

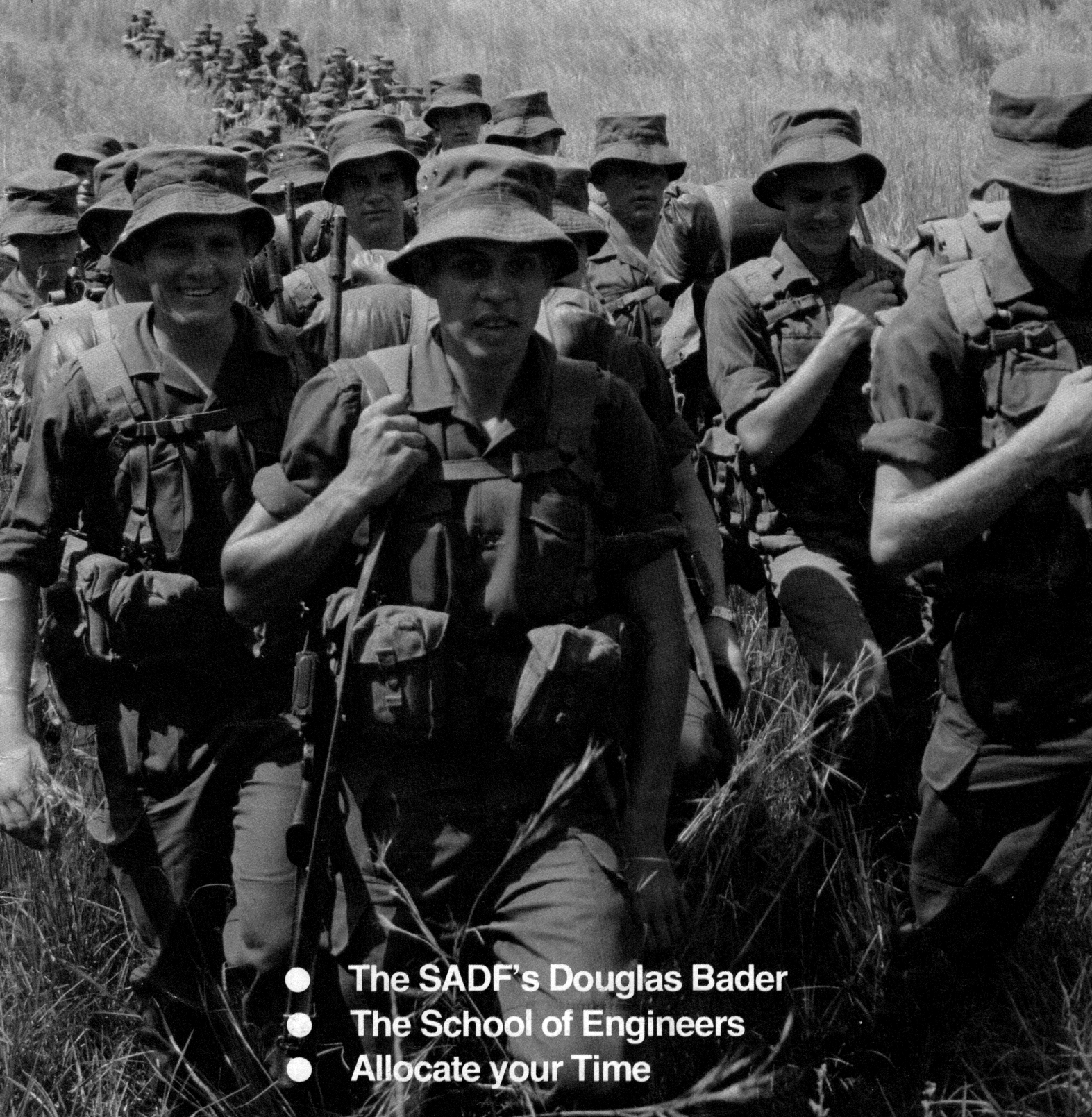
ARMED FORCES

A Monthly Journal devoted to Defence matters

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(Excl. GST.)



- The SADF's Douglas Bader
- The School of Engineers
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ARMED FORCES

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Cover Picture:
Recruits on a route march.

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EDITORIAL

The prompt action by the Minister of Defence in ordering the withdrawal of an order issued by the Navy which prohibited members of the South African Navy discussing matters with Members of Parliament is to be commended. But the original action of issuing the order in the first place underlines an existing trend of thinking concerning the functions and responsibilities of Parliament.

Let no one be under any misapprehension; it is Parliament, via a Parliamentary majority that governs the country. Recently there has been constant reference in some defence circles to the Treasury: The Treasury will not supply funds: The Treasury has cut funds: The Treasury has instructed . . . The Treasury is not omnipotent, a resolution of Parliament is. While the functions of the Treasury is the administration of the funds of the various Departments as approved by Parliament and to ensure that they are correctly allocated and spent. To do otherwise is an offence!

In all probability the offending order was something that had been lying around for years and was circulated by some one who does not understand just how a Parliamentary democracy is supposed to work.

