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THE MATABELE
Outpost

The Newsletter
of the B. S. A. Police
Regimental Association

MATABELELAND BRANCH

NOVEMBER 2010

No.3

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Editorial

“London swings like a pendulum do...Bobbies on bicycles two by two, Westminster Abbey, the Tower of Big Ben...the rosey red cheeks of the little children”

So go the lyrics to a popular song of the seventies. Well we were there and I am here to tell you that Westminster Abbey and the Tower of Big Ben are still there, but as for the Bobbies on bicycles (two by two or otherwise) and children with rosey red cheeks... We saw nary a one. Perhaps because the former are so swamped with paper work and political correctness and the latter are all wearing hoodies??

In any event, London certainly still swings and Denise & I had the most wonderful holiday, travelling from the depths of Devon (where we shared a pint or two with that old Devonian smuggler, Dick Hall, through Maidenhead where we cruised the Thames with Ken Gault. On to London where Dave Adams, Spackers, Sara and Carol (nee Warren) Mackenzie and Dave Grimbley were met...and up to Staffordshire where memorials were unveiled and old comrades greeted.

That unbelievable sun drenched isle, basking in almost tropical conditions was like a very different place to the one

I remembered 23 years previously. Denise, never having been to Blighty's shores before could not be convinced that it was not always like this. You could almost live here. If it just stayed like that, I suppose?? But what would we talk about without load shedding and pot holes?

It was a fantastic HOLIDAY and despite all of the lovely people we met up with, it was still a mighty relief to get back to Bulawayo. Of course, we had no sooner got the kettle on than power went off - thank you ZESA! It just wouldn't have felt like home otherwise.

Unfortunately much of this edition of the Outpost revolves around our UK trip. I hope you will forgive my self indulgence but, much of the trip was linked with the Regiment and old comrades.

As usual

A luta continua.

Ed





Transfers, Transits and Departures

We would like to wish both Ken Berry and Dick Hall all the best in their "transfers" to England. Dick has settled in Devon and Ken and his wife have (to quote himself) "landed with their bum's in the butter" and are living in Croyden. E-mail addresses: K. Berry c/o pattybee36@hotmail.co.uk, D. Hall c/o sheilachisnall@googlemail.com

Ken MacDonald, on returning from his holidays to Australia and Mauritius, bumped into 7230 Dave Pell at Bulawayo Airport (or hangar as the new International Terminal is STILL under construction).

Dave is living in Beitbridge but was en-route to England to visit family. We wish him the best for his trip.

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On a sadder note, although we have had an Obituary free eight months or so - touch wood - we pass our condolences on the passing of Dave Callow. Although a Natal member, Dave was a frequent visitor to Bulawayo, together with Barry Woan and we shall miss him and our get togethers at Ken MacDonalds pub.

Green & White Luncheon

Sunday 29th June 2010

On a lovely sunny, winters day, the usual suspects gathered at Karl & Denise Hurry's pub, The Green & White. It has become something of a tradition over the past few years, to get together in June and enjoy the company of our old comrades and to celebrate yet another 90 something birthday with Beryl Castle-Ward. This being her 93rd. As usual Beryl was in fine health and thoroughly enjoyed the day.

The food was provided by Karl & Denise - a whole rump of beef together with vegetables and roast potatoes. And just as usually, Hugh Squair provided the culinary expertise in the preparation of the meal for us.





Amongst the 41 members and guests who enjoyed the day, were Tom Ritchie 83 years young and still shooting his age on the golf course! (A former Field Reservist & PATU man) whose stepson, 8525 Timothy Hewit was killed when his Support Unit Troop was ambushed and Posthumously awarded the Police Decoration for Gallantry.



Alison McNab, Ian Paterson, Robin Montgomery & Tuppence Paterson



Gary Green, Anne Tourle, Hugh Squair, Karl Hurry, Denise Hurry, Rod Tourle & Tom Ritchie



Peter Rollason, Craig Friend, Hugh Squair (carving), Tom Ritchie, Alison McNab & Denise Hurry???

