
April 2023



The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Rhodesian Services Association

THE REGIMENT

They northward rode across the land,
Mopani forest, scrub and sand.
Young troopers far from England's green,
To take a land few yet had seen.
For Queen, for country and for law,
Set to inspire a sense of awe,
And friend and foe alike amaze,
For these were England's glorious days.
And when that century had died,
There followed on a force of pride.
The B.S.A.P. had had its birth
And now was still to prove its worth.
Across Rhodesia's varied lands,
They held the reins in steady hands.
Kept the peace, upheld the law,
Until there came unwanted war.

We fought to keep what had been won,
So little time, so little done.
To none our faults could we atone,
None at our backs, we stood alone.
With courage, honour, sense of pride,
Black and white stood side by side.
As did those troopers long before,
With fortitude our role we bore.

We saw as they, Zambesi's dawn,
The noble sable, lions yawn.
Watched the jumbo's ponderous tread,
The spiralled horns of kudu's head.
The brilliant flash of blue jays' flight,
The flying ants round campfire light.
The fleet impala make its run,
The glorious sight of setting sun.

But in an ever changing scene,
Where time erases what has been,
We watched a land revert and change
To values we considered strange.
But all of us can feel with pride,
The comradeship nought can deride,
And in our hearts know what is meant
Each time we toast "The Regiment".

~Dave Blacker 5483, BSAP (RIP)

FROM OUR INBOX:

[The Rhodesian/Zimbabwean Diaspora]

Les Voyageurs/The Travellers

In 2013, Bruno Catalano's ten life-size, bronze sculptures were displayed along the waterfront in Marseille, France. Titled 'Les Voyageurs' ('The Travellers'), these surrealist sculptures depict people with huge portions of their bodies missing. Born in 1960 to a

Sicilian family living in Morocco and raised in France, Catalano became a sailor in his twenties. This nomadic lifestyle was a major inspiration for his work as an artist. The sculptures of Bruno Catalano, especially, 'Les Voyageurs', show this influence. They delve into themes of travel, migration and journeying, which extend into exploring the ideas of home, belonging, loss and the experiences of a "world citizen". Each statue carries a single suitcase, weighing them down, but also serving as their only means of support. Fascinating technically, artistically, and in its symbolism, the large omissions in the statues leave much to the imagination. Some figures appear to be fading away, while others materialize before our eyes. Contrary to the opinion that travel broadens and enriches, Catalano lamented that all his travels left him feeling *that a part of [him] was gone and will never come back*.



Il Viaggiatore, symbolising the void created by leaving one's country, one's family and one's people for another life.

~Nadine Waldmann

Daily Art Magazine

<https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/sculptures-of-bruno-catalano/>

WAR AND REMEMBRANCE

THE RHODESIAN SAS

Special Air Service: the men speak

Compiled by Jonathan Pittaway

3rd edition, 2016

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SAS Rhodesia: An Overview, by Sergeant Rob Riddell

The Rhodesian Squadron of the SAS originated in Malaya as a separate squadron of 22 SAS Regiment. However, Rhodesians were active with the SAS from its inception. During December 1941 Rhodesian members of S Patrol, LRDG [Long Range Desert Group] guided the SAS to its targets during raids in the Western Desert. After the war many ex-SAS men settled in Rhodesia. However, the only Rhodesian, born and bred, to serve in the wartime SAS was Lieutenant Ken Harvey.

First raised as the Southern Rhodesia Far East Volunteer Unit to take part in the war in Korea, the unit was diverted to Malaya in 1951 where it joined 'Mad Mike' Calvert as C (Rhodesia) Squadron, Malayan Scouts (SAS). An eighteen-month tour of duty was served by 119 members (the Happy 100 and the Naughty 19), commanded by Major Peter Walls.

In 1961 the SAS was raised once again in Ndola, Northern Rhodesia to form part of the Central African Command during the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Close links were established with 22 SAS and a selection, parachuting and training course set up. The dissolution of the Federation, however, meant the end of C Squadron and most officers went on to other colonial appointments.

In November 1963 thirty-two former members headed south and C Squadron was officially revived from scratch, eventually undertaking the first cross-border anti-terrorist operations under the command of Majors Coventry and Rich. After UDI on 11 November 1965, there was no further official or unofficial connection with 22 SAS.

