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*July 2022*

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# *The Sentinel*

*Newsletter of the Rhodesian Services Association*

Our numbers dwindle now and fade,  
Will history prove a mark we made?  
I doubt we'll merit but a line,  
Just memories which are yours and mine.  
But in our hearts, we thought it right  
To build a place for black and white.  
Our cause thought just, our spirits strong,  
Oh history, can you prove us wrong?  
Let men deride, or have no care,  
We can with pride state, 'I was there.'

~ **Dave Blacker 5483, BSAP** (posted on BSAPolice.org)

In Memoriam: 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020

## ***From our Inbox:***

- The 124th Cavalry Regiment was the last horse cavalry regiment in the United States Army. The regiment was mounted until July 1944, when it was dismounted and moved to fight in the China-Burma-India Theatre of Operations during World War

II, where they earned their moniker, Marsmen. Following 9/11, the Regiment had subsequent deployments in Iraq, Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula.

On this topic, RhSA member, Kevin Smith, writes:

*While serving in the [U.S.] Army, I was fortunate to make acquaintance, via the internet, with John Edmond a few years ago and I asked him to document the story behind 'The 124th Cavalry Regiment Lives On'. As a Texan, I think it is very interesting how a song from the 1800s found its way to Southern Africa and back over the course of a century plus.*

[In 1889, Cecil John Rhodes was granted a Royal Charter by Queen Victoria to settle Mashonaland, in what was to become Southern Rhodesia. So was formed the British South Africa Company, its regiment of troopers - raised to protect the occupying Pioneer Column - dubbed the British South Africa Police, the BSAP.]

*From the pen and keyboard of John Edmond...*

*To celebrate the 100th anniversary of this event I was commissioned to write a commemorative song for the BSAP. This I did ('The Regiment Lives On'), mentioning all their roles and achievements.*

*It must be noted that the BSAP Force was made up of former British and Colonial soldiers together with some American soldiers; to mention one, Frederick Russell Burnham who had been a tracker in the Apache wars. These Americans sang a cowboy song called 'The Old Chisholm Trail' – a song with the chorus containing a hook line 'Kum A Kye!' which was a cry that kept cowboys in touch in the dust of the cattle they herded from Texas to the railhead at Wichita, bound for the butcheries of the North. The song was then used in the dust of the Pioneer Column and the BSAP adopted it as their official Regimental March.*

*Lt. Col Kevin Smith of the 124th Cavalry Regiment came upon my tribute song 'The Regiment Lives On' and approached me to write a lyric pertaining to the 124th. After studying material sent to me by Kevin and reading the book 'Marsmen in Burma' by John Randolph and hearing of their latter service in Iraq, I was honoured to write another lyric*



and record 'The 124th Cavalry Regiment Lives on'. Automatically I told some BSAP members about the twin song and they were proud to be associated in song with an equally gallant regiment.

On a lighter note, one of my reminders to the BSAP was that they 'stole' a Texas song for their Regimental March. So, everything is now square: 'we stole theirs, so they can have ours.'



To bring more clarity to the BSAP members, on the album I wrote called 'Rhodesian Troopers Legacy' commemorating 130 years of their birth, I wrote a song called 'The Cowboy and the Trooper' which explains all.

You can listen to these songs through the following links:

'The Old Chisholm Trail', song by Michael Martin Murphy  
<https://youtu.be/JnS9-FFsRc>

'BSAP Regimental Quick March' <https://youtu.be/L1qBpFrjY6w>

And from John Edmond -

'The Regiment Lives On' <https://youtu.be/G5WsGVh4hu0>

'The 124th Cavalry Regiment Lives On' [https://youtu.be/LBTAYOgE\\_zk](https://youtu.be/LBTAYOgE_zk)

'The Cowboy and the Trooper' <https://youtu.be/8zoW-SMT1QE>

Note: Kevin Smith is a retired officer, not currently serving. The composition and recording of 'The 124<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment Lives On' were undertaken by individuals in their personal capacities, on behalf of a private organization, the 124th Regimental Association, which supports the 124<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment. The song was not solicited or endorsed by the U.S. Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, or the 124th Cavalry.

