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ARMED FORCES

A Monthly Journal devoted to Defence matters

November 1982

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- Sitrep: Zimbabwe Report
- Army Games take off
- Farnborough Report

ARMED FORCES

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EDITORIAL

The Personnel Division of the South African Defence Force is to be congratulated on the production of the well presented and informative brochure "Your Guide to National Service". It goes to show that the SADF can rise to the occasion and it is to be hoped that this is the first of many such Public Relation type of publications that will from time to time be issued by the SADF. "Your Guide to National Service" clearly sets out the commitments of all those who are liable for Military Service and will put a stop to the circulation of rumours and the creation of mis-information.

As with any scheme of this magnitude it will not be easily applied and will require trained personnel to effect it's smooth application and it is hoped that the SADF has not lost sight of two very important aspects of the existing system. Firstly the thousands of men who are missing from their units after completing or partially completing their periods of basic training and the other thousands who have each year escaped any form of training. The prime task is now to find these people which under existing conditions is an almost impossible task. The only practical solution to this problem is, as we have written before, is to increase both the size and quality, of the yearly intake for the Military police.

There is a trend of thought that the relationship concerning obligation for military service that exists between the SADF and a Citizen is of a confidential nature, if this is so - it is hard to believe that it is - it will create a fertile field for both suspicion and other irregularities.

The SADF is asking for full co-operation from all Citizens and it would be grossly unfair to expect this unless there is a maximum effort to apprehend all 'dodgers'. Fairness and equal treatment for all is one of the cornerstones of any Army.

Absolute fairness is essential.

In this regard it is hard to reconcile two reports that appeared in the same issue of a national newspaper of the 10 November. One deals with the sentence imposed on a Townsville (Johannesburg) man who missed two parades. He was fined a total of R600 or 12 months in jail with another 18 months jail suspended.

The other deals with the Court appearance of an Alberton father of four, who is alleged to have made a threat of violence against the person of tennis player Johan Kriek for not completing his Military Training in South Africa.

A witness appearing for the accused is reported to have made the following statement to the Court. "I think he (the accused) feels as virtually most South Africans do - only he tried to do something about it".

At the time of writing the only comment available from the South African Defence Force is that the matter of Johan Kriek and Military service is a confidential matter between Kriek and themselves. Is it?

THE EDITOR.

Cover Picture:

Sapper Candidate Officers building a Medium Girder Assault Bridge while under training at the School of Engineers at Kroonstad.

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SITREP

This information has been received from Zimbabwe item number 1 is class A Intelligence but the other items must only be considered as reliable.

