
January 2026



The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Rhodesian Services Association



Another year has flown by and it's time once more to send Christmas and festive season greetings to all our members, as well as our best wishes for 2026.

The general theme running through the newsletters this year has been 'home' and the yearning across the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean diaspora for a country that is no more.

As the year draws to a close, we thought we'd revisit *Homeland*, a poem by Michelle Frost (reproduced with permission).

Homeland

*Within my soul, within my mind,
There lies a place I cannot find.
Home of my heart. Land of my birth.
Smoke-coloured stone and flame-coloured earth.
Electric skies. Shivering heat.
Blood-red clay beneath my feet.
At night when finally alone,
I close my eyes - and I am home.
I kneel and touch the blood-warm sand
And feel the pulse beneath my hand
Of an ancient life too old to name,
In an ancient land too wild to tame.
How can I show you what I feel?
How can I make this essence real?
I search for words in dumb frustration
To try and form some explanation,
But how can heart and soul be caught
In one-dimensional written thought?
If love and longing are a 'fire'
And man 'consumed' by his desire,
Then this love is no simple flame
That mortal thought can hold or tame.
As deep within the earth's own core
The love of home burns evermore.
But what is home? I hear them say,
This never was yours anyway.
You have no birthright to this place,
Descendant from another race.
An immigrant? A pioneer?
You are no longer welcome here.
Whoever said that love made sense?
'I love' is an 'imperfect' tense.
To love in vain has been man's fate
From history to present date.*

*I have no grounds for dispensation,
I know I have no home or nation.
For just one moment in the night
I am complete, my soul takes flight.
For just one moment then it's gone
And I am once again undone.
Never complete. Never whole.
White skin and an African soul.*

FROM OUR INBOX:

Nikki Hinde is trying to find a friend of her parents, Michael (Mike) Sean Armstrong, who was in the BSAP in 1975, possibly with 4/73 squad.

She is also looking for anyone who may have known her father, John Edward Todd, who worked as a mine electrician at Shabani and Kamativi. John Todd, a police reservist in Matabeleland, was killed in an attack on a convoy on the Wankie-Kamativi road, on 14th August 1979.

Please contact Nikki if you can help: nikki.hinde@gmail.com

WAR AND REMEMBRANCE



The 'Remembrance' statue at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire, UK

Escape from Colditz Castle: Bill Goldfinch and Tony Rolt

Two men at the centre of an ingenious and now famous escape plan from Colditz during World War II had Rhodesian connections. **L. J. E. (Bill) Goldfinch** worked for the Salisbury City Council as an engineer in the 1930s and joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserves when he was 21. He was called up in 1938. During the evacuation of Greece, his Sunderland flying-boat crashed at Kalamata and he became a prisoner of the Germans. His efforts to escape captivity landed him in Colditz Castle - the Germans' 'special camp' for those deemed to be enemies of Germany of special note, and thought to be escape-proof.

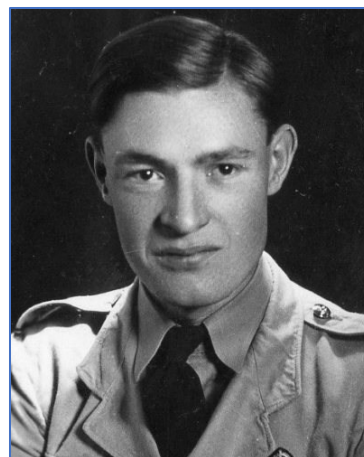


Photo credit: Old Sarum Airfield Ltd.

Anthony Peter Roylance Rolt was a British soldier, engineer, and racing driver whose father, Brigadier-General Stuart Peter Rolt, saw service in the Second Boer War, during which he was wounded in action while commanding the Rhodesia Regiment. Tony Rolt served in the Rifle Brigade during World War II and was awarded the Military Cross and Bar for his actions and determined escape attempts from several German POW camps, including the high-security Colditz Castle.



At the beginning of 1944, three prisoners of war at Oflag IVC, Colditz Camp in Germany, Flight-Lieutenant Goldfinch, Lieutenant Rolt, and Flight-Lieutenant Jack Best, came up with a plan to build an escape glider. The idea of an aerial escape from Colditz Castle was sparked when Bill Goldfinch noticed, during the winter of 1943, that the snowflakes were taking an upward course over the prison roof. The idea was to build a glider that could sit on the sloping roof and be launched in a strong wind. Bill Goldfinch discovered in the prison library a copy of *Aircraft*