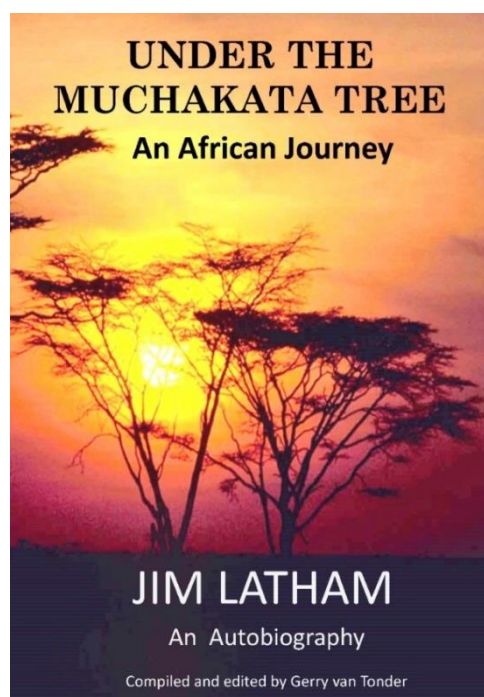
- Mike Harris (ex-8RR Mortars) is hoping to locate any ex-8RR members he served with from 1978-1980, including Sergeant John Armstrong who served in the Honde Valley and whose civilian job was with PG Timbers in Salisbury. The RSM during the 60-day

training was the-never-to-be forgotten RSM Erasmus. The following online groups have been contacted without success: Fighting Men of Rhodesia, Rhodesia Military, Llewellyn Barracks, and Rhodesians and Zimbabweans Worldwide. If anyone can help, or is aware of any records, such as recruit names of the D intakes (over 30s) from 1978 onwards, please contact Mike at: [micharris2@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:micharris2@tiscali.co.uk)

## **NEW BOOKS ~**

***UNDER THE MUCHAKATA TREE: An African Journey***  
**Jim Latham: An Autobiography**, compiled and edited  
by Gerry van Tonder

Symbolising ancestral care and protection, the Muchakata tree of the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe is synonymous with tribal ritual. Dwelling place of the tribal and clan spirits, this 'holy tree' provides shade for social gatherings and court, and its fruit sustains humans and animals. Rain rituals are conducted under its venerated dense green foliage, profoundly important in a rural subsistence economy. Born in colonial Tanganyika, now Tanzania, educated in South Africa, and with a life of service in Rhodesia, and now Zimbabwe, author Jim Latham is a self-confessed son of Africa. A holder of a Masters in Shona religion, and a Doctorate in natural resource management and community governance, he is a leading anthropologist, historian and linguist. But most of all, Jim has undertaken a life-long African journey as an individual with an uncompromising passion for the continent and its people. From the tranquil sands of the Indian Ocean to the insurgency war of Rhodesia in the 1970s, Jim delivers a remarkable, sometimes bitter-sweet tale that covers more than eight decades. He also logs his own Danish, Irish and Afrikaner lineage, imbued throughout with a rich tableau of ancestral courage, adventure and idiosyncrasy.



His is an anecdotal story of the Southern Rhodesian Native Department's rural development policies and activities in its infancy, while covering large tracts of the country — more often than not wild and remote. Campfires, hunting for the pot, learning a whole new language and culture, and living modestly with no electricity or running water were all part of daily life. And through this all, his devoted wife, Jill, shared Jim's rustic but cherished adventure, while also introducing children Brian and Jean to this 'alternative' lifestyle. Controversially so for many, Jim disagreed with many aspects of the direction taken by the Rhodesian

government, such as the land issue and its psychological prosecution of the conflict. He believes there was a tragic and far-reaching failure by those in power to fully understand the ancestral history and spirituality of the very tribespeople unwittingly caught up in a deadly game of hearts and minds, between the two warring parties.

A remarkably well-written opus, these vibrant pages hold appeal for anyone who has ever had the privilege of touching the soil of Africa and experiencing and embracing her spirit. Equally, the contents will be of significant value to historians, academics, anthropologists, social scientists, psychologists and those in the military, administrative, educational and political structures of government and institutions of learning. Jim Latham, District Commissioner, academic, adventurer, husband and father, and much-respected African, this is his life story, in the shade of the Muchakata tree.

Published privately in paperback (424p.) in May 2022 and distributed by Gerry van Tonder: £19.50, plus P&P £4.50 (UK only); international postage on request. Please send all enquiries to Gerry: [g.van-tonder@sky.com](mailto:g.van-tonder@sky.com)

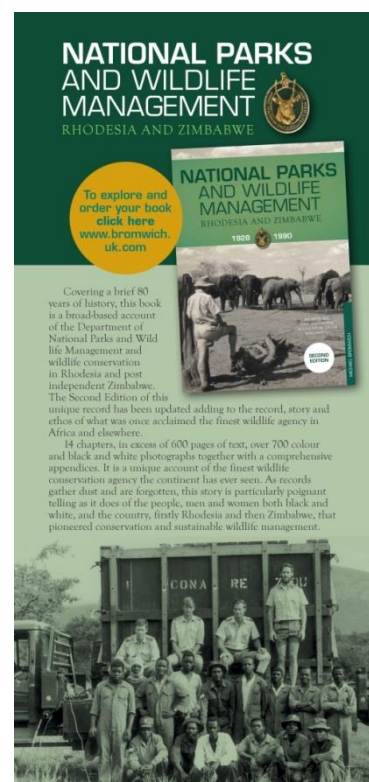
Also available on Kindle (£9.99):

