
July 2025



The Sentinel

Newsletter of the Rhodesian Services Association

Return

In those Chimurenga years, I
Walked through these Sengwa Hills
With a rifle in my hands
And violence in my heart.

At War's end
I bought a borrowed, battered boat
And said goodbye to Sengwa's lonely hills.
Then left. Took my heart
And made my home
In Jo'burg's urban brawl.

Now, I return.

(My hair is grey, my beard is white.
My children tall, my business strong).

I return and
As our houseboat feels its way
Into Sengwa Bay. Below
The crew prepares our meal. While
I stand, Chivas in hand
Upon the upper deck –
And my lonely Sengwa Hills
Call out to me again.

~ Chas Lotter
Echoes of an African War

FROM OUR INBOX:

The Sea Lion Ambush

In December 1976, six months before Operation Splinter was established to coordinate security on Lake Kariba, a gang of fourteen ZIPRA crossed Kariba, just SW of Chete Island, from Zambia; they had the specific task of attacking the National Parks camp in the Chizarira Game Reserve and abducting the game scouts to be trained as guerillas back in Zambia. The gang split into two and, at dawn on 20 December, attacked the National Parks camp and a Roads Department camp a few kilometres away. They killed five BSAP members who were spending the night at the Roads Dept camp, and abducted 15 game scouts and labourers from the Chizarira National Parks camp. All five of the senior National Parks staff were away from the camp that night and two National Service staff members managed to escape into the bush. The gang then force marched their captives back towards the lake where their dinghies had been cached.

The following is an extract from the book *SPLINTER: Rhodesia's Lake War*, by Andrew Jackson:

..... the Security Forces had anticipated this. They put a follow-up stick, led by Second Lieutenant Paul Connolly, the brother of Kevin Connolly who was one of the BSAP members killed at Chizarira, aboard a BSAP Namacurra patrol boat, P23. Connolly had orders to patrol the most obvious crossing point at Chete Gorge and

also to escort the civilian ferry *Sea Lion* when it made its regular night passage through Chete Gorge, from Kariba to Binga, and on to its terminus at Milibizi.

John Klug, a BSAP member, was on board the police boat:

"I was briefed that there was likely to be an attack on the ferry as it passed through the Chete Gorge and that I and a boatload of well-armed military were to surreptitiously escort the ferry through the gorge. So, on the morning of 21 December, we cruised up to Ruzirukuru and camped



The BSAP catamaran P23 that was escorting the *Sea Lion* at the time of the Chete Gorge ambush

Photo: John Klug

there until the night when the ferry was due, which we met as it passed us on its way southwest to the gorge. The ferry had all its lights on as usual and we were travelling about 50m behind, with absolutely no lights and as quietly as possible. We were expecting any attack to come from Chete Island and all our weapons, including the rear mounted Bren, were therefore trained on the right-hand side of the boat as we entered the gorge from the northeast. I cannot remember the exact time, but it was quite late at night and the normal time that it would be passing through the gorge. Suddenly, when the ferry was about midway through the gorge, there was a mass of weapon fire from the upper portion of the Rhodesian bank and I remember seeing an RPG7 rocket sail over the top of the ferry. I don't recall seeing the other two that were supposedly fired. On our boat, all the men redirected their aim and started firing at the fairly visible source of their fire, which I believe surprised them. Their fire stopped almost immediately we engaged them and both we and the ferry continued through the gorge to the large open bay on the southwestern side of Chete Island and Gorge.

We were obviously in radio comms throughout the event from the time we joined the ferry as escort, and it was during this communication that we were informed that one of their passengers had been hit and killed. We were also in comms with Binga HQ and we were instructed to transfer the body from the ferry to our boat and return to Binga. During this operation I also remember seeing an AK armour-piercing head

on the floor of the ferry's bridge. I don't remember too much of what happened after that, whether Paul and his men started follow-up immediately or not, but neither was I aware of any capture, or court case for the incident".

The *Sea Lion* was hit 26 times by small arms fire. Three RPG rockets were fired, but missed. The ambush resulted in the death of South African tourist, Peter Collinson (29) of Witbank, who was shot in the head, while urging the other passengers to get under cover. *Sea Lion* continued on to Binga after transferring Collinson's body to the BSAP boat, but it never ran tourist trips again until after the war.

