



## Rhodesian Services Association Newsletter #2 2003

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Welcome to this second newsletter of 2003.

This newsletter is a bit behind schedule. From time to time I send out important information by email as it is the easiest way to keep in touch. I will endeavour not to double up on what I have already sent out, but if I do it is because I view it as very important.

For some time now I have been in contact with Eddy Norris of ORAFS (Old Rhodesian Airforce Sods). Eddie is very switched on and keeps an excellent system of briefs and newsletters with interesting content going out. I encourage anyone, Blue or Brown, to contact Eddie and get added to his mailing list. Email him at [orafs1@gmail.com](mailto:orafs1@gmail.com)

I have been asked by the secretary of the NZSAS Assn to pass invitation to operators who served in the Rhodesian SAS to apply to the NZSAS Assn for membership. The secretary can be reached by email at [mckeewright@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mckeewright@xtra.co.nz)

### October 2003 RV

Yes folks its on again! On Saturday 25th October starting with a welcome at 13h00 the second RV will kick off.

We have some exciting plans for this RV, one of which is an auction to raise money for the museum display. The glass alone cost around \$1,000.00 which we need to repay. We also need to improve the lighting and take care of the additional material which is being loaned for display. We need donations of goods that are suitable to be auctioned. That does not mean you have to donate large or expensive items (by the same token we will not accept unwanted pets/children or mothers in law!). Please contact Paul Nes at 09 537 4302 or email [paulnes@xtra.co.nz](mailto:paulnes@xtra.co.nz) who is co-ordinating the collection of all items for auction. It is for a good cause, so please help with preserving and protecting our history.

The format for the RV will run along similar lines to last year's very successful formula.

Dress - tidy, the wearing of medals is encouraged. Please note that this is not a memorial ceremony, the wearing of relative's medals in memorial is reserved for ANZAC Day only.

Food - snacks and a braai will be provided as part of the ticket price. All drinks are to be purchased from the Garrison Club Bar. Prices are very reasonable. Please do NOT byo.

Tickets - are to be pre purchased by contacting Hugh Bomford 07 571 8401 during work hours or by email [hbomford@clear.net.nz](mailto:hbomford@clear.net.nz) No ticket - no entry remember we are on Ministry of Defence property and there is a security requirement to adhere to. Price is \$20 for adults and \$5 for under 13 year olds.

Sunday 26th Oct we will hold an AGM to discuss the future developments for Rhodesian Veterans and nurses.

Details will be included in the information package that will be sent to you upon payment of your ticket.

Everyone is welcome to attend the RV, so please share this information with anyone you think might be interested. The AGM is going to be as there is a need to provide structure to what has been started and developed over the last year.

### **ANZAC Parade at Hobsonville 25/4/2003**

The last of the rain fell on the 'Tauranga Stick' when they arrived at 9.30am having set off at 06h00. The day cleared away and the sun shone on a very successful day that began with a march from the Hobsonville Hall to the RSA.

The record turnout of Rhodesian Veterans and family swelled our ranks to 39. Our colours were once more on display. As the majority of us were infantry, we found that the NZ Airforce marching pace a little on the slow side, combined with the fact that there was only a piper and a woefully quite drummer, keeping in step was difficult.

The wreath was laid this year by Mrs. Sue White, a Rhodesian who saw service as a nurse during W.W.II.



Our service followed the main service on the lower carpark. Rob Bates led the speeches followed by Wally Insch. After a minute silence with the salute taken we ended in prayer lead by Tim Davis.



After the ceremony photos of Lt. Gen Walls opening our museum display at the Hauraki Regiment were passed around and a collection taken which amounted to a very generous \$225 most of which will be put towards the museum display.

The 'Tauranga stick' together with one of the SAS die hards and his wife were the last to leave. As we say "Next year will be better" - here is hoping that more of you turn up for what is an important occasion (and stick around a bit longer you Aucklanders).

### **Elements of Rob Bates' speech:-**

Rob welcomed everyone and confirmed our loyalty to New Zealand and thanked Hobsonville RSA which very kindly allows us to be part of the ANZAC Parade every year. Rob went on to say that when he came to Hobsonville for the first time four years ago, the service had a profound effect on him. As he heard the call for the Rhodesian War vets to lay a wreath for our fallen soldiers, he realised our role in the war nearly thirty years ago and our freedom to honour our dead, need no longer be some hidden secret but something we should be proud of and be free to express. To him it was a great weight off his shoulders. For years living in Zimbabwe, after the war and then in South Africa Rob said that one simply kept quiet and kept ones thoughts to oneself. In Zimbabwe, Remembrance Day for First and Second World War soldiers has been frowned upon by the Government and only allowed begrudgingly and then only due to the attendance of Military Attaches of Britain, France, America and Canada. And yet all the time, in the back of his mind the memories of some very dear and good people were there, almost demanding to be spoken about and openly remembered.

Rob said that for all of us who were caught up in wars that were far bigger than any of us, many got on with it, putting aside all the politics; who was right and who was wrong, we simply gave our very best for our country.