The Minister's instruction to withdraw the order does not mean that members of the South African Defence Force who have real or imagined grievances must 'hot foot' it off to Members of Parliament. There are correct channels for them to follow, and institutions such as the Inspector General of the SADF have a great deal of wallop that can be used to set matters right.

The Minister's action clearly substantiates the rights of the members of Parliament and is in accord with the progress that the SADF has made in recent years in keeping opinion makers and members of the legislatures informed about the SADF and the current military situation. No doubt there is still room for improvement and there is even more goodwill that can be mustered for the SADF and perhaps MPs can exert themselves even more to assist the SADF. Their constituents constantly lobby their members on behalf of their sons and themselves in connection with military service and the SADF should also openly and unashamedly lobby them on behalf of the SADF.

In most democracies the Defence structures have powerful lobbies in their various legislative assemblies that assist them in creating the right atmosphere.

One of the most successful forms of psychological warfare is that of Black Propaganda, the practice of letting the big lie ride on the back of the small truth. The technique was developed by the British and the BBC and was adopted by the Portuguese using their Nampula radio transmitters during their African war. These were deliberate attempts to sow anxiety in people's minds. But a recent appeal by a well respected Service organisation has unintentionally produced the same results.

This well meaning gesture, stressing an appeal, over-emphasized a need that could create an opinion in the mind of the generally ill-informed public that men are suffering because of the lack of specialised equipment. In future care should be taken that the unwary are made aware that specialised knowledge is needed to avoid the pitfalls that exist in any situation that is open to psychological warfare.

THE EDITOR.

Rhodesian Military Terminology

A/B	- Airborne	DO	- District Officer
Abort	- Cancel a mission or take-off	DPO	- Detective Patrol Officer
Accorn	- CID or SB personnel	DRR	- Depot Rhodesia Regiment
ADF	- Automatic Direction Finder	D RR LT	- Depot Rhodesia Regiment Leader
AG	- Adjutant General		- Training Wing
Agrialert	- VHF Radio system	Drip	- Medical saline drip
A/G	- Air to ground	DSO	- Detective section officer
AHQ	- Army Head Quarters	Echo Seven	- Unit call sign
AK 47	- Avtomat Kalashnikov Assault Rifle	Echo Tango Alpha	- ETA - estimated time of arrival
AKM	- Late model AK rifle with plastic components	Eland	- Panhard armoured car with 90 mm gun
Alpha One	- Unit call sign	Fd Reg Rh A	- Field Regiment Rhodesian Artillery
ANC	- African National Council or African National Congress	Feathered	- Blades of propellor turned into wind
APA	- African Purchase Area	FIC	- Flight information centre
APAR	- Army Pay and Records	Fireforce	- Airborne troops on standby for action
BCR	- Bronze Cross of Rhodesia	Fives	- Five by five - radio reception based on a scale of 1 (min) to 5 (max) clarity and signal strength
Biscuit Factory	- Secret airbase near Gatooma	Flame Out	- Engine failure in jet aircraft
Bird	- Aircraft or girlfriend	Floppie	- Dead terrorist
Blindfold	- Security forces ambush	Foxtrot Four	- Unit call sign
Blowtorch	- Jet aircraft or jet engine	FN	- Fabrique Nationale d'Armes Guerre. 7.62 mm Nato Rifle
Bluebirds	- Women Air Force personnel	Frolizi	- James Chikerema's Nationalist Splinter Group, which operated ineffectively from Zambia
Blue Jobs	- Slang for air force servicemen	G3	- Nato 7.62 mm rifle. CETME variation of original German StG 45M
Bluebell	- Armourer	G-Gun	- MAG machine gun
Body Box	- Coffin	G-Car or Gee-Car	- Trooping Alouette helicopter
Bought it	- Person(s) killed	GF	- Guard Force
Buy it	- Likely to be killed	Go Ahead	- Say what you have to
Bravo-One	- Unit call sign	Golf	- Airburst bombs
Bright Lights	- Guards provided for outlying farm homesteads	Golf Eight	- Unit call sign
Brown Birds	- Women Army personnel	Gomos	- Hills or kopjies
Buzzing	- Aircraft diving or zooming close to ground	Gooks	- Terrorists
Casevac	- Casualty/casualty evacuation	Grapple	- Operational zone in Midlands
Cave	- CID Officer	Greaser	- Perfect two or three point landing
Charlie Seven	- Unit call sign	Greys	- Grey's Scouts
Charlie Tango	- CT - Communist Terrorist	GSU	- General Service Unit
Chibuli	- Beers	GSM	- General Service Medal
Chopper	- Helicopter	Gunge	- Rubbish or nonsense
CID	- Criminal Investigation Department	GWS	- Gunshot wound
Citadel	- Defensive position	Heavy	- Good or big
Cmd	- Commander	High Command	- Combined Operations
COIN	- Counter insurgency operations	Hold your position	- Remain where you are
Compol	- Commissioner of Police	Hotel Two	- Unit call sign
Comrade	- Greetings of terrorists	H Q	- Head Quarters
Contact Alpha One	- Call alpha one	Hyena	- Armoured personnel carried
Control	- Area control centre	Iracus	- Iracus flare
Cool	- Everything fine or normal	India Two	- Unit call sign
Copper	- Police Air Wing	Inkomo	- Inkomo Garrison, 14 kilometres northwest of Salisbury
Copied	- Message understood	Instant Light	- Light grenade
CoE	- Corps of Engineers	Intake	- -- No 107 etc/training of recruits
CoS	- Corps of Signals	JOC	- Joint Operations Command or Joint Operations Centre
Cranborne Barracks	- Headquarters of 2 Brigade	Joller	- A good chap
Creamed	- Crashed	Juliet Four	- Radio call sign
Crocodile	- An armoured personnel carrier	Jump	- Parachute
Crusader	- General call sign for army	K-Car	- Alouette helicopter rigged out as a gunship
Culling	- Killing with special reference to terrorists	Keep	- Control point of a protected village
Cyclone	- Call sign of Air Force planes	Kewrep	- Quartermaster
Cyclone 7	- Helicopter call sign (No 7 Sqd)	K G VI Barracks	- Headquarters of Salisbury District
Dad's Army	- Older men in service units	KIA	- Killed in action
Deadstick	- Aircraft landing without engine power		
Delta Three	- Unit call sign		
Demo	- Demonstration		
Discoms	- Officer in charge signals		
Dispol	- District Officer Police		
DMS	- Directorate of Military Studies		