1. The ex-Terrorists who were on Gatu and Mgadzi farms north of Shamva have recently moved out. Destination unknown.
2. The security situation continues to deteriorate. The so-called "Dissidents" are not only ex-Zipra terrorists, but deserters from our National Army. They are responsible for number of cases of robberies of stores, buses and kraals. Mrewa, situated in the north east area, was attacked by them a couple of weeks ago and damaged. The National Army started running very soon after the first shots were fired. The Army was later ambushed in a nearby Reserve. Discipline is of a very low standard.
3. The talk has it that clan friction is becoming apparent between Makorekore, Vazezuru, Manicu, Makaranga etc wing to nepotism in government departments. Mugabes party members, Tekere, Ushekowunze and Zfogo are said to be planning to get rid of him.
4. There have been about four very bad shooting and assault incidents on the part of the motor cyclist escorts of Banana and other top government officials. Drivers of cars who have not moved off roads in time and stopped, have been victims of automatic fire. So far no deaths.
5. The attack on Mugabes official residence which was reported belatedly as a few shots fired from a passing vehicle, was in fact a heavy attack with automatics, rockets and mortars.
6. The three tourists murdered some time ago in the Inyanga area were in fact taken out by a National Army roadblock. There have been several beatings up in the area by these gentlemen.
7. One of our Army Brigades was sent into Mozambique recently to help Frelimo quell the M.R.N. who were attacking the oil pipeline from Beira. It was ambushed, fled, and left behind most of its vehicles and equipment.
8. It is understood from one of the few Whites left in government, that vehicles of all kinds bought by government are being written off slightly faster than they are being imported. Repairs are only just maintaining the balance.
9. Some ex-Territorial Force have been quietly approached and sounded out about serving again in their old units. Some rural Area Co-ordination Committees are re-activating their Agric - Alert radio systems.
10. There is a steady influx of tribesmen into the country from Mozambique. They say that in the rural areas there is no food, clothing, schooling, no clinics or any kind of organisations. Machel apparently really only controls Maputo, Beira, and intermittently, other centres.
11. Something that is at last hitting the remaining Whites in the country is the rapid take over of schools by our indigenes, with consequent deteriorating standards. Much running about trying to organise extremely expensive private schools. They were told that this would be one of the sure results of handing the country over. They said then, however that "this is Rhodesia, it won't happen here".
12. The mines are in a very bad way. Only a very few are making any profits. Managements state that unless there is a radical improvement they will have to close. Reasons - world recession, minimum wages too soon; law about not being able to fire labour; and as a result an immediate drop in productivity - up to 30%.
13. Immigration/emigration statistics published by government show a balance. Where the Whites are is a big question, because all government departments; blacks; post office; factories; shops are staffed by 98% blacks!
14. Everything in the country is in short supply - excepting the population growth figures. Estimated at 800 average daily live births, with a population figure of 17 000 000 by the end of the century.
15. The unoccupied land takeover has been well hashed up. Where say 50 families were living and employed on a farm until it was taken over, and then only 30 families were moved in as nobody had thought of availability of water and arable land.
16. Censorship of all mail - including registered articles, and theft of anything looking interesting has reached gross proportions.

(We can confirm this. Ed. Armed Forces).

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The Rhodesian Air Force

A History from inception to the Bush War

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

Part Two

The Inter-war years: 1945-1965:

A major casualty of the war was the Southern Rhodesian Air Force itself. To reiterate, 1 Squadron had been absorbed into the Royal Air Force in the form of 267 Squadron, to be then disbanded. Moreover, the training cadre of the SRAF had been absorbed into the Royal Air Force and become the nucleus of the extremely large Rhodesian Air Training Group; in the progress, however, it had almost completely lost its identity. The RATG, under the command of Air Vice Marshal Sir Charles Meredith, KBE, CB, AFC, was essentially British in character and operation. Hence, to all intents and purposes the SRAF had ceased to exist. However, a nucleus for regeneration of the SRAF had existed in the form of the Southern Rhodesian Permanent Staff Corps.

Many of its members had rejoined, generally with very lowly ranks. Many of the ex-Air Force members of the Staff Corps were, not unnaturally, extremely anxious to see military aviation re-established in Southern Rhodesia. The prospects, however, were not promising. There was neither money nor aircraft available; whilst even the original SRAF buildings at Cranborne had been appropriated for use by immigrants and various government departments. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm of those who lobbied for the resurrection of an Air Force never flagged, and eventually they secured the support of Sir Ernest Guest, then Minister of Defence, and Col. S. Garlake, CBE, who was Commander of military forces in Southern Rhodesia. The result was the provision of a budget of £20 000, with an instruction to form an air unit. 'The financial grant was woefully inadequate, but there were almost limitless reserves of enthusiasm and resourcefulness to call upon. Within an oil stained, petrol-soaked bowser shed set aside for their use at Cranborne, the small group started planning a viable programme for a new Air Force'. The embryo Air Force, at this juncture, consisted of some 12 officers and men, under the leadership of Lt Col (later Air Vice Marshal) E.W.S. Jacklin. The Royal Air Force contributed a war surplus Anson. As a result of veritable miracles of improvisation — in which old RAF maintenance depots and even old scrap dumps were scoured for tools, raw materials, spares, supplies and even trained personnel — the unit rebuilt six scrapped and abandoned Tiger Moths. To reiterate an earlier point, the history of the RAF began officially on 28 November 1947; for, on this day, the Government Gazette contained a notice establishing the Air Force as a permanent unit.

