



Rhodesian Services Association Newsletter #2 2004

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This newsletter is a tad late, sorry, been busy and I find winter a little uninspiring.

There has been a lot happening behind the scenes with the committee that was elected last October; contributions to the museum; assistance with Vol. II of SAS Rhodesia which will go on sale in due course; many people contacting me in order to find old mates and organising for the next RV on October 23rd 2004.

Take your time and read through this newsletter.

ANZAC Parade - (Hobsonville RSA, Auckland, NZ)



This ANZAC Day parade had the largest attendance in my experience, with 40 people in the Rhodesian squad. The overall attendance at Hobsonville was the biggest I have seen. Getting to the bar afterwards was a major mission and 2 former 1 Cdo RLI troopies made a good plan and didn't move far from the bar in order to save on time and energy. Record attendances at ANZAC parades were reported all over the country.

ANZAC Day is a great time to get together. The people attending came from near and far. Several from Tauranga, but no one could match the distance the 2 above mentioned RLI troopies came. One, a New Zealander, who went to Rhodesia to join the fray in 1978, lives in Oamaru in the South Island. The other, a National Serviceman, was visiting from Zimbabwe at the time of ANZAC Day and joined the parade. There were the usual suspects as well as a couple of officers Tony Stiebles a WWII veteran and Mike Graham MLM. Several New Zealanders who had served in the French Foreign Legion also joined our ranks when they spotted Wolf Huckle's Algerian and Indo China medals.

The march from the Hobsonville Hall to the RSA was, unfortunately, done without any musical accompaniment.

The whole column was out of step except for the Rhodesian squad who had Percy Purcell calling out the time. We might be getting older and live in another country but no one is going to say we march like a shower of s..t. Our drill instructors would approve!!



During the main service Bryony Bomford laid the Rhodesian wreath (pictured above).

At the completion of the service the Rhodesians reformed and held a short service. This separate service is approved of by the Hobsonville RSA. The President made favourable comments to Paul Nes at the completion. It was also noted that an air force cadet videoed our service.

Rob Bates opened our service and the text of his speech is below:-

Good morning everyone and welcome to the ANZAC Day Service and to our own special dedication for the Rhodesians. We are proud to be here in such good numbers to remember those who served their countries and those who never returned home.

Every year we are privileged to stand here and speak freely about and remember our fallen people without fear of criticism or recrimination. It is a privilege we must never take lightly. And in doing so we honour the many ANZAC soldiers who served gave their lives for New Zealand. Without that sacrifice we may not have been in the position we find ourselves in today. We are grateful for becoming New Zealanders and our lives are the richer for having come to know our many Kiwi friends and colleagues.

We thank the Hobsonville RSA which very kindly allows the Rhodesian Services Association to join it every year and takes us under its wing. This is an incredibly kind gesture which we appreciate.

I would like to give our Special thanks to Bry Bomford who kindly laid the wreath for us today. Bry is representing three generations who fought for Rhodesia. Her father, the late Col Herbert MacIlwaine DSO MC MID, Croix de Guerre, her husband, the late Capt Peter Bomford MC MID, both served Rhodesia. Her sons Hugh and Paddy Bomford both served Rhodesia in the Bush War. In addition Bry's grandfather, Lt Jack Manners-Smith, although having no connection to Rhodesia, was awarded the VC in 1891 during the Hunza Campaign in India. This represents a very proud family military history and Bry we thank you for laying the wreath today.

This service is of course dedicated to those who died in the Wars. But we also pay tribute to everyone who served, both living and dead, men and woman, those of you standing here today and many others now scattered far and wide around the world. In all branches of the forces and other services, whatever role they played, we gratefully remember them all. We think particularly today of those who still carry the injuries and scars of War. All of us here know people in this position and the quiet uncomplaining way in which they face their difficulties.

A very special part of this service has always been Sergeant Wally Insch's dedication to all the African soldiers who served Rhodesia. This ANZAC Day, for the first time in many years, we do

not have our good friend Wally here. As many of you know he is now in Australia. He has been a pillar amongst us. We therefore remember the African soldiers who fought with us and for Wally, those who fought in the Selous Scouts with him.

I recall that we stood here a year ago, all hoping that the madness in Zimbabwe might end soon. Sadly it has not. So we continue to hope. We consider what it must be like for the people who live there, our fellow servicemen and women, of people who have been murdered, who face harassment, hardship, torture and imprisonment there. We think of our fellow African soldiers who must be particularly vulnerable and in great danger. Our thoughts go out to them in Zimbabwe.

This ANZAC Day, we are very honoured to have Mike Graham to address us. Mike was 2IC of the SAS in Rhodesia and retired from service as a Major. He was decorated with the Member of the Legion of Merit (MLM) for distinguished service to Rhodesia.

Mike Graham addressed the parade at this point and then Rob Bates continued...