Kilo Nine	- Radio call sign	RR	- Rhodesia Regiment (formerly RRR-Royal Rhodesia Regiment)
KOAS	- Killed on active service	R/T	- Radio Telephony
Kudu	- Armoured protected vehicle	RWS	- Rhodesian Women's Services
LEOPARD	- " " " "		
Landing Hot	- Landing speed too high	Say again	- Repeat what you have to say
LDP	- Rhodesian made 9mm machine pistol	Sapper	- Soldier in the Engineers
Lemon	- Waste of time	SB	- Special Branch
Lighthouse	- Internal Affairs Representative	Screwed up	- Messed up
Lima Mike	- L M or land mine	Scouter	- Ground coverage personnel
Lima Six	- Unit call sign	Scouts	- Abbreviation for either Selous Scouts or Grey's Scouts
Llewellyn	- Barracks near Bulawayo	SCR	- Silver Cross of Rhodesia
LMG	- Light machine gun	SF	- Security Forces
LOC	- Location	Shumba	- Lion Lager
LOC Stat	- Position	Sierra Two	- Unit Call Sign
LR	- Landrover	Sitrep	- Situation report
Mach	- Speed of sound	SKS	- Simonov 7.62 mm (intermediate) carbine
MAG	- Belgium FN General Purpose Machine Gun 7.62 mm calibre	Skyshout	- Aircraft dropping leaflets or air/ground broadcasting
Mantle	- BSAP Support Unit Troops	Smoke	- Smoke from aircraft or mortars
Mayday	- Distress signal - help wanted	Soft Target	- Civilians
Mike Three	- Unit call sign	Spaced out	- Terrorists laid out in a line for body count-or in positions as they were killed.
Mopani	- Common variety of tree	Specials	- Older members of the Police Reserve
Msasa	- Common variety of tree	S Scts	- Selous Scouts
New Sarum	- Airbase adjoining Salisbury airport	Starlight	- Medical personnel
No-Go	- Cancelled mission	Stick	- Small field unit of from four to twelve men
No Go Area	- Restricted area	SubJOC	- Subsidiary control centres of military
No Sweat	- No problem	Sunray	- Officer or other person in charge.
November Four	- Unit call sign	Sunray Minor	- The Second in command
Nutshell	- Quartermaster	Support Unit	- Supporting troops, or Police Support Unit
OSB	- Officer selection board	Sycops	- Psychological Operations
OSD	- Ordnance Supply Depot	SWAT	- Police Urban Emergency Unit
Oscar Charlie	- Officer Commanding	Tangent	- Operational Zone in the western part of the country
Oscar One	- Unit call sign	Tango Five	- Unit call sign
PAN	- Prefix to priority signal	Tango Charlie	- TCT - Tracker Combat Unit
P I	- Walther 9 mm pistol	Tango	- Operational zone along the eastern border
Papa Seven	- Unit call sign	Thrasher	- Air Force Station at Gwelo
PATU	- Police Anti-Terrorist Units	Thornhill	- RLI soldier
PCC	- Josua Nkomo's People's Caretaker Council	Troupie	- Member of the enemy
Perimeter	- Officer commanding a border area	Tourist	- Tribal trust land
Pfumo Revanhu	- Bishop Muzorewa's Auxiliary Forces	TTL	
Playtime	- Transport officer or mechanic	Uniform Seven	- Unit call sign
PO	- Patrol Officer	U/S	- Unservicable
Pronto	- Staff Officer Signals	Vedette	- Rank of private in the Guard Force
Pulled a Fade	- Didn't appear or didn't do a job	Victor Three	- Unit call sign
Puma	- Armoured personnel carried	Whiskey Seven	- Unit call sign
P V	- Protected village	Wombles	- Police Reserve Specials
Pyrotechnics	- Illuminants of some sort - flares, Very Lights, paraflares	W/V	- Wind velocity
Quebec Nine	- Unit Call sign	X-Ray Nine	- Unit call sign
QDM	- Bearing from station to aircraft	Yankee Three	- Unit call sign
QDR	- Bearing from aircraft to station	Yellowbird	- The sun
QNH	- Altimeter setting giving aerodrome elevation on aircraft touchdown.	Zanu/ZANU	- Sithole/Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union
Rampart	- Border Control Officer	Zanla	- Military Wing of Zanu - Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
RAR	- Rhodesian African Rifles	Zapu/ZAPU	- Josua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union
Ratpack	- Foodstuffs supplied for field service	Zipra	- Military Wing of Zapu
RDR	- Rhodesia Defense Regiment	Zulu	- Rifle grenade
RDU	- Rhodesia Defense Unit	Zulu Five	- Unit call sign
Repulse	- Operational Zone in Southeast		
Rhino	- Early type armoured vehicle		
Rhodaf	- Rhodesian Air Force		
RHU	- Reinforcement Holding Unit		
RL	- Bedford Truck		
RLI	- Rhodesian Light Infantry		
Romeo Two	- Unit Call sign		
RPD	- Ruchnoi Pulemet Degtyarev 7.62 mm (intermediate) machine gun		
RPG-2			
RPG-7	- Anti tank rocket launcher derived from German Panzerfaust		