In 1970 Rhodesia became a republic and over the next ten years, according to the nominal roll, about 1,000 badged men were to pass through C Squadron's ranks, excluding non-badged support personnel who were an integral part of our operations. At maximum strength, in 1979, total unit numbers came to only 310 badged SAS men. The maximum call-out was only for the big raids and usually only one third of this was actively deployed

at any one time. This figure was made up of Regular, National Service and Territorial Force personnel. To this should be added a figure of some 240 non-badged members. As the terrorist challenge grew, so the SAS was engaged in operations, both internal and external, almost continuously, whilst at the same time involved in recruitment, selection and training. Commanded by Majors Bentley, Robinson and Barrett, during this period the Rhodesian SAS performed more operational jumps, recces and camp attacks than any other SAS squadron or regiment. Ultimately, the unit expanded from a squadron into a regiment in 1978, becoming 1 (Rhodesian) SAS Regiment.

When Rhodesia became Zimbabwe in April 1980, Lieutenant Colonel Garth Barrett moved south with over 100 ex-members of the SAS to form 6 RC (6 Reconnaissance Commando) in Durban, South Africa. Command in Zimbabwe passed to Major Grahame Wilson who continued with the SAS unit until its disbandment in December 1980, so ending the era of C Squadron and the Rhodesian SAS.

The Elite: The Story of the Rhodesian Special Air Service, by Barbara Cole
2nd edition, 1984

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The Rhodesian Special Air Service, one of the most formidable fighting forces in the world, operated almost exclusively across the border during the long bitter bush war, undertaking deep-penetration missions against insurgents being harboured inside neighbouring Mozambique and Zambia. There were missions into Botswana too, and at one stage, they were operating without benefit of passport in all three neighbouring black territories at the same time.



Long before the war escalated and the whole region became their battlefield, secret clandestine missions across the border were undertaken by Special Air Service operators. Later, when the situation intensified, they were responsible for some of the most audacious and highly sensitive missions of the war. Yet little is known of this highly professional

Special Force unit, which had its beginnings in the days of the Malayan Emergency, and like its parent unit, the British SAS, boasted the coveted and very apt motto, 'Who Dares Wins'.

On December 31, 1980, the Rhodesian SAS disbanded. A telegram from 22 SAS in Britain paid tribute to the operators:

"Farewell to a much-admired sister unit. Your professionalism and fighting expertise have always been second to none throughout the history of the Rhodesian SAS. C Sqn still remains vacant in 22 SAS orbat."

At a ceremony on December 13, the last official function of the unit, the last CO, the most decorated member of the security forces, had this to say:

"We will leave here not only in sorrow but filled with pride, dignity and honour in ourselves and in 1 SAS. We have much to be grateful for. I am eternally grateful to those who served with the unit before we did; to those among us who have lost loved ones: to those who were wounded: to those friends, and there are many of them, who have stood by us: to those wives and families who stood behind us: to those who have fought with such courage beside us, and especially to those who gave their lives for Rhodesia and the unit. We have not let them down and we will not forget them. I know that in the years to come, we can, with the greatest pride, say: 'I served with the Rhodesian SAS'.

May God bless you and thank God we did our duty".



HONOURS AND AWARDS

Martin Rogers Chikondo, SCR

The Silver Cross of Rhodesia was awarded to only 30 men.

The official citation given in the General Order of 13 September 1974 for Martin Chikondo, Selous Scouts, states:

“For conspicuous gallantry and leadership in action. During anti-terrorist operations in the northeastern Border area, Corporal Martin, commander of a small patrol of men, was involved in numerous successful engagements with the terrorists. In a number of these encounters, whilst seeking out the enemy at night, Corporal Martin and his men have come under heavy enemy fire at close range whilst in unfavourable positions. On three such occasions Corporal Martin, with complete disregard for his own safety and showing a high degree of personal gallantry, leadership and tactical skill, was able to extricate his men, without loss, from most precarious positions to more favourable ground, where he quickly re-organised his men and remaining perfectly cool, turned what could have been disastrous situations to his advantage, killing a number of terrorists and capturing quantities of arms and equipment. Corporal Martin’s successes have been directly attributable to his acts of personal courage, determined leadership and tactical skill, which have been an inspiration to his men and his unit.”