Tragically of course many paid with their lives. Therefore why should we be ashamed of our past? Why should we keep quiet about it? Fortunately in NZ we are able to take part in ANZAC day services and remember our past and our people. We should be very humbled by that freedom. As well as honouring our own people we honour the many ANZAC soldiers who gave their lives for New Zealand, the country we are now proudly able to call our home.

Rob paid tribute all the women who served in War and to Sue White who laid the wreath on our behalf. Rob noted that this is a timely reminder to us all of the important role played by women in the wars, something that can be easily overlooked. We think of women in their various rolls, the armed forces, the nurses and also woman in the civilian role. Women were in all the branches of the forces of course. Army, Police, Air Force and more. We think of the nurses in all the Wars who, as well as their great service and dedication to duty, will obviously have taken heavily on their shoulders the sadness and tragedy, going on around them in the hospitals as many men and women were killed or suffered terrible injuries in the war years. We also remember those women in the civilian role. We think of the woman defending farm houses, often single handed. The simple task of taking the kids back to school on a Monday morning, along gravel roads not knowing what lay around the corner. This took amazing courage. And we all think of the ladies of the WVS and support organisations who kept canteens going around the country, where you could relax have a burger and a coffee, put your feet up and forget about all the things going on outside for a few minutes.

Rob also paid tribute to those who still carry the injuries and scars of War and reminded us that some of our fellow servicemen and women who thought they could carry on and live peacefully in Zimbabwe, now so many years on are again enduring terrible times. As we know some have died or been tortured or imprisoned or have had to flee the country literally overnight. Unfortunately some of them don't have the option to leave and we think particularly our fellow African soldiers. They are War Veterans in the true sense of the word.

Rob called on us to honour the fallen men and women of all races who fought for Rhodesia and who never returned home. A very special part of the Rhodesian's service at Hobsonville has always been Sergeant Wally Inch's dedication to all the African soldiers who served Rhodesia, who Rob believed would be very proud to know that after all these years, on the other side of the world, a small group of people – their fellow Rhodesians stood in the sun on a beautiful Autumn day in New Zealand and took time to reflect and remember them.

Rob then went on to read out a list of some of the people who survived the war and have since passed away.

Col Rob Southey – formerly Officer Commanding RLI – Died 11 March 2003;  
John Coleman, C/Sgt 11 Troop 3 Cdo RLI. He held the Bronze Star and Purple Heart medals  
John Connelly, Trooper 3 Cdo RLI;  
John Gentleman, Trooper RLI;  
'BAT' Maskell, C/Sgt Selous Scouts. He held the Military Forces Commendation (Operational) Medal;  
Des Sinclair, (Buffalo Bill) Sgt, Selous Scouts and 6RR;  
Terry Vice, (Bloodnut) Selous Scouts and RLI;  
Theresa Crabb, (Terry served in the Royal Air Force in World War II and was Sister in Charge BSAP Camp Hospital during the Bush War) She passed away last year in Harare at the age of 82.

Rob also paid tribute to David Turner, who at that time was terminally ill in Australia and to Wally Insch who went and visited David on our behalf. Rob read from the note that Wally had brought back from David. The main points being:-

- Dave initiated the idea of a New Zealand ex Rhodesian Servicemen's association back in 1991 and the RAA NZ was set up as a Branch of the Rhodesian Army Association overseas, which had formed in 1989
- The nucleus of membership of the New Zealand Association actually had earlier origins at Keith Kietzmann's Christmas Braais going back as far as 1978.
- Dave was unanimously elected as the first general co-ordinator and secretary/ treasurer of the RAA NZ, supported by other members.
- Over the years people like Paul Nes, Hugh Bomford, Wally Insch, Tony Fraser and Martin Trumplemen and others not named, have worked hard to make the Association what it is today.
- Dave approached the Hobsonville RSA in 1991 and, with the support of the then Secretary Tom Palmer, eligibility for membership was extended to RAA NZ members who wished to apply.
- The RAA NZ marched at Hobsonville for the first time on ANZAC Day 1992.
- The Association was intended to engender in us a spirit of belonging and unique comradeship. It is our tribe. We need to recognise that very unique bond that forms among people who have served together in war.

Rob noted that a luncheon had recently been held in Auckland with Lt General Peter Walls who was in New Zealand on a visit. A few days later Lt General Walls travelled to Tauranga and officially opened the Museum Display. Regrettably he was not able to stay on to ANZAC Day but he wished us well for today.

### **Lt. Gen. Walls visit to Tauranga**

As mentioned above the General was on a private visit to New Zealand. He travelled to Tauranga with his family and opened the museum display on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2002



***'Thumbs up' for the display***

General Walls made a moving speech in which he expressed his appreciation for all that was being done to preserve Rhodesian history here in New Zealand and to truly thank the New Zealanders, in particular the Hauraki Regiment who were allowing this to happen. Hopefully the General will return one day.

### **ANZAC Parade, Sydney 2003**

The following was reported to me from Australia by by Nick Russell C881 / 9596.