The Rhodesian Air Force

A History from inception to the Bush War

By

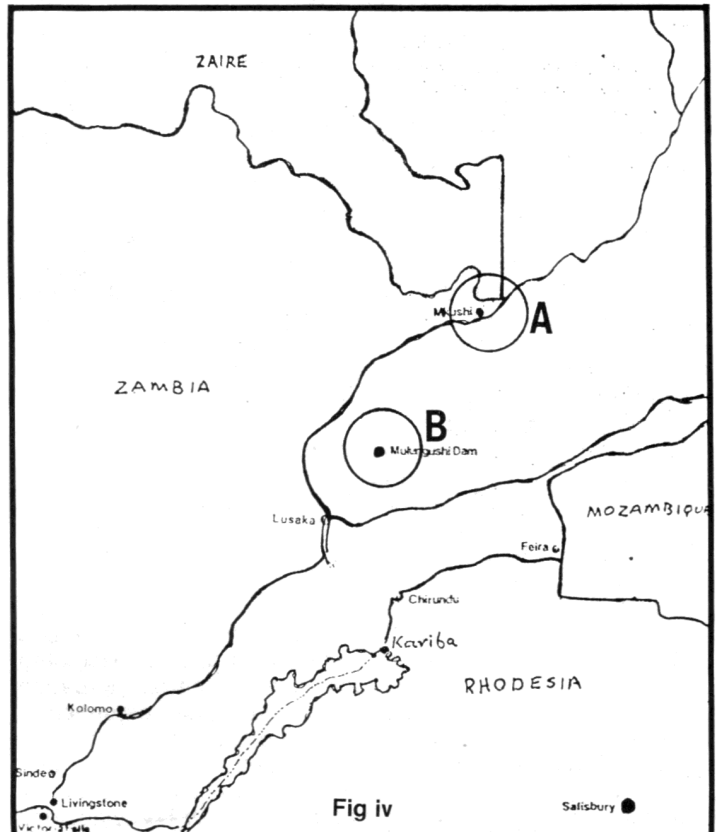
S. Monick, OLJ., MA., PhD., ALA., FSA(Scot.),
FRSA.

Part Three

Exhibiting a characteristic resourcefulness necessitated by extremely limited technical resources, the RhAF had produced a device which, when attached to a flare, enabled an aircraft to ignite the flare by radio impulse. This provided the much needed capability of accurately bombing targets at night. After much trial and error a system of using two flares had been devised, whereby the Canberras could strike their targets with pin-point accuracy. The first flare would be positioned a maximum of 800 metres from the target. The other had to be placed approximately two to four km distance from the first flare, which provided the bombers with the advantage of not alerting the enemy too early by the ignition and allowing the bombers the few but vital extra seconds needed to correct their line of approach if necessary. The navigator having been told the precise distance of the flares from the target, he would offset his bombsight accordingly. On approach to the target he would ignite both flares and, continually scanning the bombsight, would pass any course corrections to the pilot and release his bombs on the forward flare. If this had been correctly positioned and the distance from target evaluated correctly, the bombs would straddle the target. Naturally, such a system necessitated the availability of ground teams to establish flares and plot them with extreme accuracy. (The absence of such facilities could prove disastrous, as the attack on Mulungushi in April 1979 — cf. below — almost proved. Fig. iv). Capt Rob Warracker, of the Selous Scouts, requested the Photographic Interpretation Section of the RhAF to produce an enormous blown up photograph of the transit camp area. This photograph revealed an unusually large tree, some 400 metres from the camp, and this was selected as the site for the first flare; a large and very distinctive clump of trees, approximately two km further from the camp on the required compass bearing was chosen as the position for the second flare. The attack was scheduled for 04h00 on 12 January. This time was chosen as it was customary for ZANLA terrorists to prepare for the forthcoming day's activities then; or even to evacuate the camp in anticipation of aerial dawn attacks. Whatever their plans, the majority would be situated in the camp at this time. It was also arranged for Capt Richard Pomford to take in a heliborne force of 16 men just after first light to sweep the camp area for wounded terrorists and to gather up any weapons, equipment, documents, etc., which might prove useful.