No attendance list was completed but from memory, also present were Hugh & Robin Montgomery and the SA Montgomery Clan, Paul Kruger and Alison McNab, Ian & Tuppence Paterson, Peter Rollason, Dave & Sal Anderson, John & Margaret Learmonth, Rod & Anne Tourle, Robby Robertson, Ken & Glenys MacDonald, Tony Turner, Hugh Squair, Craig Friend, Ron & Liz Hansen and Gary & Heather Green.



Rod Tourle, Tom Ritchie & Ken MacDonald





Regimental Dinner

Like many other Branches and Associations, our Regimental Dinners have become Regimental luncheons. As we grow older and more infirm, travelling at night is no longer an option for many.

However, a number of the more energetic and sprightly members suggested a return to the formal dinner and, as sufficient interest was generated, it was decided to go ahead. And so after much preparation and hard work by our committee, seventeen members and guests assembled at a local Bulawayo restaurant on Friday 11th June 2010.

The newly opened '26 on Park' in Bulawayo's Suburbs was set aside for our exclusive use and a special four course gourmet menu was prepared for us by the owner and chef, Greg Friend.



Reverend Francis Day with Bill Elway



Ken MacDonald, Bill Elway & Tony Turner

Amongst the delicacies served for us, were:

Starters - Fresh breads, cauliflower and vanilla puree with pickled pear relish.

Entree - Poached hake with peas, bacon, mussels and braised lettuce.

Main - Rare roast beef fillet, sweet onion puree, root vegetable, pommes dauphine & white wine jus.

Dessert - Chocolate royaltine, caramel ice cream, cardamon foam, cashew nut brittle and tuilles.

Waiter service was provided by mine host himself, Craig Friend and the lovely Robin!

Port and a selection of fine cheeses provided an exquisite end to the culinary proceedings.





A selection of both white and red wines was provided at cost by Hugh Montgomery of Monk's trading.

We were delighted and honoured to welcome, Bill Ellway who travelled down from Harare to be with us and to raise a toast to the Regiment.

Bill gave a most interesting talk on the history of the Regimental Association. Our Chairman and ironically, Junior Troop, Tony Turner responded.

Afterwards a copy of the Blue & Gold (kindly donated by Chris Cocks of 30 degrees South and the good offices of the Transvaal Branch) was raffled. It was won by Mike Aristotelous and a total of US\$ 321 was raised for the Matabeleland coffers. In due course we

will disburse this amongst the deserved and needy.

I feel it is safe to say that everyone who attended thoroughly enjoyed themselves and it was unanimously agreed that the dinner should become a regular event on our calendar.



Gordon Geddes (partially obscured), Gus Oosthuizen, Taffy Jones, Hugh Squair, Tony Turner, Tim Cherry & Bill Ellway



*Seated: Karl Hurry, Bill Ellway, Ken MacDonald, Francis Day, Peter Rollason
Standing: John Glossop, Taffy Jones, Gus Oosthuizen, Tim Cherry, Gordon Geddes
Tony Turner, Rod Tourle, Hugh Squair, Dave Johnston-Butcher, John Minshul,
Gordon Kent (Barry Knight is taking the photographs)*





UK Sundowner

At a little after 17.00 hours (sharp!) On Tuesday 6th July 2010, Denise and I entered the cocktail bar of the Victory services Club, London W2. It was not as though distance was an excuse for, as members of the Club we were comfortably settled in our room in the new Memorial Wing and had merely to descend three floors in the elevator.

Fashionably late then, we were delighted to find many of our old friends already present and with refreshments to hand.

Former Matabeleland Chairman, Ian and Sarah Spackman were there, having travelled up from Camberley. Also taking time to travel to London were Graham and Carol MacKenzie, Dave Adams as well as old colleagues from my days at Fort Victoria, Mike and Gail Rowley.

We were welcomed by the UK Chairman, 6905 Peter Phillips, who introduced us to members of his committee and a throng of other ex-members who were present enjoying the convivial atmosphere. Amongst them was Derek Humberstone, a founder member of PATU and a former colleague at Guard-Alert.



Sarah Spackman, Denise Hurry, Dave Adams, Ian Spackman (unidentified) Carol MacKenzie

A very fine evening was had by all, with the "hard-core" seen at the bar below. To be fair, many had long distances to travel and most had to be at work the next day. Not so for Denise and I, who had merely to ascend the lift and tumble into bed. Nothing more strenuous planned for the next day than a late and leisurely breakfast followed by the British Museum, National Gallery and a handy pub for lunch!