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Under-Muchakata-Tree-Jim-Latham-ebook/dp/B0B223BYDX/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=2RBI45L93FSAK&keywords=muchakata&qid=1653468910&sprefix=muchakata%2Caps%2C120&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Under-Muchakata-Tree-Jim-Latham-ebook/dp/B0B223BYDX/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2RBI45L93FSAK&keywords=muchakata&qid=1653468910&sprefix=muchakata%2Caps%2C120&sr=8-1)

- ***National Parks and Wildlife Management: Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, 1928-1990***, by Michael Bromwich (second and updated edition)

Covering a brief 80 years of history, this is a broad-based account of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management and wildlife conservation in Rhodesia and post-independent Zimbabwe. This unique record, comprising 14 chapters, with 600 pages of text, over 700 colour and black and white photographs, and a comprehensive appendix, has been put together to document the story and ethos of what was once acclaimed the finest wildlife agency in Africa, and elsewhere. This story is particularly poignant, as it tells of the people involved - men and women, both black and white – who pioneered conservation and sustainable wildlife management, firstly in Rhodesia and then Zimbabwe.

A feature of this book is the chapter titled Rhino Wars, a hard-hitting account that will open the eyes of many. Regular and



covert anti-poaching operations in the lower Zambezi Valley and elsewhere, took the war to the poachers, buying time for capture units to move some 400 black rhino to conservancies and Intensive Protection Zones. Thanks to the untiring efforts of a handful of dedicated men, there are still black and white rhino in Zimbabwe today.

Orders for the book can be placed at <https://bromwich.uk.com>

## **WAR AND REMEMBRANCE**

### **Women in Combat: The Rhodesian Women's Service (RWS)**

~ J. E. O'Toole, Major (Ret.), former Commandant, RWS

[Abridged]

During the mid-1970s, as the civil war in Rhodesia intensified, the Rhodesian security forces could not enlist sufficient numbers of men to face the multiple raids, which became more frequent. Given this, the decision was made to incorporate women into the Army and Air Force for a period of 12 months, initially on a trial basis, this would be called 'Rhodesian Women's Services'.

Many of these women would be employed in administrative jobs, freeing up men who were in a position to be in service. The applicants had to be between 17 and 50 years old, regardless of whether they were married or single, in the case of being over 50 years old, they were considered to have special qualities. The conditions of service were simple, the personnel must always be in uniform and under military law. What differed in principle was that there was no rank structure, so RWS staff were referred to as Mrs or Miss.

The basic training course was very similar to the one women in the Israeli army underwent, it was effective, but it required a lot of work in a short time (2 weeks). It was therefore essential that applicants familiarize themselves with as many aspects of military life as possible, even as some of their training would continue at their postings. Some time of this training was given to familiarize them with weapons, the RWS had at their disposal the Browning hi power, Sterling 9mm and then weapons such as the Uzi, Star and FN pistols.

It is worth mentioning that most of the women, including myself, had never been instructed in the art of weapons training before. I remember that during



my basic training course, we were subjected to mock attacks or ambushes. I must say that the sight of the African soldiers disguised as insurgents, accompanied by explosions and blanks from all angles, gave us a 'baptism of fire' - we knew this was not a joke.

I dare to mention the moment when we were introduced to the 'jungle lane', where one by one we would go down a path with a loaded Sterling (live ammunition), while being followed by an instructor, along said lane towards various objectives that rose, as you walked. The objective was to hit all the 'enemies', but most of the applicants emptied the magazine at the first noise in the bushes, in several cases almost opening fire on the instructor.

The course united the women in a team, which of course was one of the objectives. The training produced a team of proud and confident new soldiers who were ready to take on anything. In the initial stage of the RWS, both the Army and the Air Force trained together in the training barracks. Later, the personnel of each force were separated for each of its specialties.



Getting the RWS to take shape and be accepted by the professional forces took time, many of the older soldiers were sceptical about how the RWS could perform its duties, however, as the RWS expanded and took more places in the forces, scepticism was disappearing. As the staff grew to almost 300 women, the Air Force took its trainees to train separately, the Army would act in the same way.

