



Rhodesian Services Association Newsletter #1 2003

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Web: www.rhodesianservices.org

Welcome to this, the first newsletter, for Rhodesian Security Force Veterans in New Zealand. I had intended to incorporate as part of this newsletter an article on the Shangani Patrol. I got in a bit of reading over Christmas, but sadly ran out of time to put together a piece for this issue. Looking back on our history is fascinating to me, pity I didn't pay more attention at school! In New Zealand we have members of Capt. Napier's family who have offered some material from his diary for the museum display at the Hauraki Regiment Hall here in Tauranga. Capt. Napier was on the Shangani Patrol and was called upon to testify at the subsequent inquiry in Bulawayo. So as you can see some interesting things happen here in New Zealand to keep our history alive. Any contributions for future newsletters will be gratefully received.

The internet is the easiest way for me to communicate with the approx 120 people who I have currently listed as being former service men and women and who wish to receive information of particular interest to them. I would appreciate you passing my email address on to other ex service people who arrive in NZ in order for me to keep them up to date. In the course of my contact with people arriving in New Zealand I endeavour to find out if they were ex SF but I do prefer that people contact me asking for information. I believe that by keeping in contact people regain their pride and confidence, make better lives for themselves and keep our history from being buried for all time.

Request for information re the late Dave Berry

I am in contact with many people around the world. I was recently contacted by Louise Berry, daughter of Dave Berry, who was an operator of note in the SAS. Dave was killed while infiltrating Zimbabwe as a member of a South African unit around 1982. Louise is seeking information and recollections from anyone who knew or served with her father. If you can help Louise please contact her by e-mail lberry@rbps.co.za

David Turner

David Turner contributed much to Rhodesians and Zimbabweans in New Zealand over the years. His recent diagnosis of terminal cancer came as a shock to all of us.

I have been asked to inform those that are able, to meet Martin Trumpelmann at the Browns Bay RSA between 2pm and 4pm on Sunday 16th March in order to sign a card or drop off a letter for David. Martin is also organising any assistance/contributions to assist Wally Insch who is to visit Dave and Claire in Australia shortly. Wally will carry with him our support and best wishes for the Turner family. Wally will take any messages, photos etc with him. Please contact Martin if you are unable to get to the Browns Bay RSA on 021 795 039 or e-mail him accpac@xtra.co.nz should you wish to help.

A Tribute to the late John Coleman

John Coleman died on about the 4th March 2003 in California. He was an American Vietnam Veteran who held the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. John was a Colour Sergeant in 3 Commando 1RLI. I am grateful to Tony Coom for letting me publish his tribute to his friend.

I met John Coleman in 3 Commando, 1RLI where I was in 12 Troop as the troop sergeant.

John was a good friend to all that knew him and respected a soldier who led from the front. We enjoyed ribbing him about his "Yank" background and he gave as good as he got.

John and I served together for a couple of years and during this time became friends/good friends/house friends.

With of course the inevitable boozing and warped army camaraderie that was part of ours, and any soldiers lives, regardless of the war zone.

I remember us planning to go on a two man expedition to Kariba on our next R+R to pursue all that was evil and wonderful in a bottle and a bikini and as I left to go on some mission or whatever I vividly remember saying to him, "Coleman don't go and spoil our R+R by getting shot", and what did he do; got shot 5 times! He spoilt the R+R! (*Editors note - John was shot while trying to rescue Pete Garnett who had been, unknown to John at that stage, killed by a female gook RPD gunner.*)

But such was John that he rose from these little setbacks that soldiers are inclined to suffer and went on to serve with distinction.

John left the army and returned to the States, but such was our friendship that he came to stay with me in Durban on a couple of occasions. Long and hard was the drinking and the "remember when bullshit".

We never saw each other again and in later years we corresponded by e-mail and the warped humour and jousting continued. Then came the news that he was suffering and it never sunk in. Rubbish, Coleman was invincible, this would never happen, he was having us on! He wasn't and he succumbed.

I couldn't believe what I heard. I reached for the photo album and Cocks's book Fireforce and read and re-read and looked at him immortalised by technology; gone, Coleman gone. Lived through the wars that he fought in and the bars that he drunk in. Never again to pass the time of day with me.

Words fail me, others have said it more eloquently, read their books. But none can know my personal sorrow, share my grief or clean my misty eyes at this time.

Cheers John Coleman, thank you for passing through my life, it was a privilege to have shared some wonderful moments with you.