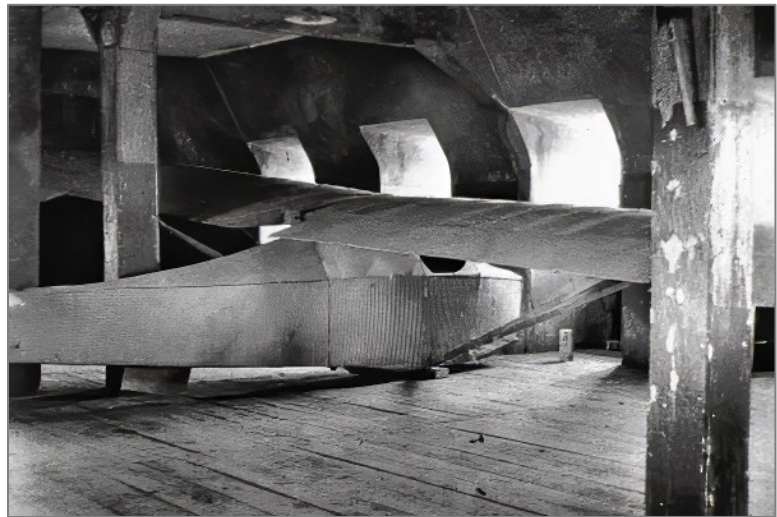


Design, a two-volume work by C. H. Latimer and he became the designer of the project, which resulted in the manufacture of the 'Colditz Cock'.

The full-size, two-man glider was constructed behind a false wall in the chapel attic, using pieces of wood (floor and bed boards) and mattress covers. Essential construction tools were improvised by Jack Best. Although only four men at a time could fit into the attic, in all 52 prisoners helped in various ways, either as look-outs ('stooges'), or assisting with the construction. The finished glider had a wingspan of 32 feet and an all-up weight with two occupants of around 560lb. The design was original except for the rudder shape, which was based on the pre-war 'Luton Buzzard'. The craft was intended to be launched from the roof, on a trolley attached to a bath full of concrete weights. When the bath was dropped, the resulting thrust was calculated as sufficient to propel the glider some 450 metres, so that it could land in a small flat field across the River Mulde. The glider was completed by the end of 1944, but no escape was attempted, in light of the War Office's warnings of Hitler's orders that all recaptured prisoners would be shot.

Assigned to the American task force that liberated the Castle, war correspondent Lee Carson entered Colditz on 15 April 1945 and took the only photograph of the assembled glider. Sadly, it was destroyed just after the war, before it could be put to the test.

Goldfinch kept his drawings, which enabled a one-third scale model to be constructed, and this was eventually launched from the castle roof in 1993. A set of plans for the glider are now in the collection of the Imperial War Museum.



Tony Rolt, who played a pivotal role in this innovative escape plan, was a very private man who shunned personal publicity regarding his wartime exploits. It is believed that at some point he spent time in Rhodesia where he became a tobacco farmer. Most notably, he became a prominent racing driver in the UK, winning the 1953 *24 Hours of Le Mans*; he also participated in three Formula One World Championship Grands Prix.

Sources:

The Imperial War Museum, London, UK

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30080881>

The Society of Old Framlinghamians:

<https://www.oldframlinghamian.com/image-archive/albums/public/distinguished/Services/FLIGHTLTLESLIEBILLJAMESEDWARDGOLDFINCH26-32.pdf>

ROLL OF HONOUR

Flight Lieutenant Arthur Ian Albertson AFC

Service numbers: 80126 and 778422

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve Pathfinder Navigation Training Unit, Bomber Command

Died on active service: 02/03/1945

Flight Lieutenant Albertson was born on 03/03/1914 in Gatooma, Southern Rhodesia and attended Plumtree School. In 1931, he was employed by the Texas Company. He attested in November, 1940 and received preliminary training in Southern Rhodesia and the Union; on returning to Rhodesia, he was engaged on flying instructors' duties until proceeding overseas in June 1944. He was commissioned on 05/21/1941. Flight Lieutenant Albertson was killed in a flying accident, whilst training in a de Havilland Mosquito; he was 30. He had taken off from Warboys in Cambridgeshire, UK at 1900 hrs, for a high-level night cross-country training flight, the crew being briefed to fly at 27,000 feet. At around 2100 hrs, the Mosquito broke up when control was lost and crashed at Yew Tree Farm, Basford, south of Leek, Stafford. Flight Lieutenant Albertson's Air Force Cross was presented posthumously to his wife by King George VI, at an investiture ceremony at Government House, Salisbury (now Harare) on 07/04/1947.

Constable Sulpisio Muchemwa

Service number: 23186

BSAP

Killed in action: 12/11/1977

Constable Muchemwa was killed by anti-personnel mine during follow-up operations in the Tjolotjo district, Operation Tangent; he was 27. Born in Fort Victoria (now Masvingo), Sulpisio Muchemwa completed his schooling at St Patrick's Mission in Bulawayo and found employment with the Jairos Jiri Association, a charity for the disabled in Bulawayo.