*Derek Humberstone, Karl Hurry, Ian Spackman
Denise Hurry & Sarah Spackman*





The Last Parade

Early, well at least 09.00 hours, on a sunny summer Sunday morning (how's that for alliteration?) Denise and I set off on our journey from the North East coast of Yorkshire.

Departing the small seaside town of Withernsea, we commenced our three hour drive into the heart of the English midlands. It was Sunday 25th July 2010, a very special day in the annals of a proud, but now disbanded Police Force.

Alrewas is not a name that springs immediately to mind, but it will from now on be forever and indelibly part of the history of the BSA Police. For it is here, just outside a small village in Staffordshire, that the National Memorial Arboretum is located.

Our journey was fairly circuitous and far from straightforward, taking as it did far more A roads than M roads. However, despite this being our first - solo - trip "unaccompanied" (as it were) by the ubiquitous sat-nav we found our destination (almost) without any hitches. The one notable exception being my sortie up (and down) the A38, but of that embarrassing interlude, we need say no more (Denise's fault, 'nuff said!).

Despite my lovely wife's shortcomings in the map reading/navigation department, we arrived at our destination in good time, to find roadside parking and to change into our "Number Ones".

Although the day was, by now, slightly overcast, it was brightened significantly by the sight of the BSAP flag fluttering proudly next to the Union Jack.



Entrance to the Arboretum, Sunday 25th July 2010

As we entered the Arboretum we quickly identified many kindred spirits and old comrades, proudly wearing their BSAP blazers, ties and medals.

On arrival at the dedicated BSAP Marquee we joined the lengthy queue to sign the register and enjoyed a buffet lunch. Approximately 300 ex members and guests had turned up, much to the consternation of the catering staff! However, as far as I could see, no-one went short.





Amongst those old faces, well met, were Derek Humberstone, Glen Seymour-Hall, Steve Acornley, Tony Marillier, Brian Pym, Dave Linas & Hugh Phillips. We were also delighted to meet and put faces to names, Will Cornell from the United States, Peter Phillips, the Chairman of the UK branch as well as the UK Secretary, Barry Henson.

It was Barry who introduced Denise and I to the guest of honour, General The Lord Walker of Aldringham, GCB CMG CBE DL. A most approachable and charming gentleman, who introduced himself as Mike and spoke fondly of his time



Karl Hurry and Derek Humberstone

In Rhodesia and, in particular Bulawayo. Well, what else would you expect from an Old Miltonian. I doubt if many ex-Rhodesian school boys have gone on to become Britain's Chief of Defence!



4777 Richard "Tuckie" MacIntosh.
Karl Hurry and Steve Acornley

Formed up, in ranks of three (with many a blank-file) we were brought to Attention! And to the strains of the Regimental March - Kum a Kay; marched up to the site of the BSAP Memorial.

This was a replica of the Blatherwick memorial, adorned on all four sides with magnificent panels; designed and sculpted by 5872 Winston Hart.

The memorial was unveiled by General The Lord Walker and was Dedicated (together with the Roll of Honour) by Reverend Terry Mesley-Spong (4600). A Final Address was given by the last Commissioner of the BSA Police, P K Allum 3939 and the ceremony concluded with a reading of Dave Blacker's poem "The Regiment" by Barry Henson 5662.





At this point, the parade was dismissed and broke away to mingle with old colleagues and to examine the Memorial from closer to hand.



Karl, Dave and Lyn Linas

Regrettably, there was no opportunity to share a cold refreshment with those present - Britain's drink driving laws being what they are. In any case, many if not most of those attending were to return by the coaches on whence they had come, to the Whitwell Arms.



Denise, proudly wearing her mother's medals at the Memorial

Unfortunately for Denise and I, we had not been able to make it to the braai, distance and family commitments prevailing. We also had another 90 miles to travel, that afternoon to Warrington, where we were to spend the night with another ex-Bulawayan; Bob and Barbera Blair. Bob was a former New Zealand Test cricketer who came to Zimbabwe to coach the Matabeleland cricket team and later the National team. So, with regret, we bid farewell to those old comrades and those newly met and set off on our journey North.