The original recommendation states:

“Corporal Martin Chikondo volunteered for operational tracking duties in the northeastern border area in 1973. In September Chikondo was in command of a section of men attempting to locate a group of some four to five terrorists. After making suitable arrangements with the local terrorist contact man, a meeting was arranged for the following night. At the appointed time Chikondo and four others approached the kraal and were met by the contact man who then called the terrorists. As the terrorists approached the group, they became suspicious and opened fire. Chikondo, although under heavy fire from close range and with complete disregard for his own safety, immediately opened fire. Under cover of his own and his machine-gunner’s fire, he was able to extricate his men from the open area to a more favourable position. He quickly regained control of his men and saturated the contact area with fire. Later it was discovered that two terrorists had been killed, one of the terrorists being a section leader. As a result of this contact and subsequent interrogation of locals involved much valuable information in respect of terrorist presence in the area was obtained.

In October 1973 Chikondo was once again in command of a small patrol attempting to make contact with a group of approximately ten terrorists. A suitable rendezvous was arranged for the following night. At the appointed time Chikondo quite brazenly approached the terrorists to make verbal contact and attempt to lure them into the

planned killing ground. However, the terrorists became extremely suspicious and Chikondo, with complete disregard for his own safety and showing a high degree of personal gallantry, opened fire killing two terrorists and wounding one other. Several weapons and other equipment were recovered. Later that same day the captured terrorist indicated a terrorist base. In the ensuing contact security forces eliminated a gang leader and wounded two others.

In November 1973 Chikondo was in command of a patrol trying to locate a group of terrorists. As he approached the rendezvous the terrorist leader came out of the thick bush to meet him. During the initial conversation Chikondo saw a further terrorist nearby with a machine gun trained on him. Realising he was in fact in an ambush he opened fire killing the terrorist leader. The patrol immediately came under heavy fire from close range. Remaining perfectly cool and using his tactical skill to the best advantage, Chikondo extricated his men, without casualty, from a most precarious position. During all these actions Chikondo displayed great personal gallantry, outstanding leadership and devotion to duty far beyond the call of normal operational requirements."

Martin Rogers Chikondo enlisted in the 1st Rhodesian African Rifles in March 1970. Having advanced to Lance-Corporal, he was one of the early pioneers of the Selous Scouts, and of pseudo ops warfare. He was also a founding member of the Recce Troop in the Selous Scouts, set up by Chris Schulenburg and Dave Scales, both ex-Rhodesian SAS.

Having advanced to Sergeant in 1978, Chikondo was enrolled in the Officers' Selection Course, at the School of Infantry. On passing out, he was commissioned Lieutenant and, in 1980, despite the change in regime, he was posted as a founding officer of the newly-formed Zimbabwe Parachute Battalion. He spent six years there, before being posted to Llewellyn Barracks, on the formation of 6 Brigade. He advanced to Major and returned to what was now called Para Group, with whom he was the Officer Commanding of the Training Depot.

Martin Chikondo retired from the army in 1991 and joined the Fawcett Security Company, where he was shot and killed by an employee. His death in Harare Central Hospital, on 17 February 1991, was officially recorded as accidental.



THE LION & TUSK MUSEUM

The Background to the Rhodie Wear Brand

~Michael Gaskin

Decoding the pattern

It all started with a floppy hat. It was green with the Rhodesian Coat of Arms embroidered on the front. I wondered if it was possible to get the same hat made with the Rhodesian camouflage pattern. This simple thought led to a two-year project that took me down a rabbit hole of research and development, until finally we had a product that is as close as possible to the original.

In the beginning

Any Google search will unleash a barrage of information and pictures of our soldiers during the Bush War, there are even old original pieces of clothing available on sites like eBay. It's amazing how much time can be spent scrolling through pictures without achieving very much. However, thanks to the many years of putting together jigsaw puzzles and my high school art classes, I started to recognise the repeating design of the pattern that has become so iconic to both friends and foe alike.

One of the stories that I came across relating to the origin of the camouflage pattern involves the wife of one of the directors of David Whitehead Textiles. As legend goes, she took large sheets of paper out into her garden and traced the shadows that the trees and plants made on the ground. A few sheets of paper later, a bit of artistic interpretation, and "hey presto", the Rhodesian camouflage was born. All I can say is that I wish I could have seen those original patterns.

So where to next?