The reconnaissance team of two Selous Scouts who were to lay the flares — Capt Scholleberg and Sgt Mpoto — were dropped by Dakota on 11 January. As the strike hour approached a reserve Canberra arrived in the vicinity and circled the area at a very high altitude. On board was Capt Warracker, who soon established radio communication with the two man reconnaissance team and relayed to the following Canberras that all was ready. A few minutes prior to reaching the target, the pilot leading the strike force called for illumination, and Capt Scholleberg ignited the first flare manually and gave the pilots the final inflight briefing. The pilot of the lead aircraft then ignited the second flare by radio, and the bombers swept over the target and released their bombs.

Doctor Monick has in this work produced a very well researched history of the Rhodesian Air Force. Starting with its inception in 1953 until it ceased to exist as such and became the Air Force of Zimbabwe. In the instalment that will follow, Doctor Monick covers the RhAF operations undertaken during the years until 1980. This is the first authentic report on the RhAF to be published and we are sure that it will stimulate much comment.



A Mkushi: attacked by RSF 18-21 October 1978
B Area of Mulungushi camp; attacked by Canberras of 5 Squadron 10 April 1979

There is a tragic epilogue to this raid. At first light Capt Pomford and his troops arrived over the target as planned. To their astonishment, the force was met by a dense hail of fire. At first it was thought that the bombers had missed their target. Two supporting Hawker Hunters retaliated with rockets and cannons, but the ground fire did not diminish. Maj Bert Sachse, flying overhead in a fixed-wing aircraft as forward air controller, realized that a heavily armed FRELIMO column had arrived to aid the terrorists and that the fire was emanating from them. Any ground action would, therefore, inevitably involve FRELIMO and, as Capt Pomford's force was too light to combat this situation, their mission was accordingly aborted. Meanwhile, the reserve Canberra, with Capt Warracker on board, which had already re-crossed the Rhodesian border, was requested to return and bomb the FRELIMO column. The weather was cloudy and the pilot made a slow turn, in order to orientate himself with the ground, losing altitude as he did so, but unfortunately he emerged from the clouds directly over Malvernia. Malvernia, warned by Mapai of the Madulo Pan attack, had a general alert on and within moments of its appearance the Canberra was confronted with a dense curtain of heavy flack as well as small arms fire.

The bomber suddenly banked steeply and then tipped over and dived into the ground. The crew members — Air Sub Lt D. Hawkes and Flt Lt I.H. Donaldson — together with Capt Warracker (who had been awarded the Silver Cross of Rhodesia only 29 days previously) were killed instantly. Later radio intercepts revealed that the casualties incurred by the terrorists at Madulo Pan consisted of six killed and 70 wounded. However, documents captured at a later date increased this estimate to 10 killed and 100-200 wounded. The majority of wounded, it was learned, had lost limbs. From a morale viewpoint, the sight of limbless comrades had a more debilitating effect upon the enemy than those killed.

An important raid was launched on Mulungushi camp in Zambia in April 1979. Mulungushi was an old army training centre in the period of the Central African Federation, situated on the western shores of the Mulungushi dam, approximately 100 km from Lusaka (cf. fig. iv). The camp had previously been attacked by Canberras on 22 December 1978 (coinciding with the rescue mission executed at Mboroma camp on the same day; cf. above). However, air photography on a continuing basis, together with intelligence gleaned by the Special Branch, indicated that it had not been abandoned after the attack of 22 December. Quite the reverse was the case in actual fact; insurgent activity within the camp had increased to such an extent that in April 1979 the ZIPRA strength in the camp was estimated to be in the region of 9 000 (i.e. the strength based at the camp, not necessarily present at one time). Accordingly, it was decided to subject the camp to a further attack. The Air Force insisted that the raid take place on 10 April as the moonlight would provide perfect visibility on that date. The time of the strike was also fixed in advance at 19h00; according to known ZIPRA routine the insurgents would be eating in the cookhouse at this time, and the bombs would strike before they had the opportunity of taking cover in the extensive underground bunker system in the camp. (The small number of ZIPRA casualties resulting from the raid of 22 December 1978 was due to their being able to take cover underground. A Selous Scout reconnaissance team (Capt Chris Schollemberg and Sgt Chibanda) were deployed on 9 April; if a large number of occupants was confirmed, they were to set up flares for a night bombing run. However, by nightfall on 10 April the team had only counted 10 terrorists present in the camp, so Capt Schollemberg came onto the air briefly, gave a terse 'sitrep' (situation report) and recommended that the airstrike be postponed to the following night. He then signed off, assuming that his recommendations would be followed; they were not. Schollemberg could not be contacted by radio until he signed on again the following day. Thus when the Air Force decided to mount the attack as scheduled, irrespective of the Selous Scout's recommendation (due to the moon condition), Capt Schollemberg was not aware of the need to establish a flare path. The Canberras were horrified to find that, when they approached the target, there was no illumination.