Between 1947 and 1952 the newly established force gradually expanded. The six rebuilt Tiger Moths were joined by six Harvard trainers bought from the Rhodesian Air Training Group, and at a later date 12 more Harvards were obtained from South Africa at nominal prices. An increasing number of ex-Air Force personnel entered the unit whilst the selection of aircraft available increased in variety. By 1951 a Leopard Moth, a Dakota, Rapides, Ansons and Austers had been obtained from a variety of sources. In 1948 two fighter squadrons (consisting of 22 Spitfires) were ferried to Rhodesia from Britain. It should be borne in mind that this year saw the Berlin blockade and consequent allied air lift to

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.

besieged West Berlin. The reinforcement of the RHAF by these Spitfires from the UK was, perhaps, symptomatic of a new awareness on the part of the NATO powers that the Commonwealth required regenerated defence systems in the troubled post-war world.

The newly formed SRAF operated with a small regular element and one active auxiliary squadron — 1 Squadron. Full time flying was re-introduced in the form of a 'short service' training scheme. In 1952 a further landmark in the history of the force was established, when it moved from Cranborne to Kentucky Airport, which subsequently became the huge airfield used jointly by New Sarum Air Force Station and Salisbury International Airport. This was the SRAF's first permanent home, and it was the first time that it had occupied buildings and facilities specifically designed for its purposes. The expansion continued into 1954 with the acquisition of Vampire fighter/bombers and Provost piston-engined trainers. Seven additional Dakotas and Pembroke were acquired to replace the ageing Ansons and Rapides and further aircrew and technicians were recruited. By the beginning of 1956 the RhAF could boast of four active squadrons; two Vampire fighter squadrons, a transport squadron and a flying training squadron.

In 1953 the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland was formed; a process which was to exercise a tremendous impact upon the RhAF.

The title of the force was changed to Rhodesian Air Force and the 'Royal' prefix was added (RRAF) in 1954. The change in nomenclature from Southern Rhodesian Air Force to Rhodesian Air Force and then to Royal Rhodesian Air Force was profoundly symbolic of a new and widely enhanced orbit of responsibilities. The transition from SRAF to Rhodesian Air Force was indicative of the fact that the force had clearly developed from a self-contained unit pre-occupied with territorial defence to one concerned with the defence of the entire Federation. The Prefix 'Royal' symbolized the fact that the RRAF had acquired a wider responsibility as part of the Royal Air Force's defence commitment in the Middle East. During the period 1954-1963 the RRAF functioned as an arrow in the sling of CENTO (Central Treaty Organization). (The Baghdad Pact, incorporating Britain, Turkey, Greece, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan had been instituted in 1955, with a view to protecting the eastern flank of NATO. The treaty was renamed the Central Treaty Organization in 1959, when Iraq withdrew from it). In conformity with this new conception of augmenting RAF strength, the RRAF relinquished its army uniforms and ranks and adopted those similar to that of the RAF. In accordance with this new enhanced commitment, Thornhill was re-opened, having been closed with the demise of the RATG in 1946. During 1958 Canberra jet bombers and Canadian C4 transport aircraft were acquired. The RRAF attained an enviable reputation for efficiency among RAF units in the Middle East. From 1958 RRAF fighter squadrons played a regular role in RAF operations against dissident elements in the Arabian Peninsula. 1 Squadron (consisting at that time of De Havilland Vampires) first visited Aden in 1958. In 1961 5

Squadron was sent to Bahrein and Aden, to operate there in conjunction with 8 Squadron, RAF, and to participate in 'Operation Sea Sheikh'. The RRAF's reputation was enhanced by Rhodesian air transport support to the British Army during the Kuwait crisis of 1961 and during the Kenyan flood relief exercise in the same year. Moreover, the Rhodesian bomber squadron (5) acquired an increasing reputation from its first training visit to RAF bomber squadrons in Cyprus in 1959. The contingent consisted of six Canberras which, every year for the succeeding four years, joined the RAF in Cyprus for one month. By the time of its fourth and final visit in 1963, the Squadron had developed its skills to such an extent that it won the coveted Middle East bombing trophy, despite the fact that the RAF bombing squadrons operated with more recently built aircraft and more modern equipment.