Having left Jairos Jiri in 1972 to join the police force, he was posted to Tjolutjo where he was to spend his entire service. During this time, he was stationed at the nearby Sipepa Police Post. During this spell of duty, he proved to be a tenacious and resourceful investigator. In November 1974, he tracked an escaped prisoner for 12 miles before arresting him. In October 1975, Constable Muchemwa followed a suspect from Tjolutjo to Bulawayo and then on to Plumtree, before arresting him for theft.

He was buried in Gokwe on 19th November 1977

Craig Bone, Wildlife Artist

1955 – November 2025

Craig Bone, the legendary artist, conservationist and RLI veteran has passed away suddenly from a heart attack in Florida. Craig was born in 1955 in Southern Rhodesia. Like many young men of his generation, he would fight in the Rhodesian Bush War, as a member of the elite Rhodesian Light Infantry. He painted occasionally between Fireforce missions, before being wounded. After this, he became intently focused on painting, an activity that he considered therapeutic. After moving to the United States, he became a renowned African wildlife artist, making significant contributions to conservation over the years. In 2012, he published his memoir, *Cut To The Bone*, detailing his fascinating life trajectory and his art. Excelling in his artistry, he expanded his art to religious, political, and military themes, including the Rhodesian Bush War. With his striking attention to detail and skill, he was by far the finest of Rhodesia's war artists.

From Hugh Bomford -

It is with regret that I write to inform you that Craig Bone, husband, father, artist, Rhodesian soldier, and Life Member of the Rhodesian Services Association has passed away from a heart attack in the USA.

Craig painted this fish eagle and donated it to the Rhodesian Services Association. The money we were able to raise by selling it helped fund our work to preserve Rhodesian history; we remain extremely grateful to Craig for this.



From Craig Bone's family -

It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of our dad, Craig Bone, early this morning. He gave us a childhood in the farmlands of Zimbabwe that was rich with adventure and beauty—nights spent in the bush, camping under the stars, and hiking to gather reference photos for his paintings. There was nothing he wouldn't do for his kids, and there was nothing we wouldn't do for him. He was, simply put, the most generous man we have known—always ready to help family and close friends, rarely asking for anything in return. He filled every room with his stories, his wit, and undeniable presence. He lived life to the fullest, never taking a day for granted, and most importantly, showed us what it means to stand for what you believe. Our mom, whom he loved deeply, endured many challenges with him. Through her he found grounding. Every morning, he began the day by bringing her a cup of tea in bed to start her morning right. Our mother stood by him tirelessly, behind the scenes, turning dreams into reality. He touched so many lives—even here in the States, people would stop us to share their memories of him, recounting his days in Rhodesia, his bush adventures, and even his school days. He remembered everything, every story - sharp as a whip to the very end!

We were fortunate to celebrate his 70th birthday in Tampa this past June, surrounded by children, grandchildren and friends who loved him. He was a true master of art in our day - no subject matter was too tricky to tackle, in fact, the more detail and difficult, the more enticed he was to dive into it. Most recently, he embarked on the most epic painting of his

life. It's a massive piece of art, an extraordinary tribute, which I know he poured his heart and soul into. It will take some time to figure out how we can help keep this passion project alive and to completion, but for right now we are focusing on spending time together as a family, as we tackle what has easily been the worst day in our lives. If you had the privilege of knowing him personally, please share how you knew him. Your stories would mean so much to us as we keep his memory alive.