The ambush is recorded as having happened early on 21 December on Collinson's death certificate, although the ZIPRA newsletter put it as occurring on 22 December. The gang escaped after the attack, although one of the members, Walter Ncube, the 'logistics advisor' of the ZIPRA gang, and participant in the attack on the *Sea Lion*, was captured the following year at a Security Force roadblock. At the end of his murder trial, on 4 October, 1978, he was sentenced to death.

By chance, there were three security force boats just south of Chete Gorge carrying out trials on a new prototype strike boat to be operated by the Rhodesian Corps of Engineers Boat Troop. Two ZIPRA dinghies were picked up on radar and the strike boat intercepted them. As a result of the contact and follow up, three ZIPRA were captured and four killed; three National Parks scouts were rescued, but one was unfortunately killed. Subsequent information suggested that some of the abducted National Parks scouts escaped their captors during the night march to the lake, but others were not accounted for.

These two incidents were the final triggers for the launch of Operation Splinter 6 months later, in May 1977, and the upgrading of the command structure and equipment on the lake.



The Sea Lion ferry (recent photo, Kariba Ferries)

WAR AND REMEMBRANCE

In October 2021, in Almere, Netherlands, a monument was unveiled honouring the crew of a Short Stirling BK716 bomber that crashed in the area during World War II. The plane was salvaged from the Markermeer, a large lake in the central Netherlands, and the monument is partly made from one of its engines. The aircraft was from 218 (Gold Coast) Squadron, which took off from RAF Downham Market, Norfolk. Amongst the wreckage were the remains of the crew, five of whom were British and two Canadians. They were buried in Jonkerbos War Cemetery in Nijmegen, on 28th September 2022. The recovery of the Short Stirling BK716 began on August 31, 2020 and



was completed on October 9, 2020. The municipality of Almere carried out the operation, in collaboration with several partners, including the Dutch Ministry of Defence.

The monument, called 'Rise', was created by British visual artist, Laura O'Neill. Miniatures of the artwork were presented to the surviving relatives of the deceased crew.

~ *British and Commonwealth Forces* Facebook group, 31 March 2025

Malayan Emergency - Three Proud Regiments on Display

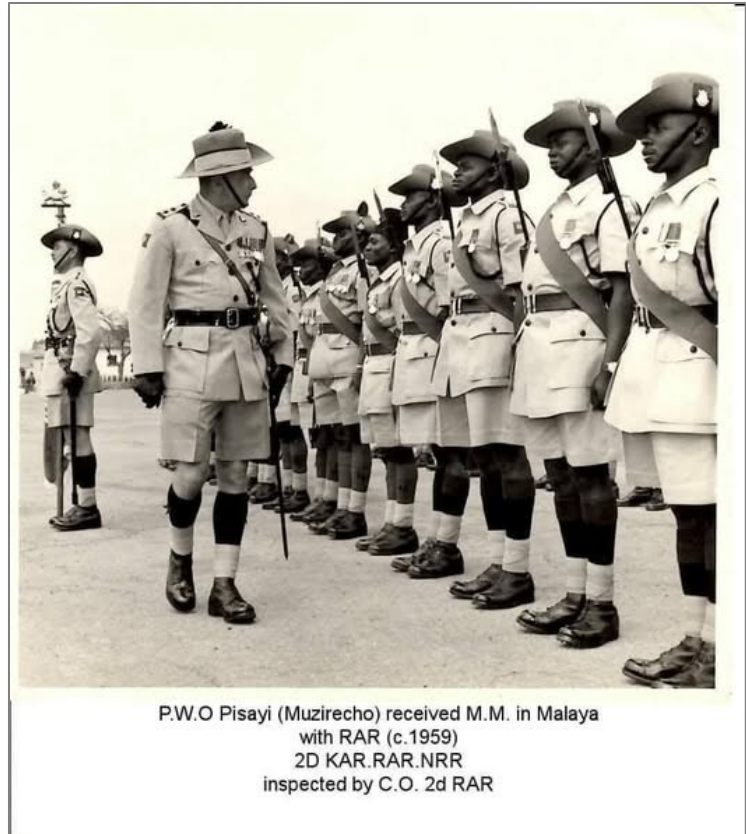
~ posted to the *British & Commonwealth Forces* Facebook group and brought to our attention by RhSA member, William Borg.