In 1961 Air Vice-Marshal 'Ted' Jacklin, CB, CBE, AFC, the 'father' of the RhAF, retired and was replaced by Air Vice-Marshal A.M. Bently, CBE, AFC. With the dissolution of the Central African Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland (officially dissolved on 1 January 1964, although the process of dissolution had been completed by the end of 1963), the defence responsibilities of the RRAF contracted once again to that of territorial defence. Control reverted once again to Rhodesia (as Southern Rhodesia was designated after the transition of Northern Rhodesia to independent Zambia). However, this new territorial defence role was of quite different dimensions from that which had characterized the 1935-1939, 1947-1956 periods, during which the Air Force had not yet been assimilated into an expanded defence orbit. These new dimensions were, of course, the result of terrorist activity, which began to emerge in 1962-1963. Thus, during 1962-1964 the RRAF pursued a training programme with the object of improving territorial defence procedures in concert with police and army authorities. In 1962 a squadron of French Alouette helicopters added an urgently needed vertical support and casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) capability and the following year a squadron of Hunter jet fighters substantially added to strike potential. In the aftermath of the Federal dissolution, a number of aircraft were relinquished and there was a small reduction in manpower, but the RRAF remained largely unaffected.

UDI: 1965-1980: In 1965 Air Vice-Marshal Bentley retired, to be succeeded by Air Vice-Marshal H. Hawkins, CBE, AFC. The year of Air Vice-Marshal Hawkins' appointment was coincidental with that of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) (11 November 1965), in which Rhodesia declared itself to be an independent sovereign state. The major repercussion of this act was, of course, that Rhodesia became immediately subject to an economic war of sanctions. This obviously presented major problems for the RRAF, whose aircraft and equipment were almost entirely British and which was prevented from purchasing new equipment in traditional markets. It was, moreover, completely cut off from both overhaul and repair facilities and from one of its most important traditional recruiting areas (i.e. the United Kingdom). However, as in the past, ingenuity and improvisation successfully overcame these problems. For example, one post-UDI invention reduced the cost of starting a jet from \$30 to 10c, replacing imported materials with a local engine and extending the life of the starter system in the process.

In 1969 Air Vice-Marshal A.O.G. Wilson, ICD, OBE succeeded Air Vice-Marshal Hawkins as Chief of Air Staff. In 1970 the 'Royal' prefix was relinquished, and the official designation of the force became 'Rhodesian Air Force' (RhAF). Air Marshal M.J. McLaren, CLM, succeeded Air Marshal A.O.G. Wilson as Commander of the RhAF in 1973, to be succeeded by Air Marshal F.W. Mussell, CLM, in 1977.

The RhAF which fought in the Rhodesian war consisted of eight squadrons:

1 Squadron: To reiterate (cf. above) 1 Squadron originated in the flights of the SRAF serving in Kenya in 1939, subsequently merged with the RAF in the form of 237 Squadron and re-emerging after the war as an auxiliary squadron. Equipped with Hawker Hunters, introduced into the RhAF in 1963 (cf.

above), the Squadron was equally adept at both high altitude and low level operations. In February 1973 the first low level attack was executed by 1 Squadron during the course of Operation 'Hurricane'.

Operation 'Hurricane' — the first of the operational areas — covered most of Mashonaland (i.e. the north eastern areas of the country (cf. fig. vii for map of operational areas).

The terrorist base was cunningly located within a ravine. The attack was complicated by a low cloud base of some 250 ft, with the rugged ravine backed at the far end with the ground rising sheer to 150 ft. Due to low cloud, a clear view of the terrorist target was impossible from any distance, and the approach speed of the Hunters on target demanded the highest standards of flying. Nevertheless, the target was successfully attacked.