Even though I had seen online companies promoting Rhodesian camouflage products for sale, I noticed that their camouflage design differed from the original that I was researching. I was about to find out why. Having copied and pasted many parts of the images that were available online and giving myself a crash course in Adobe Illustrator (no paper, pens and shadows for me), I managed to decode the repeating design that makes up the camouflage pattern except for one area that didn't seem to make sense. For this, I would thank the many hard-working Rhodesians who produced the uniforms. It turns out there was a method to the way the uniforms were made - this was done to achieve the best disruption of the human figure as was possible. What this also meant was the hem on most shirts and trousers was in the same place for most garments, thus hiding a section of the pattern. Luckily, an old friend came to the rescue, in the form of my camouflage shirt which was dragged out of the closet and scrutinised for clues. Just like Sherlock Holmes, I found the missing piece and was able to complete the puzzle. The camouflage was now complete.

What's in a colour?

As anyone who can hold a camera in their hand will tell you, photographs are never really a true representative of what you see in front of you. Age, exposure, settings, and old film were my next enemy, whilst seeking to recreate our iconic camouflage pattern. Even my old shirt, which had seen its fair share of action, had now become faded, thanks to the African sun and many visits to the washing machine. That being said, I managed to find, under the pocket flap and protected from the elements, a section of fabric that looked as good as new. This would become the basis for the final colour that was to be printed on the fabric.

Machinery built by an empire

In an attempt to recreate a product that was as true to the original as possible, I searched the Internet, looking for screen printers. Most suggestions were small companies that printed logos on T-shirts and similar corporate and promotional products. Unfortunately, David Whitehead was a little far away, so that also put them out of the equation. In the end, a trip to South Auckland revealed a small company with a huge machine - a 1983 Buser flatbed screen printer, to be precise. This massive machine seemed to disappear into the distance, as it took up most of the warehouse and is, I believe, over 30 meters long. The whirring of gears and the industrial clunk of machinery working together in a symphony of perfectly timed movements, signalled that I had found what I had been looking for.

Set the oven to 180 degrees and cook slowly for two hours

Like any good dish, I now had all the ingredients. The pattern was broken down into colours and transferred to the screens. Fabric dye was matched and a base cloth was chosen. After years of research and development, I had to stand back and hope that everything had been taken care of. The machine clanked and groaned, as it started to draw the fabric through the rollers, then the thud and swish of the silk screens rising and falling, while the mechanical arms pushed the dye through the screen and onto the fabric. I was almost too afraid to look as the fabric emerged, first with the dark brown, then the deep green. I watched metre after metre head down the conveyor belt and up into the dryer. Time seemed to stand still, as emotions began to flood over me, I was transported to a small country in Southern Africa where, a little more than 55 years ago, this same pattern would emerge.



Off to the Quartermaster Store

With the help of the Lion and Tusk Museum, patterns were made using original garments, to ensure authenticity. Kathy, our dedicated (and long suffering) New Zealand seamstress received a crash course in all things Rhodesian. I can only imagine what she was thinking when she saw us walk up the driveway with a roll of camouflage and heads full of wild ideas. The short story is that she was taken in by our enthusiasm, she said yes, and the rest is history. The Lion and Tusk (in my eyes) has the most faithfully replicated product available on the market today. I feel proud that from a humble idea and with the help of both Rhodies and Kiwis alike, we can keep this piece of history alive and the proceeds from sales help to keep the Museum running.

THE CQ STORE

Welcome to Rhodie Wear!

This brand was established by Michael Gaskin, in order to produce high quality Rhodesian brushstroke pattern camouflage clothing.

- All Rhodie Wear garments are professionally made in New Zealand.
- The Rhodesian camouflage material is printed in Auckland, on imported cloth.
- Click here to view the printing process: [Printing Rhodesian Camo.mp4](#)
- We are producing a mix of garments that were worn back in the day, as well as modern-day jerkins or *gilets*, ties, and cross-body pouches or wallets, known as a *chikwamas*.
- Click below to order:

[Shirts](#)