In preparing for today I came upon a short piece of verse, which I thought was appropriate. It is written as if it were the voices of fallen young soldiers heard in the mind of a surviving comrade now a middle aged man:

***And when we fell, no sooner gone,
The flag draped box, the bugle's sorry call, than memories fade.
Only Remembrance Day, to jog your thoughts
And when you're gone one day then who'll remember us all?***

***But let's not moan – you've lived your life.
You've weathered well – your first grey hairs,
You're fifty now.
Your children grown, now rival us in years.***

***That's good dear friend, but don't forget,
When life is good, and all seems well, no matter where the place
You stop for a while –
You remember a name a face.***

It is a plea from them never to be forgotten. For as long as we draw breath then, we must not forget them. And we can only wonder what they would have achieved, what they may have become and the life they could have enjoyed. In the hectic day-to-day rush of life, it is so easy to forget.

Above all we should not be ashamed of our past and should not be scared to talk about it. I know a couple characters who died in the Bush War who would have a thing or two to say to me if there was the slightest suggestion I was ashamed of what happened.

Again then, we are proud to stand, in this far corner of the world, far away from the battlegrounds of Africa, Europe and Asia, so many years after our people died, to reflect and remember them.

Sadly too, some of the people who survived the war, have passed away in recent times, a number of them since we stood here last. Today we remember them also. I will read out a list that I have of people we know of who have passed away in the last year. Please remember that at the end of the service and you may also wish to take the opportunity to mention the names of any others who have passed on recently. The names I have are:- Dumpy Le Roux - ex SAS. He died recently at Mazviekidai near Banket, he had been suffering from cancer.

Phil Lang - Sergeant Intake 152– you will recall that Phil died recently at the hands of cowards and murderers in the Honde Valley as part of the current reign of terror.

Lt TJ Green E Coy 1RR David Turner. Last year we paid tribute to our good friend David Turner who at that time was gravely ill in Australia with cancer. Dave died not long after ANZAC Day. Clare came over to NZ in July and some of us attended a Memorial Service for Dave at the Navy Chapel in Devonport, after which his ashes were scattered on the Hauraki Gulf. Dave was a good friend and has done so much for us in the past. Today we remember him.

I would now ask that we stand in silence and remember those who died in all of the Wars and conflicts also in peace times as well as those who have passed on since then. We take a moment to remember names and faces from the past, those very close to us, relatives, dear friends, those we knew and those we did not come to know.

During the silence Paul Nes saluted the Rhodesian flag.

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

Tim Davis then lead us in a prayer of remembrance.

Rob concluded with...

"In true comradeship, mutual help and sound memory."

The Red Baron's Last Victory - From 'Under The Guns of The Red Baron' Page 202 and 203

20th April 1918 Victory No. 80 Von Richtofen's Combat Report:-

Three minutes after I had brought down the first machine, (this being Raymond-Barker Victory No 79, Ed) I attacked a second Camel (David Lewis, Ed) of the same enemy squadron. The adversary dived, caught his machine and repeated this manoeuvre several times. I approached him as near as possible when fighting and fired 50 bullets until the machine began to burn. The body of the machine was burned in the air, the remnants dashed to the ground, north-east of Villers-Bretonneux. (signed)Baron von Richtofen.

Victory No 80 survived. He was Rhodesian born David Lewis who recorded that he was hit and went down. He'd seen the red Triplane come round behind his tail and Richtofen's bullets set his seven gallon gravity tank afire. Lewis, however, was more fortunate than his CO (Raymond-Barker) had been, and somehow survived the impact with the ground. He came down only some 50 yards from Raymond-Barker's (Richtofen's victory No. 79) machine the wreckage of which was burning furiously.

As he stood between the two burning machines, Lewis saw a Triplane fly by at low level, the pilot waving. Presumably this was Richtofen and he must have assumed the man, Lewis, to be a German soldier, for it seems certain he believed his two victories had resulted in two men dead. He undoubtedly wanted someone on the ground to recognise his red machine in order to gain confirmation of his two kills.

Von Richtofen gained his 80th victory and his second of the day, flying Fokker Dr 1 No.425/17. This machine is understood to have had red sides and top deck fuselage, red upper surfaces on all wings, struts, wheel covers and tail, but white rudder. The former Patee crosses had been over painted with the new broad style Balken crosses. Wing and fuselage under surfaces were turquoise. Its engine was 110 hp. Oberuresel type serial Nr.

2478. This Dr1's Werke Nr. Was 2009, built in Frankfurt and first tested on 8th January 1918. It was the same Dr1 that von Richtofen flew out to do battle with 209 Squadron the next day - and failed to return.

David Greswolde Lewis, Second Lieutenant, 3 Squadron.