Extensive reference to the Hawker Hunters of 1 Squadron (*Motto: 'Speed and Courage'*) is made later within the context of inter-squadron co-operation; i.e. the attack of 'Westlands Farm' (October 1978) and Operation 'Turmoil' (March 1978). It is apposite at this point, however, to discuss the role of Hawker Hunters exclusively within the context of one notable operation; viz. Operation 'Miracle', the attack on the new ZANLA base in Chimoio Circle, Monte Cassino Hill (September/October 1979). (ZANLA was the military wing of ZANU — Zimbabwe African National Union — the political movement ultimately led by Robert Mugabe and based in Mozambique). During mid-1979 there was a marked increase in the incidence of ZANLA infiltration into Rhodesia's eastern districts. Their principal base in Mozambique, prior to being eliminated by the highly successful raid by the Rhodesian Light Infantry and Special Air Service in November 1977 had been Chimoio (cf. below). However, the terrorists had subsequently dispersed into smaller concentrations at a considerable distance from Chimoio. The precise location of the camp was unknown, although it was known that the insurgents could not be very far removed from Chimoio, this being the main FRELIMO administrative centre for the Manicaland province (and, consequently, ZANLA's also). Thus, although the terrorists might keep moving their bases in order to avoid the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF), they were still compelled, by reason of administrative necessity, to remain within an approximate radius of 60 km of Chimoio; this area became known to RSF as the Chimoio circle.

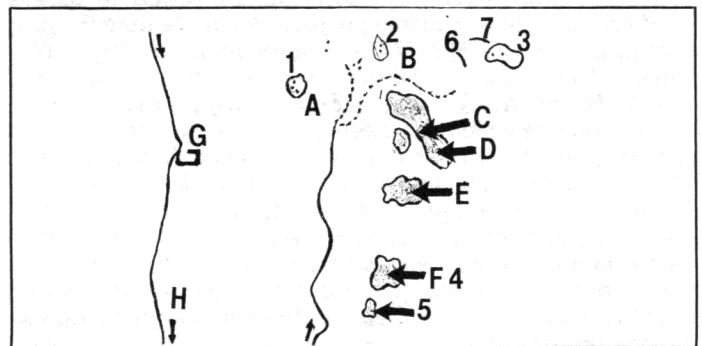


Fig ii

1 - 5 Ack Ack positions	D Hill 805
6 - 7 Trenches	E Hill 824
A Hill 682	F Hill 912
B Main terrorist base	G Store - 'Madison Square'
C Monte Cassino	H To RL1 road block

Two ground reconnaissance teams of the Special Air Service (SAS) and Selous Scouts were compromised in the vicinity of the area and Combined Operations tasked the Air Force to execute a photographic reconnaissance. The Canberra run was made, and the resultant photographs revealed a huge complex, apparently consisting of five separate camps, each very heavily defended with anti-aircraft weapons, hewn into the rock on top of high ground in the area. The most prominent feature, which was to become known as Monte Cassino (after the famous battle in Italy in 1944) was a large, almost bald koppie (cf. fig. ii) It was eventually decided to send a heavily armed column to attack the camp. The column comprised detachments of the Selous Scouts, Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI) and the Rhodesian Armoured Car Regiment.

The route adopted involved crossing the Garezi River, north of Ruda, in the Hondi valley. (The crossing of the Garezi River involved bulldozing down the banks and placing a mat of logs down, in order to enable the heavy vehicles to cross). Problems beset the column from the point of crossing the Garezi River. It was intended that the column would have traversed the river at first light. When it was at the storage base, code-named Madison Square, on the outskirts of the terrorist base, the Canberras would deliver the air strike, followed by the columnar attack. Unfortunately, when the Canberras struck the terrorist base, at 07h00, the column was still struggling to cross the river, only a few having traversed it. Thus, the column did not reach Madison Square until after 14h00 — seven hours after the Canberra air strike. The column headed south from Madison Square and then east until it struck the road leading to the terrorist base, on which it headed north. When the column reached the base of the camp at the foot of Monte Cassino, it was night, and so it entrenched; being continually subjected to harrasing RPG-7 and 57mm recoilless rifle fire, emanating from the base of Monte Cassino, in addition to some effective and accurate mortaring from an 82mm emplaced gun at a hill designated 805.