The Squadron swept over the terrorist camp, thus losing the vital element of surprise. This was a serious factor with regard to the Canberras; as a large number of newly installed anti-aircraft weapons in bunkers had been pinpointed on aerial photographs taken of the camp and surrounding area. Alpha bombs, to be effective, have to be released at approximately 300 ft, thus making the aircraft extremely vulnerable. nevertheless, it was decided to bomb. The Squadron turned a full circle and executed a perfectly synchronised turn; a difficult manoeuvre in the best of conditions by day but virtually impossible and well nigh suicidal at night with no navigation lights. Fortunately for the Selous Scouts team (who, being unaware of the impending raid, were situated close to the camp), the majority of the bombs fell off target; and, in any event, the element of surprise having been lost, there were few ZIPRA casualties. Despite the most intensive tracer fire, all the aircraft returned safely. The camp was struck again the following morning.

Although the results of the raid were most disappointing, it merits the detailed attention it has received in this paper; in

so far as it clearly testifies to the great courage of the Canberra crews (in attacking the target after the element of surprise had been clearly lost in the overrun of the camp, knowing of the extensive anti-aircraft weaponry available to the insurgents) as well as their extreme flying skill (in executing a perfectly synchronised turn at night with no lights).

The role of photographic reconnaissance: The above two raids clearly point to the vital role which aerial photographic reconnaissance played in the COIN war. There are many additional illustrations of the importance of the photographic reconnaissance function of 5 Squadron proving crucial in gathering intelligence. It proved to be of central importance, as intimated above, in Operations 'Miracle' and 'Manyatela'. Aerial photographic reconnaissance also proved to be a vital factor in locating the ZANLA base in the Monte Cassino area of the Chimoi circle, which resulted in Operation 'Miracle' (cf. above). Aerial photographic reconnaissance proved also a critical factor in Operation 'Eland', which consisted of an attack upon the Nyadzonya/Pungwe ZANLA base in Mozambique (August 1976). Increasing mention was being made by captured terrorists, in the course of interrogations, of a large ZANLA base on the Pungwe river; it appeared to be the main terrorist and logistics base for infiltration onto the 'Thrasher'

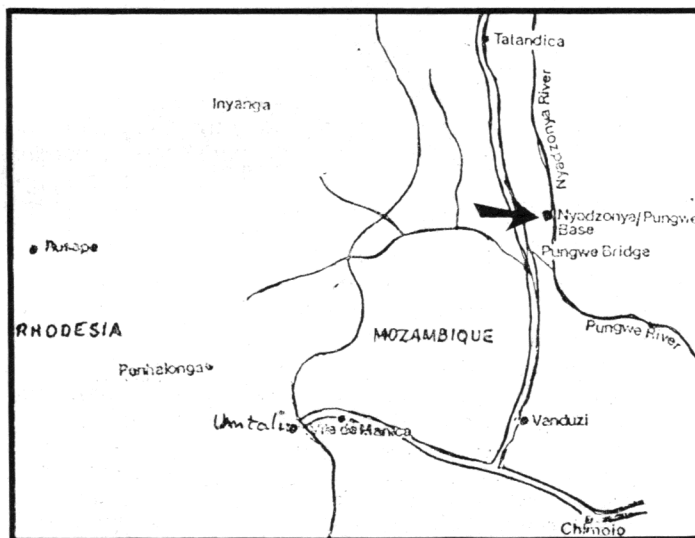


Fig v

operational area. (i.e. the greater part of the eastern border of Rhodesia). This information was relayed to the RhAF, with a request for a photographic reconnaissance to be carried out over the area of the Pungwe River, where the river bisected the main road from Chimoi to Tete. For weeks the Air Force continued their reconnaissance flights without locating it. Then one day, as Wing Cdr 'Randy' Durant was flying an unrelated photographic mission over Mozambique, which had to be aborted due to heavy cloud, he flew in the direction of the Pungwe River. Fourteen kilometres before the usual search area for the terrorist base there was a break in the cloud, providing the opportunity for the navigator to delineate details of a large complex in the bush below; certain that this was indeed the ZANLA base for which the RhAF had been searching, the area was immediately photographed. When the Canberra flew overhead a muster had been in progress on the parade ground below and a large crowd was gathered around a dais. The film was urgently processed. The photographs revealed the precise location of the camp; it was not situated on the Pungwe River but on one of its tributaries — the Nyadzonya River, some 14 km distant from the Pungwe River (cf. fig. v). Moreover, the photographic interpreter carried out a head count; it was revealed that there were some 1 800 terrorists on parade, rendering the base the largest concentration of terrorists yet observed in the war.

On Monday, 9 August 1976 a column of Selous Scouts, pretending to be FRELIMO, entered the camp and eliminated it; the casualty figures for the ZANLA insurgents were estimated to be 675 (dead) and 675 wounded; a total of 1 350.

