continued to drive out of the ambush zone. He later died from his wounds; his courage in doing so prevented further casualties. Rifleman da Silva died aged 23 and is buried at Warren Hills, Salisbury.



### **THE LION & TUSK MUSEUM**

#### Use of Steel Helmets by the Rhodesian Special Air Service Regiment During the Bush War

~ Tony Fraser, Curator

During the last years of the Rhodesian Bush War/Zimbabwean Independence Struggle, Rhodesian military forces were increasingly feeling the effects of sanctions imposed by the United Nations and, as a result, military-grade steel helmets became virtually unobtainable.

Helmets were not generally worn in the Rhodesian Army and were used only for the conventional warfare phase of training, then stored in Quartermaster's stores and military vehicles.



As the demands of parachute training and operational insertions increased, the need for protective headgear became a major concern for the Rhodesians. Initially, C Squadron SAS was the sole army parachute-trained unit, with the Air Force's No. 1 Parachute Training School providing training and development in parachute technologies. These two units held stores of: 'Helmet, Steel Airborne Troops'.



The 'Helmet, Parachute', for the instructors.

From 1977, due to a huge increase in the deployment of troops into battle by parachute, the supply of military steel helmets became wholly inadequate; one solution to this problem was to manufacture fibreglass versions.



Another idea was to purchase civilian sky diver helmets, which had a similar profile to motorcyclist crash helmets, but were not suitable for combat conditions.



A cloth-covered rubber head harness was also trialed (these were being used in South Africa).

These stopgap measures were fine for Fire Force operations, as soldiers would leave the helmets and parachute equipment in a secure location, for uplift after a contact.



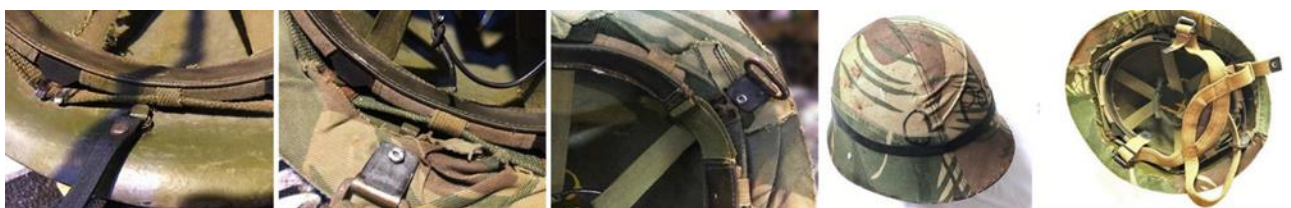
But the SAS regarded steel helmets as essential protection during their airborne and ground operations, and they were used together with similar versions made in Germany. Other steel helmets in use at the time were Asian copies of US helmets, supplied by South Africa, and the Rhodesian Army's version of the NATO helmet, modified as a 'jump' helmet.



Cloth-covered rubber head harness

As a result of one very successful cross-border raid, a large quantity of equipment and weapons was sent back to Rhodesia. Included in this prize, were a number of steel helmets which were later modified for use by the SAS.

These modifications involved removing the flimsy patent leather chinstrap and fitting the shell with three new attachment points, using a chinstrap similar to the ones on the original Rhodesian steel helmets. The chinstraps were attached to the shell by drilling holes and riveting them in place. The helmet was then covered with camo cloth taken from old uniforms and glued to the underside of the shell. The existing liner was retained and a stores number was painted in yellow on the inside.



These helmets were manufactured in China for the Albanian Army, Albania being the only country to have this particular configuration.

In order to work out the source of these helmets and quantity captured, we would like to know:

- On which cross-border raid were they seized – from ZIPRA or ZANLA?
- Approximately how many helmets were there?



If you can help with the answers, contact Hugh Bomford: [theeditor@rhodesianservices.org](mailto:theeditor@rhodesianservices.org)

To see some of these helmets (and much more), visit us at The Lion and Tusk Museum, Unit 10, 14 Portside Drive, Mount Maunganui.

Please check our website at <https://thelionandtusk.org/> for opening times.

## THE CQ STORE

### Embroidered and bullion wire badge products

Unless otherwise stated these high-quality products are made in New Zealand by our embroidery company, Sew Hot, whose premises are adjacent to The Lion and Tusk Museum. Because the products have several different applications, prices vary accordingly.

Please either refer to the product you want as listed on our website at:

<https://www.rhodesianservices.org/cq-store.htm>, or email [thecqstore@rhodesianservices.org](mailto:thecqstore@rhodesianservices.org) with your query.



BSAP: also suitable for blazers



BSAP Support Unit: black backing; also suitable for blazers

Many of us who know some Shona will recognise at least a couple of the words in the BSAP Support Unit motto: "*Pa Famba Gondo Harishayi*" and can work out that it has something to do with movement and an eagle.

We thought that it would be easy to get an accurate translation, but as no one from the unit came forward, and those attempting translation were not in total agreement, the answer was not immediately forthcoming.

Via Gerry van Tonder, Shona linguist, Jim Latham kindly provided the following translation: "Where the eagle flies it misses nothing." He went on to say that *Gondo harishayi* is a common Shona *tsumo* (proverb.) In colloquial language, the proverb stands alone and the obvious implication is that the eagle sees all, missing nothing."

In a related matter Glen Ashmead is asking if the BSAP Support Unit had any unit songs. If you can help, please email him at: [glen\\_ashmead@hotmail.com](mailto:glen_ashmead@hotmail.com)



PATU: 80mm x 60mm



PATU on camo: 125mm x 95mm



Flame Lily: available with or without RHODESIA.



Lion and Tusk: available with green or black backing



Lion and Tusk Museum: suitable for shirts. The map outline and text colours can be changed to order



Rhodesian Army: available with green or black backing



Coat of Arms



Coat of Arms: for blazers



Rhodesia Regiment high-quality bullion wire badge, for blazers



Grey's Scouts: for blazers



Lion on Tusk Sport: for Rhodesian rugby jerseys and blazers; this badge has 'Rhodesia' above the lion, and the sport, e.g., Rugby, Water Polo, Cricket, Hockey, etc. below



SAS: for caps or berets. This is a copy of the original SAS beret badge



Copy of Rhodesian SAS No. 1 dress wings, in bullion wire: 75mm x 35mm



RLI



RLI high-quality bullion wire for blazers



Intaf: for blazers



Rhodesian flag: sew-on, measures 120mm x 58mm

## Products Under Development



Rhodesian Corps of Engineers: for blazers



Rhodesian Air Force

# Rhodesian Names

**QUE QUE**  
Shona onomatopoeia for sound made by frogs.

**KARIBA**  
Shona word "kariwa" for little trap.

**ENKELDOORN**  
"single thorn"  
Named by Hendrick Ferreira after a farm in the Cape.

**WANKIE**  
chief Wangi  
meaning: "it is this one."

**MATOPOS**  
SiNdeble word "Matobo" meaning bald heads.

**VUMBA**  
Manyika dialect for Mountains of Mist

**WITCH DOCTOR**

**HARARE.** A famous witchdoctor lived there and never slept. People walking by would say: Har-a-re - "He who does not sleep."

**Kyle Lake:** Named after a lake in Scotland by lowveld pioneer Tom Murray MacDougal.

*Vic Mackenzie 2014 CC*

This newsletter is compiled by Jackie Jackson for the Rhodesian Services Association, [jackie@rhodesianservices.org](mailto:jackie@rhodesianservices.org)

***The views and comments expressed may not reflect those of the Association or its Committee.***

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