Yours aye,
Tony Coom. (ex Colour Sergeant 3 Commando, 1RLI)



The Rhodesian Services Museum Display

Things are progressing with plans for the permanent display that the CO of the Hauraki Regiment invited us to build. Tony Fraser has made space in the Garrison Club which adjoins the Hauraki Museum. We already have the plaque that was presented to the Hauraki Regiment on display in addition to a temporary display of a paratrooper and other items. Tony will be

making a display cabinet and then forming the display from items that have been loaned. So far we have been sent a number of items including photographs and equipment including an AKM that was used through out the Bush War by a Selous Scout whose Chimurenga name was 'Nyati' (Buffalo).

We need to raise some money to assist with purchasing building materials for the cabinet. One of the biggest expenses is the glass. If anyone can help out with some glass please contact me hbomford@clear.net.nz We also intend to raise some money by passing the hat around at the ANZAC Day gathering in Auckland. If anyone wants to make a financial contribution, and every bit helps, please send your donation to Paul Nes. Contact Paul by phone 09 537 4302 to make arrangements.

ANZAC Day 25th April 2003

Use this day to remember those who fought as Rhodesians for what they believed was worth defending. As Rhodesians our 'National Day' should be the 11th of November. However I believe that as ANZAC Day is the primary memorial day here in New Zealand we should use this day to honour those who gave their lives for Rhodesia.

I attend the parade at Hobsonville and speaking personally it is something that I would not miss.

Details are as follows:- Order for the day

0930 to 10am meet at Hobsonville RSA. (Refreshments are available at this time).

1040 parade assembles at Hobsonville Hall (1km from the Hobsonville RSA)

1045 March to the RSA

1100 ETA at RSA

1200 Services concludes with wreath laying

1210 Rhodesian service begins

1230 Rhodesian service concludes

1235 Socialising starts.

Dress Men - Jacket, tie, longs. Women - as appropriate. Berets with regimental insignia may be worn. Medals - full size. Medals worn in memorial on right breast. For some of you wearing medals as a memorial to the deceased holder will be something new. Whether it is just a 'New Zealand thing' or not I am unsure, whatever its origin it is a good idea.

For any further details please contact Paul Nes. If you cannot make it to Auckland and feel so moved I suggest that you contact your local RSA for details of your area's parade. We have all been part of various town parades at some time or another around New Zealand. If you turn up - who knows you may find some other Rhodesian veteran on parade.

Medal matters

If you need your medals refurbished Tony Fraser does an excellent job. You will not get a better job done anywhere. He is a busy man and if you want something done before ANZAC Day get a move on and ring him 0274 804812.

The Zimbabwe Independence medal is something that has been a regular topic of conversation amongst Rhodesians. Personally I was not keen to get it much less wear it. My father persuaded me otherwise "you are entitled to it so wear it" was his advice, and so I do. It is a unique medal in that it is the first medal to be awarded to both sides in a conflict. I also follow more of my father's lead. The Zim Indep Medal should be worn in front of all other medals. Dad wore his Military Cross and other WWII decorations but refused to put the Zim Indep Medal in front of them. His medal set has the Zim Indep Medal placed last and the medal is reversed ie the 'Phoenix' is visible. Worn correctly the Zimbabwe Ruins should be foremost -

fairly apt some might say. Anyway, wearing the medal reversed is our family's protest and if others wish please do so.

Many of you will be aware that there are thousands of RGSMs that have not been claimed and are sitting in Zimbabwe. One person has been allowed to sort through the lists and match up the medals. The job is huge. Only one person is allowed access, he has business commitments and can only do one day a week. The lists are not in any order! It is a very strenuous job when one considers what hardships people are living under in Zimbabwe at the moment. If you have not got your RGSM you can email Anne Cooke with your details including name, number, rank and unit. Anne also holds some Rhodesian Airforce and BSAP RGSMs. If you do contact Anne please have patience, things are not easy back there. (*Editor's Note 4/6/07 – Anne has left Zimbabwe as has the person doing the sorting making it near impossible to retrieve these medals now*)

Associate Membership of the Hauraki Regiment Assn

A number of applications have been made and the Hauraki Regiment Assn is impressed by the support that is being demonstrated by Rhodesian Security Force veterans. Your support is important to the continued good relations that we have with the Hauraki Regiment. The joining fee is \$20 and then \$15 per annum for subsequent annual renewal. Membership application forms can be obtained from me, you just have to ask!

