



24 December 2011

Greetings,

Each year, most of us will receive a deluge of Christmas greetings and messages from around the globe. It is a time of coming together, no matter how far apart you may be. Modern day communications and networks have allowed us to enjoy a stronger sense of belonging. Each year, yours truly has strived to send out a message to all those who have made contact during the years, be this a liaison through personal messages, or merely a visit to the regimental web site.

It never ceased to amaze me how a previous career association has brought so many people together, people too who have never actually met! This is all achieved through this sense of belonging, being part of a fine regiment of men and women. The *esprit de corp* never died. What is perhaps most awesome about this fellowship is that it seems to extend from the junior troop through to the highest ranking former officers of the force. Rank has been set aside in this family of 'old cops'. Everyone seems to accept they are each and all a part of our heritage and they all enjoy belonging.

One hundred years ago, when Major Gordon Drury was Commissioner of the BSA Police, the principal method of communication between stations will have been, I guess, the telegraph. Seventy five years ago, the radio and tele-printer would have become well established alongside telephone and, dare I say, bush telegraph, as the communications network evolved in Southern Rhodesia. Things did not change much thereafter, although radio became more sophisticated and a medium of choice. With the lowering of the Blue and Old Gold in July 1980, the technology of today's internet had not been invented, yet today it is a principal means of communication amongst us, a real bush telegraph if you like.

During the year there have been few new initiatives utilising the power of the internet to bring us all together. The web site, I hope, will continue to provide a source of information and remain as a reminder to bygone days... It is always refreshing to go back a little in time and remember things that were and remain precious to you. The site will continue to bring you news of old comrades and shall remain a centre point of contact and, hopefully, continue to draw former members together; and into the fold of the 'physical' association network.

There has been considerable activity outside the regimental branch net work, a cyber-based global companionship, if you wish. The e-mail groups, which have been operational in one form or another for 15 years now, have been nurtured along and remain reasonably well subscribed, but it has been the social media platform that has 'exploded' during the current year. One such network, Facebook, has been sprouting new BSAP related groups and membership is not just for the younger ones amongst

us. The principal BSA Police site has some 900 subscribers. A couple of former branches of the force, such as Support Unit, have utilised this media well. There is a clear yearning for this sense of belonging.

Sadly, many former members remain outside these circles, due mostly to distance, incapability or perhaps inability with modern means of communication. This is no fault of their own, it is how and where they ended up, whether they can afford to network and indeed if they know how. There is obviously some resistance to change, but we respect that, with the rapid pace of cyber-technology. One does feel tempted, however, to reach out to them and lend them a hand, bringing them into the fold. They are still one of our ilk, they too share a sense of belonging.

I mentioned 'rank' melting away in these associations we have, yet there are still some with misperceptions about the Regimental Associations being old officers' clubs, an extension of the 'cavalry club' perhaps. It is troublesome to see the number of cyber-active former police officers, who have listed themselves on the website, who have joined one or other groups or networks, yet do not subscribe to their local branch of the association. I was one of them. Your regimental branch needs you! How pleasantly surprised I was to discover my perceptions were so far from reality! If I have just one message for you this year, it will be to consider joining your local branch of the Regimental Association. This is important, since it is one way that we can enjoy feelings of comfort being amongst cherished, respected and honourable people.

It remains, therefore, for me to wish you well this period of feast and festivity. Journey well and safely if you are travelling to loved ones or friends afar, and take it easy where you can. This year my wife, Marguerite, and I are spending the festive season "home alone"... family have travelled away for the holiday and we are not up to travelling to join others this time around. I am sure many of you are in a similar predicament. As always, we shall raise our glasses to you all and I hope you will join me in toasting the Regiment too. Blessings and in the words of the comedian, Dave Allen, 'may your God go with you'. Remember those of us who are not so fortunate.

With best wishes,

Andrew Field - 8646

Honorary Life Vice President - The Regimental Association

Pro Rege Pro Lege Pro Patria

[Website of former members of the BSA Police](#)