Early on the morning of the second day, considerable enemy movement was observed on the top of Monte Cassino. It soon became apparent that they were fire controlling the other heavy weapons in the camp from this location. At 08h30 the cloud descended and obscured the enemy's vision; the Rhodesian armoured cars moved up to cover the Selous Scouts with the former's heavy weapons. As it became rapidly clear that the battle to clear the base would be protracted it was requested that Hawker Hunters be flown in, armed with 1000 lb Golf Bombs, when the cloud cleared, in order to reduce the morale of the defenders and, if possible, to 'take out' the heavy weapon positions. Unbeknown to the RhAF, a hill flanking Monte Cassino — known as Hill 761 — had a great many heavy weapons placed on it, whence they could lend support to all positions on Monte Cassino and cover all tracks leading up to it; it became known, not surprisingly, as 'Ack Ack' hill (cf. fig ii).

Thus, at 13h00, when a Lynx spotter aircraft, followed by the Hawker Hunters, arrived to bomb the summit of Monte Cassino, they had to fly through the incredibly dense flak curtain thrown up by Hill 761; the Hunters dropped 16 1000 lb Golf bombs onto the enemy position. A high feature flanking Monte Cassino — Hill 774 — was captured by the Rhodesians. At first light on the third day, after consolidating Hill 774, Lt Simon Wilfar embarked upon clearing the heavy terrorist weapons which had been harrasing the attackers and moved straight down the ridge line from point 824 to 912, the Hunters striking each high point individually before the infantry launched their attack (cf. fig. ii). The enemy soon abandoned these positions. Subsequently 'Ack Ack' hill was stormed by the infantry, and proved to be abandoned; as, indeed, was the summit of Monte Cassino itself, the enemy having withdrawn on D + 2 in the face of devastating ground and air bombardment.

Several days after the column had withdrawn to Rhodesia, it was reported by one of the monitoring groups remaining on one of the high features that a large FRELIMO armoured column, well equipped with Soviet supplied 23mm anti-aircraft weapons, had appeared and bombarded the long vacated Monte Cassino feature with extreme accuracy; later moving to the village of Christo Mento to the north, where they were based. The assessment was made that it was probable that FRELIMO intended to launch a reprisal raid of Ruda Security Force base, just over the border within Rhodesia; and Combined Operations ordered their activities to be diverted by a series of air strikes, which proved extremely costly to the RhAF.

During the first air strike one Canberra bomber was seriously damaged by ground fire and crashed into the ground after flying 20km; the crew, Air Lts Kevin Pinkey and J.J. Strydom, were killed. In a later strike a Hunter was hit by ground fire, causing it to crash into the FRELIMO column,

resulting in much destruction but killing the pilot, Air Lt Brian Gordon.

2 Squadron (Motto: Strike from Above): 2 Squadron was formed in March 1960 as a flying training unit to provide flying instructors on both the Percival Provost and De Havilland Vampire T11. The primary function of each aircraft was to cater for the advanced flying training of pupil pilots. The aircraft performed a secondary role in the COIN war; the Provosts being responsible for internal security duties and the Vampires engaged in ground attack day fighter operations. The Squadron was first 'blooded' in an air attack against terrorists in March 1968. In March 1973, at the outset of Operation 'Hurricane', a most successful strike was executed against a terrorist camp.