The Northern Rhodesia Regiment (NRR) - Northern Rhodesia, The Rhodesia African Rifles (RAR) - Southern Rhodesia, 2nd Battalion, and The Kings African Rifles (KAR) are all seen in this rare photo. Note the 3 different nation regiment army badges on their

bush hats. All 3 countries served with great honour in the Malaya Emergency campaign in the 1950s.

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd battalions of the King's Africa Rifles saw service in the Malayan Emergency, where they were heavily involved in fighting Communist rebels, suffering 23 dead. The Northern Rhodesia Regiment and Rhodesia African Rifles also fought in the Malayan Emergency.

That is how proud and wonderful our soldiers were when they took part in the Malaysian Emergency campaign. It is because of men like them that Malaya has the freedom that the nation enjoys today.



ROLL OF HONOUR

2nd Lieutenant Armand Howard Albertson

Service numbers: 1003 and 107480

2nd Battalion C Coy, Tank Corps

Killed in action: 9 August, 1918

2nd Lieutenant Howard was killed in action at Rosières-en-Santerre, at the age of 25. He is buried in grave II. B. 2, Rosières Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France and listed on the St. George's College War Memorial, Harare, Zimbabwe. The cemetery of 283 graves was created by the Units that retook Rosières from the Germans, in August 1918. 2nd Lieutenant Albertson was born in Western Australia, the son of Mr. R. W. Albertson and Ellen Rule, his wife, of Gatooma, Southern Rhodesia. He arrived in Plymouth, England on the Llanstephan Castle on 5th March, 1915 from Natal, travelling 3rd class and described as an Engineer from Rhodesia. He first served as a Private (service number 1003), with King Edward's Horse and as a Private (service number

107480), with the Machine Gun Corps, before being commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant in the Tank Corps on 20th December, 1917.



The Royal Tank Regiment Memorial in London, depicting the crew of a World War II Comet tank, which was issued to the Royal Tank Regiment in 1945. The Comet had a crew of five: commander, gunner, loader, hull machine gunner, and driver.

Section Officer Timothy Charles Hewitt PDG (Posthumous)

Service number 8525

OC E Troop, Support Unit, BSAP

Killed in action: 23 February, 1977

Section Officer Timothy Charles Hewitt died in Salisbury Hospital from wounds received in a contact on 17 February 1977, Wedza district, Op Thrasher. He was 22 years old (b. 24 October 1954, in Bulawayo). His Police Decoration for Gallantry (awarded posthumously on 5 August, 1977) citation relates his bravery. Hewitt was driving a heavy vehicle in a convoy, which was ambushed by CTs. Despite receiving a serious wound to his abdomen, he returned fire and continued to rally his men, resulting in the CTs breaking off the attack. He then organised a follow-up and, by radio, guided an aircraft to the scene. He remained in command, until casevaced an hour and a half later. Educated at the Umtali Convent, Penhalonga School, Selukwe School, and the Brothers of Charity College in Pietersburg, South Africa, Tim joined the force in 1970 as a cadet

stationed at Selukwe. He was initially stationed at Bulawayo Urban, then Plumtree, before transferring to Madhlambusi Post. From there, Tim served at Mphoengs and, in March 1973, he took over as Member-in-Charge at Mayobodo Post. He was then transferred to Essexvale, where he was promoted to Section Officer in 1974. He returned to Mayobodo for a few months, before joining the Support Unit on 22 November 1974. An extremely popular but firm leader, Tim's semi-military funeral took place at Bulawayo, followed by a private burial in Selukwe, on 25 February, 1977.



THE LION & TUSK MUSEUM

~ Hugh Bomford

Anzac Day, 25 April 2025



Padre Peter Coventry



Piper Duncan McLeod



Wreath layers: Nicolla Bomford and Obrian Mahurure

Our annual service, led by Padre Peter Coventry, was held at The Lion and Tusk Museum, in commemoration of Anzac Day. Please click on the link to view a video of the service. Unfortunately, we had weather and technical issues, so the video is brief.

<https://youtu.be/XkXJ2SV2rpM?si=WKf-yF0Er7UqG-ke>

ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps and Anzac Day, 25th April, is one of the most important national occasions in both countries. This date marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War.