While many of the RWS women did not have combat roles, many found themselves deployed in positions or even roles that were on or very close to the front lines. RWS personnel were deployed as mine detectors, along with dog handlers, vehicle mechanics, doctors or nurses, aircraft signalling, photo interpretation (reconnaissance), radar operators, among many others.



In 1977, it was decided to recognize the RWS as military personnel, in the same conditions as men, following

several debates in the media about their recognition and use in the present war. Very shortly after the approval of said recognition, the RWS underwent several changes in its structure, salaries (which was 80% of their male peers), ranks, and training.

The first courses for RWS officers took place sometime later, it was an extremely difficult course that lasted 8 weeks and the applicants were trained on weapons, radios, navigation, intelligence, and military law, among other things. By November 1977, the first 11 RWS officers were commissioned with the rank of lieutenant.

Having started out as an experiment, the RWS became an invaluable part of the Rhodesian Army. The progress of women from all walks of life to professional soldiers was amazing. No one was prouder than me when, on 4 August 1978, the RWS held their Anniversary Parade and I was Parade Commander. Over three hundred women marched on to KGVII Barracks Parade Square to the tune of 'Jalalabad', played by the Band of the RAR, and marched off to the RWS Regimental March, 'Hello Dolly'.

April 1980, and it was over. We had experienced times of sadness, pride, and comradeship throughout the years of war and will never forget those who died for Rhodesia. The RWS is privileged to have been part of it all.

Sources:

<https://www.zona-militar.com/foros/threads/la-bush-war-en-rhodesia-1965-1980.69029/>

<https://rhodesianforces.org/RhodesianWomansServicesRWS.htm>

## **ROLL OF HONOUR**

### **Detective Constable Moraka Chinzi**

CID, BSAP/ZRP

Murdered: 12/2/1981

Moraka and PO Alistair Taylor, both plain clothes policemen, were in a vehicle in Bulawayo's Luveve Township, when they were stopped by an armed gang of between 15 and 20 men. They were assaulted as they got out of the vehicle and Alistair was shot and killed. Moraka was told to return to his station, but he was shot and killed as he walked away. The men robbed the police vehicle of a sub-machine gun, a revolver, and four radios. The incident occurred during a period of violent clashes between former ZIPRA and ZANLA terrorists in Bulawayo, with the involvement of elements of the former RAR (now a Zimbabwean battalion) in numerous engagements with these groups, in what became known as the Battle of Bulawayo.

Source: The Bulawayo Chronicle.

## **Second Lieutenant Robin Stanley Hughes**

Tracker, CU, Selous Scouts

Killed in action: 18/10/1973

Killed by a gunshot wound in crossfire, during a pseudo op and contact with ZANLA, Centenary, Op Hurricane. Aged 33, Rob was a territorial officer on call-up, who had volunteered to serve with the Selous Scouts. Born in England, Rob spent his childhood there and in Nigeria, before attending Milton Junior School, in Bulawayo. His grandfather, John Stanley Hughes, had been a member of the Bechuanaland Border Police, which had undertaken the 1889/90 Mashonaland Expedition. After going back to the UK to complete his education at Fettes College, Rob returned to Rhodesia, where he joined his parents on their cattle ranch in the Fort Victoria area. He then enrolled at Gwebi Agricultural College, where he studied for a diploma in animal husbandry. After ranching for a few years, Rob joined National Parks where, under the direct influence of Paul Coetsee, he worked on animal control. He then became the first ranger at the Chewore Wilderness Area, east of Mana Pools. During this time and subsequently at Mana itself, Rob studied and recorded the traditional history of these parts of the Zambezi Valley. In 1971, Rob started a Kariba-based safari company with Jeff Stutchbury. Rob went on to produce a series of game conservation films for British television. Early in 1973, Rob re-joined National Parks, spending the last three months running the Urungwe Hunting Camps. He was about to go on an operation to capture and translocate black rhino, when he was called up on the fateful bush trip that would cost him his life. Buried at Warren Hills Cemetery Salisbury.

Source: Wildlife magazine and death notice.



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

### **J.H. Slabbert, WWII British War medal**

~Hugh Bomford

A few years ago, Chuck Osborne found a WWII British War Medal 1939-1945 in a toolbox in a workshop in Durban, which someone had tried to chrome plate, presumably to avoid



polishing it (apparently a common practice, especially in Canada). Over the years, Chuck tried to research the recipient J.H. SLABBERT, but was not able to find him. Chuck brought the medal to us at the Museum and I received advice from some knowledgeable people. I successfully removed the chrome and the medal has been returned to pristine condition. It's unlikely that the recipient is still alive, but we'd like to return the medal to the family, if possible. Slabbert is a reasonably common surname, which is going to make it difficult to find the right family.