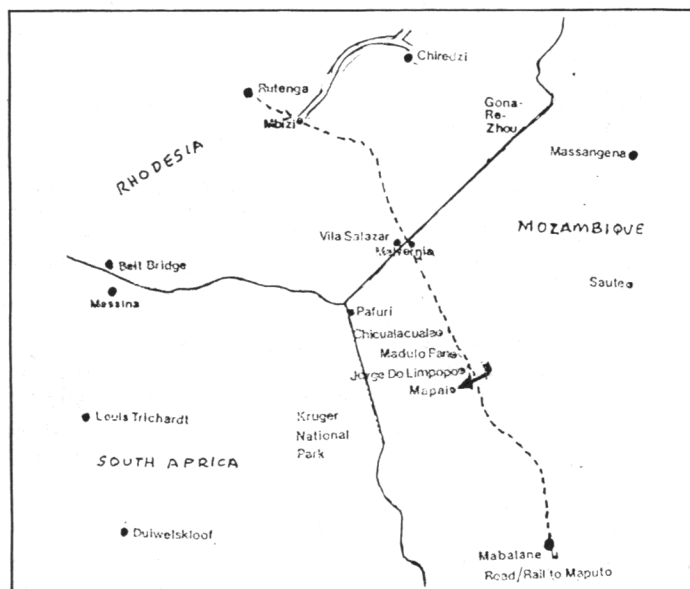


Fig iii

3 Squadron (Motto: 'Swift to Support'): This Squadron was equipped with Douglas Dakotas (DC3s) and its principal responsibility was air transport (i.e. rapid deployment of forces and ferrying of supplies to the required areas of operations). The Squadron ranks next to 1 Squadron in terms of seniority, being formed in 1947. In the Nyasaland emergency (1958 — 1959) the Dakotas of 3 Squadron played an important role (when, at one stage, a group of seven Dakotas moved an average of 335 troops a day over a three-day period, from Blantyre to Salisbury and back); and, during the Congolese erupting of July 1960, when massive airlifts of supplies were required for the influx of refugees through the Northern Rhodesian border. 3 Squadron's first major transport operation within Rhodesia occurred in 1964, when Mr Petrus Oberholzer was murdered by terrorists. It was realized that this was the beginning of an incursion of some gravity and, therefore, eight return trips were made by Dakotas to Bulawayo to collect troops and deploy them elsewhere to potential trouble areas. Since November 1961, when 18 members of the SAS Regiment Parachute Training Course made a descent from a Dakota, 3 Squadron was almost entirely responsible for transporting paratroops, and supplying the Parachute Training School with aircraft. In September 1962 members of the SAS made their first operational drop over Chipinga; in March 1967 the first military free fall was made, from 15 000 ft, over New Sarum; and, for the first time, in 1974, a Dakota ferried SAS personnel into action.

There were several later notable occasions on which Dakota aircraft proved indispensable in the transport of airborne assault troops. Two occasions — the raids of November 1977 and Operation 'Turmoil' (February/March 1978) — are discussed below, within the context of combined squadron operations. An outstanding illustration of the vital role played by Dakotas in airborne assault was Operation 'Vodka' (December 1978), which involved the attack on Mobaroma. Mobaroma was a ZIPRA camp situated 140 km north of the Rhodesian border in a remote area of Zambia.

ZIPRA was the military wing of ZAPU — Zimbabwe African People's Union — which was the political movement based in Zambia, owing allegiance to Joshua Nkomo). The camp was of particular interest to Special Branch as it was reputed to be a prison and detention camp. It had previously been struck in the three-day incursion into Zambia of 18-21 October 1978 (cf. below). Not only was the camp rumoured to house a number of captured Rhodesian Security Force personnel, but was also said to contain ZIPRA dissidents; the latter possessing obvious intelligence value to the Rhodesian forces. Combined Operations ordered that the attack on Mboroma commence with an air strike, the Selous Scouts following close behind with a paratrooper assault. The paratroop task force, consisting of 42 officers and men commanded by Capt Richard Pomfore, took off from an advanced airfield on Rhodesia's northern border and headed through a storm threatened sky into Zambia. Taking off after them, but synchronized to arrive over the target area just before the Dakota, was a section of Hawker Hunters. The air strike on the ZIPRA barrack rooms and non-prisoner installations occurred at 08h30 (22 December) and shortly after this the Selous Scout paratroopers were dropped. ZIPRA resistance proved much less than was anticipated; 18 ZIPRA terrorists were killed, the remainder fleeing. Of the 120 or so prisoners originally observed on reconnaissance, only 32 were rescued however.