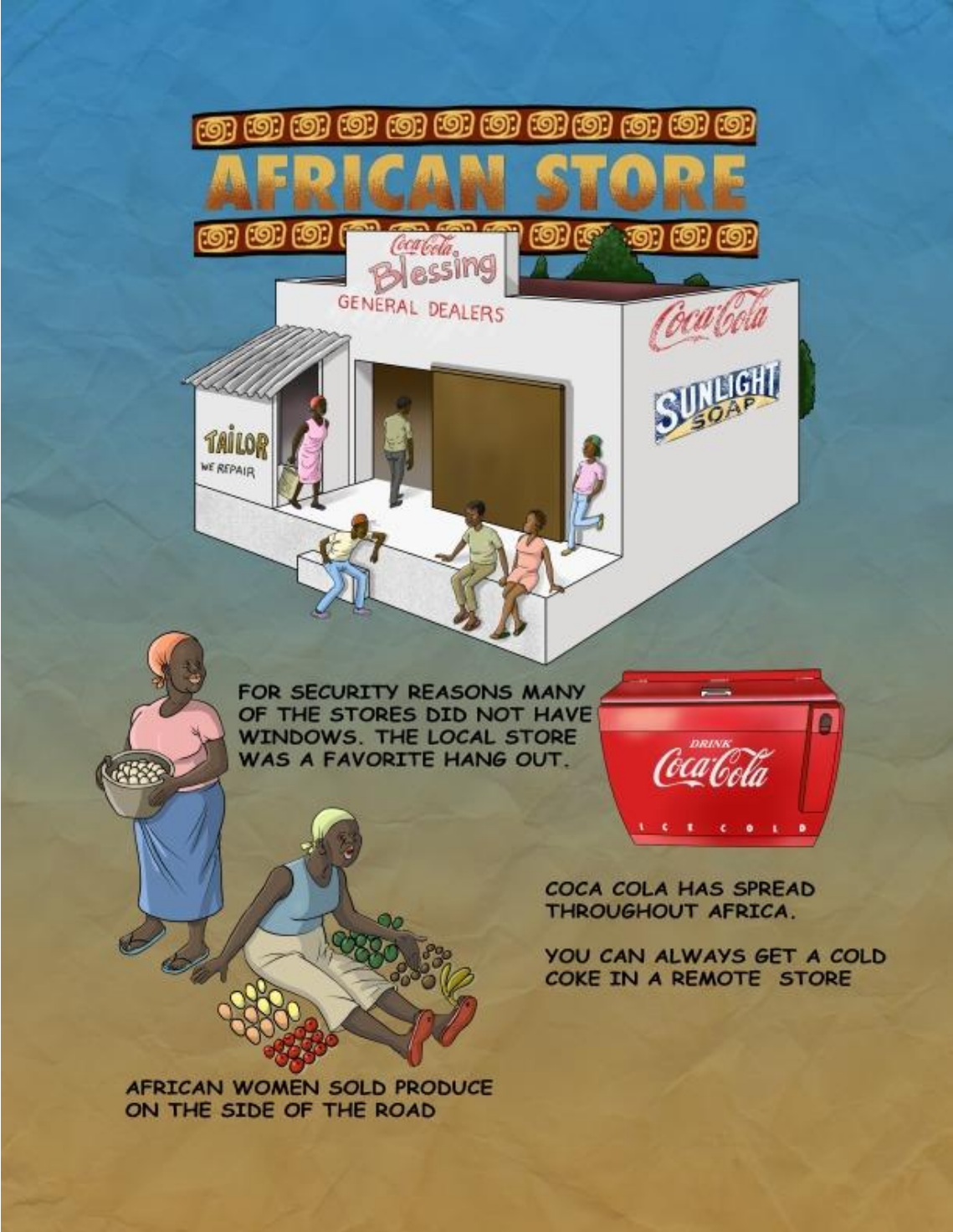
[Pants](#)

[Jackets](#)

[Headwear](#)

[Other goods](#)

When you buy from the Rhodesian Services Association CQ Store and you are supporting the preservation of Rhodesian history through The Lion and Tusk Museum.



FOR SECURITY REASONS MANY OF THE STORES DID NOT HAVE WINDOWS. THE LOCAL STORE WAS A FAVORITE HANG OUT.



COCA COLA HAS SPREAD THROUGHOUT AFRICA.

YOU CAN ALWAYS GET A COLD COKE IN A REMOTE STORE

AFRICAN WOMEN SOLD PRODUCE ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

~ Vic Mackenzie

This newsletter is compiled by Jackie Jackson for the Rhodesian Services Association, jackie@rhodesianservices.org

To view previous newsletters, go to our [Archives](#)

Views, language, and information expressed in *The Sentinel* may not reflect current understanding, they are provided in a historical context.

The Lion and Tusk Museum is a collection of historical, cultural, artistic, and scientific information displays, videos, photos, and writings. These depict Rhodesia and Rhodesians of all races, from the late 19th century until the country's transition to Zimbabwe in 1980. Neither the museum management, nor its team of volunteers, have political, racial, or gender-specific agendas, and they unreservedly condemn any scandal-mongering misconceptions to the contrary.



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