A Step Back In Time

Some Matabeleland History

Herbert Henderson - A Man With Two Graves and Two Victoria Crosses??

Three Victoria Crosses were awarded to Rhodesians during the Matabele/Mashona Rebellions of 1896/7. One to Captain Randolph Cosby Nesbitt (for the valiant leadership of the Mazoe Patrol - 19th June 1896) and one to trooper Frank William Baxter of the Bulawayo Field Force (posthumously for his heroics on the Umguza River on the 22nd 1896)





The first, however, was won on the 30th March 1896 by Trooper Herbert Stephen Henderson. A tale of gallantry, two graves and two medals!!

Herbert was born at Hillhead in Glasgow, Scotland on the 30th March 1870; the fourth son of William Henderson who was employed at the Bishop Street Engineering Works.

After his early education at Kelvinside Academy, Hillhead, Glasgow; Herbert served his apprenticeship with J & J Thomson Engineers in the same city. He then moved to Belfast where he was employed by the famous ship builders, Harland & Wolff.

In 1892 Herbert left for the Rand in South Africa where he was connected professionally with several gold mines. Two years later, in 1894 he moved to Rhodesia where he became the engineer on the Queens Mine, North of Bulawayo.

On the outbreak of the Rebellion in March 1896 Herbert volunteered for the Bulawayo Field Force as a Scout. Indeed he soon volunteered to ride from Queens Mine to Bulawayo to obtain relief for his stranded colleagues.

He had for his protection, only a revolver and one round of ammunition all that was available.

It is not clear if it was, in fact, Henderson, who brought the news; but on Saturday the 27th March 1896 a report was received in Bulawayo to the effect that seven white men were surrounded by the Matabele at Inyati (approx 15 miles NE of Queens Mine and some 50 miles north of Bulawayo).

A small party of eleven mounted men under Captain Pittendrigh (Afrikander Corps) rode out just before mid-night to rescue the trapped men. First stopping at Jenkin's store and then riding on to relieve Mr Graham the Native Commissioner at Inyati.

Finding all was quiet at Jenkins store the party, now raised to nineteen pushed on to Inyati. They were riding through the Elibani Hills when they were attacked by a strong detachment of Matabele, armed with assegais and rifles. Two men were wounded but the patrol managed to throw off the attackers and made for Campbell's store across the Bembezi river.





Once there they found that Mr Graham, Sub-Inspector Hanley and four miners had been massacred after holding out against overwhelming odds.

The area was swarming with warriors, mainly from the crack Ingubo Regiment. Pittendrigh decided to fortify the store; confident that they could hold out as they had about two thousand rounds of ammunition. Two troopers, Mostert & Fincham were sent back to Bulawayo by another route, to call for reinforcements.

That night, Sunday the 28th March 1896 a second, stronger force under Captain MacFarlane, left Bulawayo to relieve Pittendrigh's force.

This consisted of thirty horsemen (15 from the Afrikaner Corps under Commandant Van Rensburg and Capt Van Niekerk; the remainder from the Rhodesian Horse Volunteers).

Riding through the night with only a brief halt at Queen's Reef Mine, they pushed on to Campbell's Store.

Heading the patrol as scouts, at a distance of some 300 metres, were Troopers Henderson and Celliers.

In the early hours of the morning of the 29th the patrol was attacked in dense bush some 5 miles from the Store. The Matabele opened fire from close range and although the darkness and thick bush favoured the attackers, the accurate return fire from the patrol enabled them to fight their way through the ambush. A running fight, which lasted half an hour.

Finally, emerging from the bush at dawn the patrol rode across the open veld and dashed up the river bank to the store. To the relieved cheers of the besieged men.

It was only then that it was realised that Celliers and Henderson were missing.

The two scouts had been well ahead of the main body when the Matabele sprang their ambush. Celliers was shot through the knee and his horse hit in five places.





Subjected to heavy fire and effectively cut off from the main party, the two men swung their horses off the track and headed into the dense bush. After a wild gallop lasting a few minutes, they reined in their horses. Sporadic firing could be heard above the shouting of the Matabele.