David Lewis went to England from his home in Bulawayo, Rhodesia as soon as he was old enough to offer his services in the Royal Flying Corps. Born on 15th October 1898, he had spent most of his life in Africa but took up residence at 'Melvin Hall', Golders Green, London whilst awaiting his acceptance into Inns Court OTC which finally arrived on the 16th February 1917. Two months later, on 16th April, he was posted to the RFC Cadet School before being finally commissioned on 16th June 1917. Following training with 198 TD (June to September) he was sent to 78 Home Defence Squadron (September to 27th March 1918).

Lewis was friendly with Captain Douglas Bell MC, and, finding that Bell was about to be sent as a Flight Commander to 3 Squadron in France, managed, on 29th March 1918, to 'wangle' a 'joint' posting with his friend. Lewis flew in Bells flight during one of the most fraught periods for the BEF of the whole of the war. Three weeks of intensive patrolling followed his arrival in France until on the 20th April, he met the Red Baron. Thankfully, he lived to 'tell the tale' and enjoy, in later life, some small fame as von Richtofen's last 'victory'.

His subsequent incarceration at Graudenz lasted until 1st December 1918 when, at last, he was repatriated.

After the war, Lewis returned to live on the family ranch at Gwanda, Southern Rhodesia. In the mid-thirties, Lewis was Assistant Native Commissioner of the Native Affairs Department at Balanago, Southern Rhodesia. In 1938, he was invited to Germany to attend the dedication of the new Richtofen Geschwader. By the time he retired in 1958, at the age of sixty, he had become an Under-Secretary (Administration) in the Government of Rhodesia.

Lewis was to enjoy yet another miraculous escape in his lifetime. During the Rhodesian War of Independence, his car was ambushed by terrorists, the vehicle being raked from end to end by machinegun fire. Lewis walked away from the wreck, unhurt. He died in Salisbury on 10th August 1978, more than sixty years after his encounter with the Red Baron.



This painting above, by Digby Sinclair depicts the dogfight between von Richtofen and David Lewis who was flying Sopwith Camel No. B7393 3 Squadron RAF Engine No. 101026 WD10398 Guns A6576 & B168 at 1843 hrs, north-east of Villers-Bretonneux.

The painting is on loan to the Rhodesian Military Display at the Hauraki Museum Hall in Tauranga. New Zealand.

Committee Report

The geographic distribution of the committee make it difficult for regular meetings. Matters are 'discussed' via e-mail. A meeting was held the day before ANZAC Day at the Huckle's residence.

Much debate and submissions over a period of time leading up to the meeting resulted in the name of our association being decided as well as a logo. We will be known as the Rhodesian Services Association and the Lion & Tusk is to be our logo. The Lion & Tusk was chosen as it is a symbol that has been a part of Rhodesia from the days of the pioneers. It is a symbol that is immediately recognisable to other Rhodesians.

The Association will soon have t-shirts for sale. They will be black with the Lion & Tusk embroidered on.

Museum Matters

The 3 paintings by Digby Sinclair consisting of Lancaster bombers of 44 Rhodesia Sqn, von Richtofen and Lewis and one of the artist himself in a Harvard over Victoria Falls have been framed and it is intended that they be unveiled at the RV in October.

The Hauraki Museum on the corner of 11th Avenue and Devonport Road is open to the public every Friday from 16:30 hrs.

October RV

This will be held on 23rd October 2004 at the Hauraki Battalion Hall, Tauranga. Ticket price will be the same as last year - \$20 for adults and \$5 for kids under 13. Tickets will go on sale in September. You will be sent an e-mail in due course or you can contact Hugh Bomford for details.

There will be an auction in order to raise funds for our museum display. We have some items already donated. If you have any items that you would like to donate please contact Paul Nes e-mail paulnes@xtra.co.nz or phone 09 537 4302. Paul will be accepting postal/telephone/e-mail bidding. All items will be listed prior to the auction for the absentee bidders as well as being on display at the RV.

Last year the auction raised nearly \$1300.

See you there!

Rhodesian Services Association AGM

This will be held on 24th October 2004 in Tauranga, same venue as last year (Keith Kietzmann's residence).

Movie Evenings

We are able to announce that this long awaited plan has come to fruition. The 3rd Friday of every month at 7pm will see a movie played in the Hauraki Museum Hall, Tauranga. There will be a big screen in use. The first movie 'Guns of Naverone' will be shown on 20th August.

Entry is by gold coin donation which goes towards the Hauraki Museum. The Garrison bar will be open with drinks for all tastes and nibbles. There will be an intermission in keeping with the 'old style' movie house and to ensure that no one dehydrates or starves.

Future shows will feature videos and DVDs on Rhodesia, Burma, Vietnam, D Day landings and any other material that is popular. Your input is most welcome.

Obviously this is a 'Tauranga thing' and I ask the locals to please support it. Bring your kids, let your wife have a night off and come on down to the Garrison. Of course anyone travelling to Tauranga would be advised to try and coincide their visit with a showing.

Do you know someone who does not get this newsletter and would like it - let me know.

Take care and hope to see you at the RV. Cheers.

Hugh Bomford
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