"38 Rhodesian ex-Services members in attendance (two up on last year). Unlike previous years the BSAP was represented by just myself this year. However, there were several SAS, RLI, Blue Jobs and many other assorted odds and sods in the march including two ladies who had lost their husbands recently (RhAF and Army). Great time had by all as usual, and comrades fallen remembered."

### **Rhodesian Military History**

This piece below was written by Graham Blick in Perth. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation use it live as the Rhodesians march under the cameras in Sydney on ANZAC Day.

"The military history of Rhodesia until the early sixties is a history of Rhodesia's participation in wars fought on behalf of Britain, the mother country. Rhodesians partook of these varied conflicts with competence, bravery and a marked degree of enthusiasm which, on consideration of their military inclination and origins, is perhaps not surprising. The first of these wars was the South African War 1899-1902. Rhodesia's main contribution was in sending the new BSA Police and the Southern Rhodesians Volunteers to the relief of the siege of Mafeking. This force included a new unit, the Rhodesia Regiment, raised specifically for the occasion. Rhodesians were also prominently involved in the defence of Mafeking. The first shots of the war were fired against Rhodesians.

Although this conflict saw the emergence of trench warfare, concentration camps and a variety of other refinements, a real appreciation of the nature of modern war did not penetrate the consciousness of western man until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. It was in the mud of the Somme and Flanders and on the barbed wire and machine guns of the German lines that Rhodesia's sunshine settlers, in company with the whole European race, finally lost their innocence.

Over 6000 white Rhodesians 'played the game' and went to war in Europe, East Africa and South West Africa. This represented two-thirds of all European men between the ages of 15 and 44, and a quarter of the total white population of the country.

Rhodesia served in eighty Imperial regiments ranging from the Black Watch (all twelve who joined this unit were killed) to the Tank Corps, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. This, in addition to those who joined the 1st and 2nd Rhodesia Regiments (2000) men, the BSAP, the Union of South Africa forces and the 400-man Rhodesian Platoons of the King's Royal Rifle Corps. Some 2800 men of African and mixed race, most of them in the Rhodesia Native Regiment, also went to war, 900 were killed, of whom 732 were European.

A total of 527 decorations, ranging from Britain's Victoria Cross to Russia's Order of St Viadimir and France's Croix de Guerre, were awarded to Rhodesians. Pitiful compensation, perhaps, for the unbelievable obscenity and horror of war.

An indication of how small the Rhodesian armed forces were between 1920 and 1939 is that in the latter year, the Permanent Staff Corps totalled only 47 officers and men. The BSA Police, however, have always been trained as both policemen and soldiers, a dual role which was abandoned with the outbreak of WWII but not completely relinquished until 1954. With the

upsurge of armed incursions into Rhodesia in the 1960's however, the BSAP once again became a para-military force.

Distance, for Rhodesians, has always made the heart grow patriotic. They flocked to volunteer when, on Monday 4 September 1939, the local press carried full page advertisements for recruits. According to one historian, quite a few seriously wondered whether Germany would be defeated before they could get into action. They were not to be disappointed. Conscription, that Catch 22 technique of modern industrialised man, was introduced and initially six full time units were formed. Some 6650 white and 1730 black Rhodesians served outside Rhodesia in North Africa, Sicily, Normandy and Burma. A total of nearly 11000 Europeans and mixed race personnel of whom 1500 were women, actually went into uniform, as did 15000 African troops.

Rhodesia supplied more troops per head of population to the allied war effort than any other country in the empire. One in ten of the 8500 Rhodesians of all races who served overseas were killed or died on active service.

Rhodesia's most important contribution to the ultimate success of the allies, it could be argued, was the fact she provided the nucleus, and the enemy free skies, for the huge Rhodesia Air Training Group of the Royal Air Force. During the six years of war the Southern Rhodesia Air Force itself was absorbed into the RAF initially as No. 237 (Rhodesia) Squadron (in which Prime Minister Ian Smith served) and later in the form of at least two other squadrons. Of the 2409 Rhodesians who joined the Air Force, 498 were killed. The squadrons performed splendidly.

In the variety of conflicts that preceded Britain's post-war shedding of her colonial possessions, Rhodesia's armed forces have occasionally played a limited role. These have included sending men of the Southern Rhodesia Far East Volunteer Unit to Malaya in 1951 as the Rhodesian Squadron of the Special Air Services, Malayan Scouts. The last chief of Rhodesia's Security Forces, General Peter Walls, was the commanding officer of this unit. In 1952 a detachment of 400 men of the Rhodesian Africa Rifles went to Egypt for deployment in the Canal Zone. The Regiment also later fought in the foetid jungles of Malaya against the "CT's". By 1959 the Royal Rhodesian Air Force, acquired a wider responsibility as apart of the RAF's potential in the Middle East, helping to cover such hot spots as Aden, Kuwait and Cyprus with their Vampires and Canberra bombers.

From the first clashed with the Matabele in 1893 to the early counter- insurgency moves in the 1972-80 guerilla war, Rhodesians have acquired a fighting tradition which is often their rationale and inspiration."

All the best  
Cheers  
Hugh