Cellier's horse finally collapsed from it's wounds. Henderson dismounted, lifted the injured Celliers onto his own mount and, taking the reins, led it away from the sounds of battle. Celliers, in great pain and suffering from loss of blood appealed to Henderson to leave him. It would be suicidal, he reasoned, to try and walk back to Bulawayo.

Rather that one should die than both. Henderson refused to listen. Ahead lay 35 miles of rough country, thick with bands of fierce Matabele.

As dawn was breaking, Henderson led the tired horse carrying Celliers into thick bush, where he treated the injured man's wounds as best he could. They had no food with them but managed to catch some sleep although they were unpleasantly close to some Matabele encampments.

For two days and nights Henderson trudged through the bush leading the horse carrying his injured companion. Both were suffering from hunger and Celliers was in intense agony. On Tuesday 30th march (Henderson's 26th birthday!) They hid in the hills. Never, he said later, did he want to spend another birthday like that again. That night Henderson had to exercise extreme caution as he weaved his way through the Matabele Impis which encircled Bulawayo.

On Wednesday morning, a bone weary Henderson walked into Bulawayo with his faithful horse and injured companion.

Celliers had his leg amputated and he died in hospital on 16th May 1896.

At a general parade called by Earl grey on 3rd June 1896 he referred, in his address, to Henderson's gallant conduct and brave feat.

Captain MacFarlane, the leader of the patrol, wrote a letter to the Administrator recommending Henderson for the award of the Victoria Cross.





The award was gazetted on 7th May 1897, the citation was drawn from MacFarlane's letter. Henderson was decorated by Lord Milner on the occasion of the opening of the Bulawayo Railway on 4th November 1897 (the fourth anniversary of the occupation of Bulawayo).

Henderson remained in the gold mining industry for some years and at one stage was the timber contractor for the Globe & Phoenix Mine.

During the Great War, Henderson was not permitted to leave Rhodesia on active service as gold mining was considered an essential service. In 1924 (aged 54 he married Helen Joan Davidson. They had two sons, Alan Accra in 1926 and Ian Montrose in 1927

He eventually struck it rich himself with the Prince Olaf Mine in Cleveland (Colleen Bawn).

During the 2nd World War Henderson had all of the profits of his mine given to the War fund! A matter of one million pounds I believe!

Henderson died of a duodenal ulcer on 10th August 1942 and is buried in the Bulawayo Cemetery.

His grave number is 887 and (according to "informed sources") is otherwise unmarked apart from the number!

In respect for his gallantry an anonymous benefactor has recently had a headstone commissioned and placed on grave 887 Gen Sec 2.



Henderson's Grave - the plot number 887 in the foreground.



The clearly marked "headstone" at grave 887.

However Henderson's grave is actually sited in Sec. Gen 2 extension - also (rather confusingly) plot 887 where he is buried next to his wife.

This grave is clearly marked "Herbert Stephen Henderson V.C. Glasgow 30.3.1870 Bulawayo 12.8.1942". As for Henderson's V.C...





A Victoria Cross is on display currently - and has been since at least 1965 at the Bulawayo Natural History Museum. It is clearly identified as Henderson's Victoria Cross.

However, the National Army museum, in London, claims that Henderson's family donated the medal to them and that it was escorted personally by Henderson's grand-daughter on 21st May 2007.

If so, then whose medal is on display in Bulawayo?? Is one of them a replica? And if so which one? Also there is the question of Henderson's missing BSA Company medal for the '96 Rebellion (which alone would be worth a pretty penny, but as part of a medal group which includes the V.C.?? Many thousands of pounds).

Still under investigation...



The New Grave, erected by a Bulawayo resident, Clive Midlane. Note the plot number, 887 in the foreground.

Old Comrades -

Matabeleland Branch

3893 John Brampton Robertson

"Robbie" as he is universally known, was born on the 22nd August 1918 at Koffiefontain, in the Orange Free State, South Africa.

Tragically six weeks after his birth, his father died.

After completing his education at St. John's College, Johannesburg,

Robbie was employed at a dynamite factory for two years before he set forth to join the BSA Police on the 28th May, 1940.