Although no air support was involved, the initial location of the camp can be clearly attributed to the photographic reconnaissance of the Canberra. Moreover, aerial photographs of the area proved indispensable in plotting the route to the camp. Photographs revealed a meandering path of a bush track winding through the mountainous border country; commencing at a farm at Penhalonga, just north of Umtali, and progressing through very hilly terrain until it linked with the main Beira road at Vila de Manica. This was the route eventually adopted by the Selous Scouts column.

The RhAF played a further — albeit indirect — role in the success of this operation, in the form of a scrapped Vampire. The raiding column was in dire need of heavy armament. On a previous raiding column into Mapai (June 1976) the heaviest armament available had been a captured 12.7 mm heavy machine gun mounted on one of the trucks; but the remainder of the vehicles had been only sketchily defended by a single FN 7.62 medium machine gun mounted on each vehicle. The ex-British Army Ferret armoured cars were fitted with their standard armament of .30 in Browning heavy machine guns. Twin FN medium heavy machine guns (capable of a rate of fire of 1 200 rounds a minute) were mounted on each vehicle. This partially resolved the problem, but there was no weaponry to cope with the sophisticated Soviet armoured vehicles (e.g. armoured personnel carriers or perhaps even T-54 tanks, which, it was rumoured, were being imported via Beira and positioned in ever increasing numbers in Chimoi). However, the RhAF, at that time completely unaware of the raid, offered the Selous Scouts the 20 mm Hispano cannons of the Vampire, which was finally being grounded. They were converted for use on two UNIMOG and one Berliet troop carrier, and added considerably to the fire power available to the raiding column. Fortunately, they were not required to deal with any armour, but their effect when the camp was struck was devastating. These Hispano cannon were later utilized for mounting on a home made armoured car (the 'Pig') and provided the heavy armament employed in Operation 'Mardon' (October/November 1976), which consisted of an attack upon Jorge do Limpopo and Massangena in Mozambique.

6 Squadron (Motto: 'Aspire to Achieve'): This Squadron was equipped with Percival Provosts, which were acquired in 1955 as part of a re-equipment plan. At that time 6 Squadron did not exist, and the Provosts were allocated to 4 Squadron. These aircraft were used when required in a light ground attack role. The first instance of this occurred during 1958, when a state of emergency was declared in Nyasaland; the second during the Congolese disturbance of 1960; and the third during the Katangese insurrection of 1962. On all three occasions the Provosts executed armed patrols along the Northern Rhodesian border. In 1964 4 Squadron was allocated an additional task; that of the basic training of pupil pilots (cf. above). When, in 1967, it was decided to divide the Squadron into two parts, the section which retained the basic flying stage role was designated 6 Squadron. With the exception of a period early in Operation 'Hurricane', when Provosts served in the field, 6 Squadron devoted itself entirely to pilot training. Its pupils came to the Squadron immediately after completing their initial training phase at 2 Ground Training School.

7 Squadron (Motto: 'Fight Anywhere and Everywhere'): This was equipped with Sud-Aviation Alouette helicopters. The Squadron was formed in 1962, when the first Alouettes arrived in Rhodesia. The helicopter is, of course, the veritable chameleon of aircraft in terms of versatility. Its forte is undeniably counter-insurgency. The helicopter ensures that the security forces need not be restricted to airstrips in matters of deployment of troops, air supply and CASEVAC. The flexibility of the helicopter is manifested in a variety of ways; viz. its ability to move to its payloads (either human or food, fuel, ammunition, etc.) rather than vice-versa (i.e. the payloads moved to the aircraft), which is the case with fixed-wing aircraft; its capacity for carrying troops, supporting weapons and supplies over short distances at great speeds, bypassing enemy opposition and natural obstacles,

and their landing capabilities in all but the most precipitous and wooded country. Further, the helicopter can be switched rapidly from one objective to another, and from tactical to logistic support (i.e. re-supply) for widely dispersed formations. Its other roles encompass: aerial reconnaissance; forward air control; fire support for ground forces; transport of VIPs; and support of the civil power (helicopters equipped with tear gas are excellent for riot control purposes). With regard to this last named function, within three months of their arrival in Rhodesia, Alouettes were called upon to help control the politically inspired unrest in Salisbury townships. The ability of helicopters to rapidly transport troops to the area of operations was clearly manifested after the inception of the 'Fire Force' concept in 1974. This concept involved a highly mobile force, maintained at constant readiness to react instantly to any notified presence of terrorists. Infantry units took it in turn, on a roster basis, to serve for a month or so as the Fire Force, which was always situated in some centre of the operational area, adjacent to a forward air field. When a report was received calling for the Fire Force, the entire complement could be airborne within three minutes, en route to the terrorist locale. In 1976, for example, in an operation which involved a Police Anti-Terrorist Unit (PATU) stick, the Police Reserve Air Wing, police trackers and the RLI, the contact with the enemy involved 17 terrorists killed and one captured.