Britain declared war in August 1914 and, in 1915, Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli Peninsula, with the aim of opening up the Dardanelles to the Allied navies. The ultimate objective was to capture Constantinople (now Istanbul), the capital of the Ottoman Empire, an ally of Germany. Australian and New Zealand forces landed on Gallipoli on 25th April, meeting fierce resistance from the Ottoman Turkish defenders. What had been planned as a bold stroke to knock Turkey out of the war quickly became a stalemate, and the campaign dragged on for eight months. At the end of 1915, the Allied forces were evacuated from the peninsula, with both sides having suffered heavy casualties and enduring great hardships. More than 8,000 Australian soldiers and almost 3,000 New Zealand soldiers died during the campaign.

Poppies are traditionally worn on Anzac Day in New Zealand, where the Friday before Anzac Day is designated Poppy Day. On this day, funds are raised by the RNZRSA (The Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association), for the welfare of war veterans and their families.

Anzac Day remembrance takes two forms: commemorative services, often held at dawn, and marches that take place in cities and many smaller centres. Commemorative ceremonies are more formal and are held at war

memorials throughout Australia and New Zealand. During these ceremonies, flags are lowered to half-mast as *The Last Post* is played. *The Rouse* is played after a period of silence at a ceremony that is not held at dawn. During this bugle call, the flag is slowly raised to the masthead, symbolizing hope for a day when the living and the dead will rise together.



Rhodesian LRDG (Long Range Desert Group) Jeep in the 2025 Anzac Day parade, Perth, Australia (vehicle restored by Neil Potter)

These ceremonies of remembrance also include a recitation of *The Ode*, which is the 4th stanza of *For the Fallen*, a poem written in 1914, by Laurence Binyon.

The Ode

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
We will remember them.
We will remember them.

Rhodesians (as well as veterans from other countries) attend Anzac Day parades in Australia and New Zealand, out of respect for their new countries and also to use the opportunity to pay respect to their fallen family, friends, and countrymen. Our Roll of Honour records include four Rhodesians that we know of who were killed at Gallipoli; how many served there, we will never know.

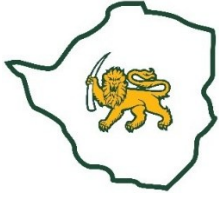
Reference Sources:

<https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/programmes-and-resources/anzac-day/>
<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/interactive/gallipoli-casualties-country>
<https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac-day/traditions>
<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/commemoration/event-planning>

We invite you to watch another interesting video (30 minutes) that features The Lion and Tusk Museum, our extensive museum collection, and interviews with several of our volunteers:

<https://youtu.be/BsMJEK3ysG4?si=M7b--Veatl1ZIKgB>

We are most grateful to Allan Udy of the Historical Aviation Film Unit in New Zealand, for the time that he put into making this video. Furthermore, we highly recommend Allan's website at <https://www.aviationfilm.com/>, which features videos, not only of aircraft, but also military vehicles, trains, and much more. New clips are released regularly, so bookmark this page and visit often. On Allan's website, you will also find longer form video and documentary releases on an advert-free streaming channel at Historical Machines TV. Sign up for a free HMTV trial and support the Historical Aviation Film Unit, thereby helping to preserve historic material.



THE CQ STORE

It costs us over NZD 40,000 per year (approx. USD 24,000), in base costs for rent, rates etc. to run The Lion and Tusk Museum. Our CQ Store is one of our main income generators. Wherever possible we try to source our stock from New Zealand, Australia, USA and UK.

We are constantly reviewing and updating our mail website at <https://www.rhodesianservices.org/>. To access the Store, click on the link at the top of the page, titled *CQ Store*. Once in, there are numerous sections and subsections covering the vast range of goods that we stock. Under our *Other* section (at link <https://www.rhodesianservices.org/other.htm>), we have a *Fundraiser* section. Here we list various goods including surplus books and memorabilia. These items are either donated specifically for us to sell or are surplus to our needs and are being sold with donors' permission. This section will be updated regularly, as we have a lot of books to be listed there, in due course.

NEW PRODUCT

Rhodesian Light Infantry polo shirts, \$75 each, plus P&P embroidered with our high quality RLI badge, these shirts as pictured below are 97% Polyester, 3% Elastane breathable stretch honeycomb knit, UPF 50+; side panels with dynamic contrast piping that match the RLI colours of green and white on the torso and back neck; longer length for added coverage when moving about. To order from the CQ Store, please email Hugh at thecqstore@rhodesianservices.org and give your delivery address; you will then receive a quote.