October 2003 RV

Following on the success of the 2002 event the Hauraki Regiment has reserved the venue for us for the next 2 Labour Weekends. I would like to hear from you all on this - how many are interested. At this point in time it is envisaged to have a less formal gathering (now that we have been welcomed by the Hauraki Regiment). The ball is with you let me know what you want.

Discussion Paper

Late last year I sent out a number of thoughts and comments which came under the heading Discussion Paper Regarding Rhodesian Security Force Veterans in New Zealand. I received some feed back but I think that it needs more feed back and discussion. The text of that e-mail is reproduced below. I apologise for some duplication of what I have already written in this newsletter but it does underline the importance of some issues.

This paper has been drawn up as the result of a number of Rhodesian Security Force Veterans inquiring about the New Zealand Branch of the Rhodesian Army Association.

For most of us our service in the Rhodesian Security Forces ended in 1980 upon the political capitulation. Many left the country and are now spread out over the world. With them went our history and heritage. Most Rhodesians have made new lives with varying degrees of success. There will always be the memories of their service for their country. Rhodesians, have through out history fought loyally for the cause that they believed in. That loyalty and comradeship is unique and therefore important to us all. The continued contact with others is essential to the preservation of our history. The extent of our knowledge of Rhodesian veterans in New Zealand is that there is one WWII veteran and the rest from thereon including airmen who were part of the Empire Training. Currently we have some 100 individual addresses (in some cases both husband and wife served so overall numbers are greater than this). The number is growing constantly. It is acknowledged that not all veterans wish to be involved with that period of their lives and this individual decision is respected and acknowledged.

In New Zealand we have previously looked to the Rhodesian Army Association, which is based in the UK and has affiliates in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and other countries. The

BSAP association is also active in some countries. Units such as the SAS and the Selous Scouts keep in comms with other members of their units and some have affiliations with other special force units around the world.

The Rhodesian Army Association in the UK produces a magazine called the Lion & Tusk. This magazine is supposed to be produced 3 times a year. The magazine is good value and has interesting articles. The subscription is £5.00 (about NZ\$15) per year. There has always been a problem with distribution and previously David Turner received the magazine in bulk and then passed it on. When David went to Australia in 2001, the decision was made for individuals to register their own addresses with the RAA and get the magazine direct. Paul Nes co-ordinated this.

The RAA also has a sub section who have been responsible for the displays at the Commonwealth War Museum in Bristol. There are 2 rooms there of Rhodesian military history which contain a lot of valuable items including the RLI Troopie statue, the Selous Scouts colours and a lot of documentation from the Bush War period that was spirited out of the country and not destroyed. There are certainly one and maybe two 'K Car' helicopter gunships that are to be displayed in another museum, as there is not sufficient space at Bristol.

Contact with the RAA has always been problematic. The last Lion & Tusk was dated May 2002 and none since. Efforts to contact the editor have failed and we have been unable to establish what is going on. There are 7 of us in New Zealand currently subscribing and we aim to keep everyone informed of any developments regarding the RAA in the UK. An application form to subscribe to the Lion & Tusk can be obtained from Hugh Bomford.

In this part of the world, ANZAC Day on the 25th April every year is the focus for honouring those who gave their lives. Rhodesians here and in Australia have gone along with this and our Remembrance services now take place on 25th April instead of 11th November. Unfortunately the significance of 11th November to Rhodesians in New Zealand has lost the UDI element and this needs to be readdressed.

In New Zealand the Hobsonville RSA in Auckland has welcomed Rhodesian participation on ANZAC Days. We are allowed to march as part of the parade, fly our colours, lay a wreath and even hold our own small service after the main service. A true honour and we are grateful to the Hobsonville RSA for this. While it is not feasible for everyone to go to Hobsonville every year, we encourage those who can to do so or participate in the ANZAC parades in their home towns around New Zealand. At Hobsonville it has now become part of tradition to wear unit berets together with personal medals on the left breast. Medals worn in memorial of relatives are worn on the right breast. Again at Hobsonville it is traditional for the wives to march as well. This was originally instigated by Rhodesian nurses who took part in the march and have developed from there. Attendance by relatives of Rhodesian soldiers who have passed on should be encouraged.