Of prime concern to 7 Squadron was CASEVAC. Although, as stated above, the Trojan and Dakota are capable of CASEVAC work (and, indeed, were frequently involved in such operations), the Alouette was most in demand in this sphere, since it can land anywhere (even in the very midst of a battle, as was often the case) to collect wounded and fly them directly to the nearest hospital. In those cases of spinal and head injuries, where the patient should be moved as little as possible, the helicopter is ideal, as it can fly the casualty directly from the scene of combat to a landing zone outside a city hospital, thereby obviating any lengthy ambulance journeys from an airport.

Possibly in no other conflict have the citations attached to awards been of such historical value as the Rhodesian conflict, for two central reasons. First, one has the extreme paucity of official documentation, commented upon in the introduction. Second, COIN campaigns, by their very nature, preclude any significant military confrontations of a decisive nature, as characterize conventional campaigns. The citations, therefore, are of invaluable assistance in capturing the daily temper of such conflicts. This aspect may be illustrated with specific reference to those awards gained by helicopter pilots. The helicopter was ubiquitous in the majority of contacts throughout the war; and yet, precisely for this reason, was not specifically associated with major operations (as were, for example, Canberras, Dakotas and Hawker Hunters). In this particular context, therefore, the citations attached to the Silver Cross of Rhodesia (SCR), Bronze Cross of Rhodesia (BCR) and other awards alleviate a regrettable void in the knowledge of those who, whilst extremely interested in the Rhodesian conflict, did not have the privilege of serving with the Security Forces. These citations attached to the awards of the SCR and BCR to RhAF personnel serving with 7 Squadron clearly capture this daily tension and temper as experienced by helicopter pilots. To illustrate this point, one may cite the citations of the SCR with regard to Air Lt R. Watt and Sgt G. Whittal and Flt Lt M. Borlace, the names are ordered in a chronological sequence.

Silver Cross of Rhodesia (SCR):
11.4.1975

Air Lt Roger John Watt: The citation reads as follows: Whilst flying a helicopter on a recent mission, Air lieutenant Watt and his crew member, Sergeant Whittal, discovered eight to ten terrorists running in a dry river bed. All these terrorists opened fire on the helicopter. Air Lieutenant Watt radioed for support and remained in a wide orbit over the area in order not to lose the terrorists.

All this time his aircraft was subjected to a very heavy ground fire. Sergeant Whittal used his rifle to keep the terrorists confined to their immediate area. This meant that the aircraft had to be kept close to and therefore within firing range of the enemy. Regardless of the considerable fire directed at the aircraft, the crew continued to hold the terrorists in the same place until support arrived some twenty-five minutes later. As a result of this action several terrorists were killed, and a number wounded and captured, together with a quantity of arms, ammunition and documents recovered. Air Lieutenant Watt has been in numerous engagements with the enemy and his personal courage, enthusiasm and determined aggression have been an inspiration to all members of his squadron.'

Sgt Gerry Whittal: The citation is the same as that for Air Lt R.J. Watt, with the following amendments: Where the citation for Air Lt Watt reads, 'Regardless of the considerable fire directed at the aircraft, the crew continued to hold the terrorists in the same place . . .', that for Sgt Whittal reads: 'Regardless of the considerable fire directed at the aircraft, Sergeant Whittal tenaciously stuck to his task . . .' The last sentence in the citation for Air Lt Watt's award is replaced by the following in that for Sgt Whittal: 'During this and other engagements, Sergeant Whittal has revealed a degree of personal gallantry, determination and devotion to duty far beyond the call of normal operational duty.'

15.10.1976

Flt Lt Michael Borlace: The citation reads as follows: Flight Lieutenant Borlace, as a helicopter pilot, has been involved in several heated engagements with terrorists and has on a number of occasions directed operations with complete disregard to his own safety.

During one contact his aircraft was hit and damaged to such an extent that it became extremely difficult to control. He then skilfully executed a precautionary landing some 1 500 metres from the main contact and, once the aircraft had been secured, joined the ground forces and continued the engagement on foot.

Within a few days Flight Lieutenant Borlace was again in action. He again came under fire and his aircraft was struck seven times, wounding him in the hand. After he was shot Flight Lieutenant Borlace had the use of only the thumb and index finger of the wounded hand but he continued to engage the terrorists until the operation was completed. Flight Lieutenant Borlace, under difficult and hazardous conditions, has displayed conspicuous gallantry, allied with aggressiveness and professional skill of an outstanding order.'

The fourth and fifth SCR gained by RhAF personnel were awarded to Flt Lt V. Cook and Flt Lt Benecke, SCR, DCD, MFC. Flt Lt Benecke was the only recipient of the SCR to receive a Bar to his SCR. Combined with his award of the Defence Cross for Distinguished Service (DCD) and Military Forces Commendation (MFC), he emerges as the most decorated member of the RhAF to emerge from the COIN war. (He was not, however, the most decorated Rhodesian serviceman. This honour clearly belongs to Capt Graham Wilson of the SAS, who gained the Grand Cross of Valour (GCV), the Silver Cross of Rhodesia and the Bronze Cross of Rhodesia.) Benecke, incidentally, is now serving with the Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces.



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