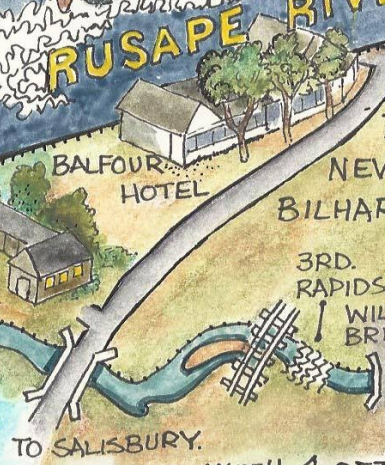
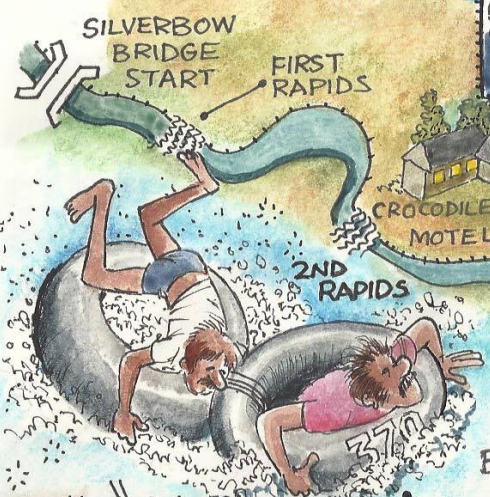
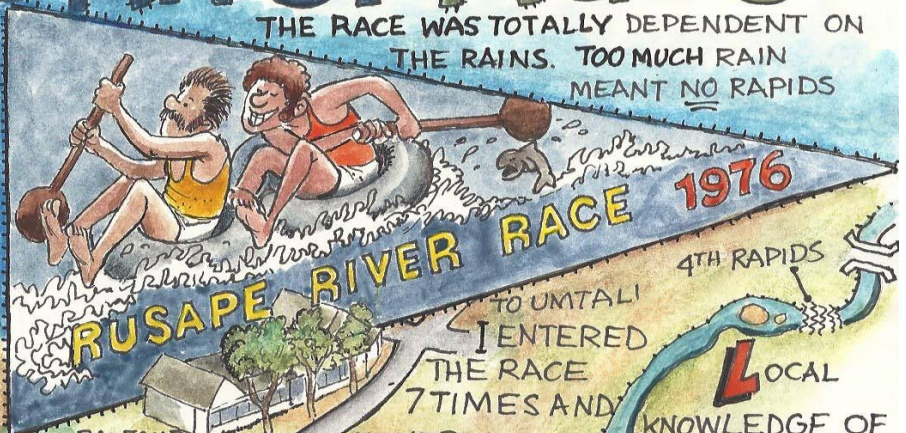
Customer support of our CQ Store is highly valued. You can view our customer feedback on Google from this link: <https://g.page/r/CZIX2Gk1fPfVEBM/review>

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

Rusape River Race

THE RACE STARTED AS A DRUNKEN BET BETWEEN TWO POLICEMEN, KEITH ADDISON AND TAKKIES BANNERMAN IN 1967

THE RACE WAS TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON THE RAINS. TOO MUCH RAIN MEANT NO RAPIDS



I ENTERED THE RACE 7 TIMES AND NEVER GOT BILHARZIA!
LOCAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE RIVER WAS CRUCIAL. THE RIVER HAD MANY FALSE TRIBUTARIES.

THE RACE WAS DANGEROUS, WITH 4 SETS OF RAPIDS. IN 1973 BEVERLEY CUMMINGS DROWNED.

Vic Mackenzie 2014

UP THE LESAPI RIVER WITHOUT A PADDLE!

Vic Mackenzie 2014/00

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.



© 2025 The Rhodesian Services Association

Registered under the 2005 Charities Act in New Zealand number CC25203

Registered as an Incorporated Society in New Zealand number 2055431

Postal: PO Box 13003, Tauranga 3141, New Zealand

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

Web: www.rhodesianservices.org and www.thelionandtusk.org