A reunion held in Tauranga in October 2002 moved the Commanding Officer of the Hauraki Regiment, which was the venue for the event, to invite us to form a permanent display within the Regimental Museum to act as a focus point for the esprit de corps of the Rhodesian Security Force Veterans in New Zealand. In his view all soldiers are due recognition of their service with out political interference. We are also welcome to join the Hauraki Regiment Assn, as associate members. The Hauraki Regiment Assn is the body for former members of the unit and friends of the unit. This again is a true honour and something very special, considering that while many of us are citizens of New Zealand now, we were fighting for another country. We are being recognised as fellow service men and women and are not being measured by anything else. This relationship must be preserved. Rhodesian veterans are welcome to join the Hauraki Regimental Assn. The cost is \$20 for the initial first year's membership and then \$15 per annum thereafter. Membership affords you access to the Garrison Bar at the Hauraki Regiment HQ in Tauranga and invitation to attend various functions, but more importantly it

strengthens our relationship with the Haruaki Regiment and demonstrates to them the honour that we hold their friendship and support towards us. A membership application form can be obtained from Hugh Bomford.

There is an informal organisation in New Zealand of former Rhodesian service men and women and we can confirm at this point that we are registered as a club giving us benefits such as free banking and simplified tax returns. All finances are through members donations which in the past has happened at ANZAC Day. An example of recent purchases is the wreath for ANZAC Day. We have an open book policy to any member who wishes to discuss our financial transactions. Despite the fact that we are a small country with limited resources we are able to make an impact and a number of members put a lot of spare time into the welfare of new migrants etc. We have the commitment and a small amount of money. We have a line of communication open largely via the internet, which cuts out postage costs in most cases, (the recent October RV was self-funding as far as food and postage goes). There is a limit to the resources that the individuals who are currently involved with communications can tolerate and at some point this will have to be addressed. There may also come a time when formation of a proper committee will become necessary. There is also the question of the display at the Hauraki Museum. The curator, Tony Fraser, is a kiwi who is married to a former Andrew Flemming nurse. Tony has a vast knowledge of our history and he will need our support with materials etc etc some time soon.

We do have a number of people who are prepared to give some of their time towards preserving our comradeship and our history and here are some ideas that have been voiced:-

- We need to recognise and encompass all men and women who served in, for or as Rhodesians from any branch of the armed services and including the nurses.
- It has long been felt that the name Rhodesian Army Association does not fit with us as we want to embody all branches of the armed services as well as well as the nurses and perhaps the WVS. A name has been put forward, which embodies this - "RCSO" (Rhodesian Combined Services Organisation) or just "RSO" leaving out the 'Combined'. However it is felt that we need ensure that the name embodies those services in Rhodesia that related directly to the war. We welcome more debate and ideas on this.
- The idea of having an annual camp for the descendants of Rhodesians is also on the cards where the kids can be taught bushcraft, first aid etc etc by those in our ranks who have the skills. The parents can also be accommodated at this camp should they wish to attend.
- We have the ability to produce an electronic 'magazine/newsletter' on a quarterly basis. This will be done via Hugh Bomford's website and distributed via e-mail.
- Tony Fraser can refurbish and mount medals and we also offer assistance to anyone in replacing any losses etc.

As you can see there are many exciting possibilities for us to retain our heritage and at the same time merging in with New Zealand society. It is definitely not constructive to try to form an element that does not recognise that we are living as New Zealanders now and indeed a number of New Zealanders fought for Rhodesia and attend our functions as well as those whose marriages are to New Zealand partners. We encourage people to join Returned Services Associations in New Zealand. We strongly encourage that you join the Hobsonville RSA in order to reciprocate the generous treatment that we receive from them. Membership of an RSA allows you to enter any RSA in the country (and possibly Australia) and have meals and drinks, which are always and low prices, and to socialise. The Hobsonville RSA will accept Rhodesians as members and it does not matter what part of the country you reside in. The cost of membership of the Hobsonville RSA is \$35 per annum. A membership application form can be obtained from Hugh Bomford.

We wish to point out in summary that awareness of the financial position of many people is acknowledged. Any input or suggestions is welcome. However we would ask that these be in a timely manner so that we can act on them.

The following people can be contacted:-

- Paul Nes, Ph 09 537 4302, e-mail paulnes@xtra.co.nz
- Hugh Bomford, PO Box 13003, Tauranga. Wk ph 07 571 8401, Hm ph 07 577 9865, e-mail hbomford@clear.net.nz
- Tony Fraser (for medal and museum matters), Ph 0274 804 812

This brings to an end this first newsletter of 2003, stay well people, hope to see some of you at Hobsonville on the 25th April.

Cheers,
Hugh.