*With love and gratitude,
Anne-Marie, Sean, Maxine, and Lauren*



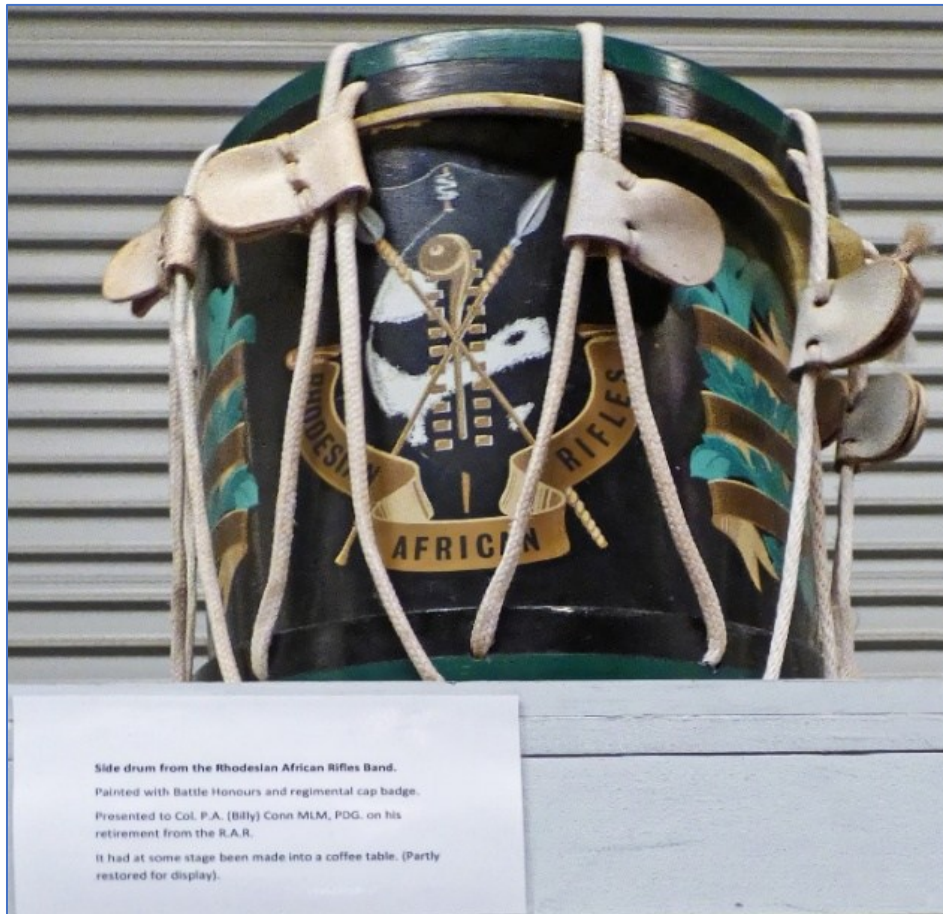
THE LION & TUSK MUSEUM

~ Hugh Bomford

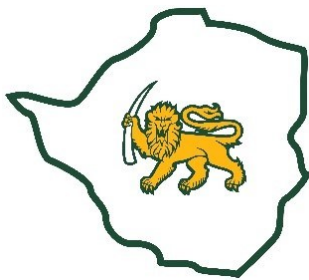
The Lion and Tusk Museum is now the only publicly accessible museum in the world covering the history of Rhodesia from 1890 to 1980.

Our Curator, Tony Fraser, is appealing for donations of artefacts connected to the Rhodesian Native Regiment (RNR) and Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR).

Currently we consider that we have insufficient material representing one of Rhodesia's oldest regular force units that began its existence in 1916 as the Rhodesian Native Regiment, serving in East Africa in WWI. The unit re-formed in 1939 as the Rhodesian African Rifles for service in WWII, principally in Burma. In the 1950s, the RAR was deployed to Egypt during the Suez Crisis; further deployments were to Malaya, Nyasaland (now Malawi), and Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) to secure the border with the Congo, where independence from Belgium had brought about chaos, mutiny, and a significant refugee problem. The Rhodesian African Rifles was disbanded and absorbed into the Zimbabwe Army post-1980, having served with distinction throughout the Bush War in Rhodesia.



Rhodesian African Rifles band drum in the Museum collection, originally presented to Col Billy Conn MLM, PDG



THE CQ STORE

The CQ Store will be closed from Wednesday 17 December to Monday 29 December 2025, and I [HB] will be off the air completely. Your patience during my Christmas break will be appreciated, because I have no doubt that when I return to office there will be a flood of emails to deal with.

The CQ Store is one of our main sources of income for The Lion and Tusk Museum, which currently needs NZ\$40,000 per year to cover rent and basic costs. We predominantly sell goods that are made and sourced in New Zealand, Australia and the USA. We supply quality goods that are unique and we strive to produce new products, so we recommend that you visit our website regularly when looking for something for yourself, or someone else.

The entry portal to the CQ Store is <https://www.rhodesianservices.org/cq-store.htm>

To place an order, email thecqstore@rhodesianservices.org, or if you live locally, please come in and browse.

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

Thirsty Rhodesians

Part 1



A BROWN COW OR A GREEN MAMBA...
Mmmmm



EMPTY BOTTLES WERE A FORM OF COMMERCE BECAUSE YOU COULD REDEEM THEM FOR A TICKEY EACH.

COKE & ICE CREAM



REMEMBER THE PROMOTIONS THEY USED WITH BOTTLE CAPS?



THEN THERE WAS MAZOE ORANGE AND HOME MADE GINGER BEER!!!

Vic Mackenzie 2014

Vic Mackenzie 2014 ©

This newsletter is compiled by Jackie Jackson for the Rhodesian Services Association,
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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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