On his arrival, with the rest of his Squad, he was confronted by the somewhat intimidating figure of the legendary Regimental Sergeant Major "Tiny" Tantom. After being asked his name, the second question was "what sport do you play". He answered, Rugby and was instructed to report for training the following Tuesday. During his ensuing twenty years in the Police, Robbie went on to represent the Force at Rugby, Cricket, Hockey and Tennis. An undoubted, talented sportsman.





1953

His career was split between the Farrier and District Branches. His love of horse riding had been founded during his youth in South Africa and one of his first tasks in the BSA Police was to train re-mounts.

Later he served for two years at Nyamandhlovu in Matabeleland before being recalled to Salisbury - the reason? A shortage of rugby players!

Among his other achievements was the winning of a number of trophies for horse jumping, culminating in his victory in the Open Jumping Championship some 60 years ago.

The highlight of Robbie's career was being selected for the BSA Police Coronation Contingent in 1953. He spent six weeks in England representing Rhodesia, not only in the Coronation Procession, but also in the Royal Tournament.



2010

One of his proudest possessions is the pennant from the lance he carried on escort duties for the Royal family during their visit to Rhodesia in 1949. It is signed by the, then, Princess Elizabeth and is the only one in existence.

He retired in May 1960 and thereafter, over the years, held various positions; including a fifteen year stint with the Rhodesia Railways Security Section.

In 2001 Robbie lost Norah, his wife of fifty seven years and now lives alone at his home in Bradfield, Bulawayo. During their time together, he and Norah suffered a devastating personal tragedy when their only son was killed. A captain in the Rhodesian Light Infantry, he died in a helicopter crash together with General Shaw on the 23rd December 1975.





Some two years ago, Robbie became very ill and his doctor gave him one week to live. This was obviously not the most accurate prognosis in history!

Today, despite being confined to a wheelchair and living alone, Robbie maintains a positive and cheerful outlook on life. He remains an active member of the regimental Association and attends virtually all of their functions.



*BSA Police Coronation Contingent - 1953
Robbie is in the Centre Rank, third from the left*

Nostalgia Time

From the collection of: 3757 Leonard Frank "Knocker" Knight.



*"Schollum"
Presumably 3693*



*3757 Const. Knight
(Depot 1938)*





OBITUARIES

-20230-

Field Reservist Mike Dycer Gawler

Mike passed away on 16th September 2009 after a battle with cancer.

Mike was the General Manager of Liebig's Ranches
in West Nicholson for a number of years



Beryl Castle-Ward

Beryl passed away in South Africa on Friday 5th November, 2010 after suffering from a short illness. She was 93 years old and still drove herself around Bulawayo, enjoyed a game of Bridge and was very involved with the Women's Institute, here in Bulawayo.

Beryl was the widow of the late 3497 William James Castle-Ward and was an active member of the Matabeleland Regimental Association.





Last Laugh

Golf And What It All Means!



GOLF can be best defined as an endless series of tragedies observed by the occasional miracle, followed by a good bottle of beer.

GOLF: You hit down to make the ball go up. You swing left and the ball goes right. The lowest score wins. And on top of that, the winner buys the drinks.

GOLF is harder than baseball. In golf, you play your foul balls.

If you find you do not mind playing golf in the rain, the snow, even during a hurricane, here's a valuable TIP: your life is in trouble.

GOLFERS who try to make everything perfect before taking the shot rarely make the perfect shot.

The term 'Mulligan' is really a contraction of the phrase 'wood it again'

A 'glimee' can be best defined as an agreement between two golfers...neither of whom can putt very well.

An interesting thing about golf is that no matter how badly you play, it is always possible to get worse.

GOLF'S a hard game to figure. One day you'll go out and slice it and shank it, hit into all the traps and miss every green. The next day you go out and for no reason at all you really stink.

If your best shots are the practice swing and the 'glimee putt', you might wish to reconsider this game.

GOLF is the only sport where the most feared opponent is you.

GOLF is like marriage: If you take yourself too seriously it won't work, and both are expensive.

The best wood in most amateur's bags is the pencil.

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Next Issue: SIKOMBO'S FIGHT

The Matabele Rebellion - August 5th 1896

"Extending the British Empire in Jupiter or somewhere else"

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