This is what we know: the recipient, J.H. SLABBERT, served in the South African Army in WWII. His service number (**607023**) is a South African one but this does not rule out a Rhodesian connection. The South Africans issued blocks of service numbers to their



different units in WWII. We know from a list found online by our Curator, Tony Fraser, that J.H. Slabbert's service number was assigned to a unit which was manually recorded as 'D.G.A.T for Rec. Sec. Roberts Heights' (the T could be an F). Our ensuing research indicates that this is or was a military college at Roberts Heights in Pretoria. Roberts Heights has undergone a number of name changes over the many years of its existence.

The abbreviation DGAT so far eludes us.

The abbreviation Rec. Sec. could relate to the Recreation Centre that appears to have been at Roberts Heights during WWII. Rec. Sec. may be Recreation Section. It could also refer to reconnaissance, but we feel that in that case, it would have been abbreviated to Recce Sec.

If you can help. please contact me at: [theeditor@rhodesiaservices.org](mailto:theeditor@rhodesiaservices.org)

## **THE CQ STORE**

~Hugh Bomford

<https://www.rhodesianservices.org/cq-store.htm>

Please direct orders and inquiries to Hugh at: [thecqstore@rhodesianservices.org](mailto:thecqstore@rhodesianservices.org)

[Rhodie Wear](#) - please look at the [Jackets](#) section for our Rhodesian camo replica combat jacket, as well as the new Rhodesian Corps of Engineers blazer badge. We are currently developing a zip-front sleeveless jacket in Rhodesian Camo, with a polar fleece lining. This is not a replication of any period garment, it is in reaction to customers wanting a warm, practical, outdoor-wear type garment. If you're interested, please send an email.

In the [Other goods](#) section, you'll find the Rhodesian camo NCO stripes we're making, which are great for re-enactors, bike jackets, etc.

A full catalogue of our [embroidery patterns](#) is available under [Service Caps, Hats, Berets, Badges & Accessories](#) (scroll down to Embroidered Sew On Badges).

This is the first sample of our intended production of COPIED [Rhodesian Para Wings](#), made in New Zealand, with green and camo backing. This backing is so that our copies cannot be mistaken for originals. We will advise pricing as soon as we accept and sign off on the pattern. For inquiries and to be informed when production starts, send an email to [thecqstore@rhodesianservices.org](mailto:thecqstore@rhodesianservices.org)



The [Clothing](#) link has Rhodesian Air Force baseball caps in navy with gold trim, with or without 'Rhodesian Air Force' on the back. We also have the RhAF badge on navy beanies and it can be put on other garments of your choice. Take a look at the scarves – they are great for winter, if you have creaky shoulders and a dodgy neck, like me.

Under the [Medals](#) link we now have a full-size copy in solid silver, of the Police Medal for Meritorious Service, to add to our large list of medals and ribbons in stock.

Under the [Assorted](#) link we have a huge selection of tea/coffee mugs, which have both military and non-military themes and make great gifts.

Under the [Books](#) link, a selection of books is available for ordering, including our own 'Rhodesia Regiment 1899 - 1981', and 'Hondo', a new book by Mark Radford.

# Rhodesian Pets...



**W**E WERE A PET FRIENDLY NATION. NEARLY EVERY HOME OR FARM HAD DOGS OR CATS, MOSTLY OF THE HEINZ 57 VARIETY.

**I**N 1960, DURING OPERATION NOAH AT KARIBA, MANY PEOPLE FOSTERED WILD ANIMALS. THE CONDY'S IN BORROWDALE HAD A BABY RHINO (RUPERT).

MY WIFE SUE'S FAMILY HAD A RESCUED VERVET MONKEY FROM OPERATION NOAH.

**W**E HAD MANY EXOTIC PETS SUCH AS BUSH BABIES, CHAMELEON AND SNAKES



**Bibby**

**W**HEN I WAS FIVE I WAS BITTEN ON THE BUM BY OUR NEIGHBORS BABOON. YES WE WERE TEASING IT!

**D**URING OUR ARMY DAYS THERE WAS ALWAYS AN ORPHANED BUSH PIG TO ENTERTAIN US.

I NEVER CARED FOR BIRDS IN CAGES BUT I KNEW SOME SMART PARROTS & BUDGIES



*Vic Mackenzie 2014 CO*

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.

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

***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 19<sup>th</sup> 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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Postal: PO Box 13003, Tauranga 3141, New Zealand

Physical: Unit 10, 14 Portside Drive, Mount Maunganui, New Zealand

Web: [www.rhodesianservices.org](http://www.rhodesianservices.org) and [www.thelionandtusk.org](http://www.thelionandtusk.org)