The greatest contribution of 3 Squadron's Dakotas was probably in the supply sphere. Where terrain is mountainous or thickly wooded or where, if there are roads, these are impassable due to heavy rains, air transport is the only means of maintaining a constant flow of ammunition, fuel, food and medical equipment. This was clearly demonstrated in 1973, at the outset of Operation 'Hurricane', when excessively wet weather bogged down army vehicles, with the result that movement of troops and equipment became well nigh impossible. 3 Squadron played an indispensable role in this situation, transporting men, fuel and equipment to the forward areas. In the absence of suitable landing strips, the Dakotas parachuted in supplies (or 'free dropped' them if they were durable and able to withstand the impact of the fall).

One may delineate the following operations in the COIN war in which the air supply functions of 3 Squadron provided crucial support:

Operation 'Aztec': attack on Jorge do Limpopo, Mapai and Madulo Pan (May/June 1977): Combined Operations ordered that, in view of RSF's failure to neutralise or reduce to any appreciable extent the movement of ZANLA terrorists to the 'Repulse' Operational area (i.e. the south eastern sector of Rhodesia), multiple strikes against ZANLA should be launched into Mozambique. Commencing on the border, 2 Bn, The Rhodesia Regiment, would mount a penetration of up to 10 km into Mozambique, with the task of disrupting and destroying all ZANLA staging posts in the area. Simultaneously, a detachment of RLI would be ferried by helicopter into the ZANLA complex known as Rio (situated almost directly on the Nuanetsi River) (cf. fig. iii), whilst another group would parachute into the Madulo Pan ZANLA base area. The Selous Scouts were ordered to form a flying column to enter Mozambique and destroy all the ZANLA camps situated along the rail line as far as Jorge do Limpopo. Having captured Jorge do Limpopo, they were ordered to remain there along the principal access route to Rhodesia for approximately three weeks; during which time they would despatch forces east to Mapai and Pafuri to attack the ZANLA camps there. Soon after first light on 28 May, the column crossed the border into Mozambique. The operation was executed according to the original plan, Mapai being captured on 30 May. The airfield at Mapai was in a serviceable condition, and three Dakotas flew in supplies; the first transporting mechanics to make repairs to the vehicles abandoned by ZANLA which, although new, had to be serviced due to negligence and mechanical ignorance on the part of their former owners; the second a demolition team (in effect a reconnaissance troop of Selous Scouts); and a third to transport additional supplies and per-

sonnel. At 20h00 on 30 May this third aircraft, having unloaded, commenced to take off procedures and moved down the runway, gathering speed as it did so. However, some insurgents (either ZANLA or FRELIMO, or both) had secretly returned to the airfield and, from concealed positions, watched the movements of the Rhodesian occupying forces. As the Dakota was in the process of taking off, they opened fire with RPG-7 rockets and tracers. The aircraft was struck, slid off the runway, and very shortly afterwards burst into flames. The co-pilot, Flt Lt Bruce Collocott, was killed by the first burst of terrorist fire; although the other pilot and passengers escaped.

Nyamoropa Police Station: Situated on the Rhodesian/Mozambique border, this was impossible to reach by road, so thoroughly had this route been mined by ZANLA. It came under daily and intensive attack so determined were the terrorists to annihilate it. One night (late 1978) ZANLA almost attained their objective, when they mounted a large scale conventional attack on the post from Mozambique.

The ammunition of the defenders began to be depleted, so determined was the assault. No air re-supply was apparently possible, due to the low cloud base. Nevertheless, an extremely courageous RhAF pilot of a Dakota took off, despite the heavy odds against success (or even of his returning alive); and a container of ammunition was parachuted with pin-point accuracy into the fortified area. The attackers, braving the last few rounds of the BSAP defenders — which they realized were their last — were actually negotiating the wire when the container was dropped. Seconds later they retreated in disorder as a shower of grenades blasted them from the wire.

On 7 April 1975 3 Squadron received its Colour and Air Marshal Frank Mussell (who had been the third Commanding Officer of 3 Squadron) made the presentation.

4 Squadron (Motto: 'Seek and Strike'): 4 Squadron was formed in January 1956, flying Percival Provosts. Its original task was the maintenance of internal security, and in the years preceding the break up of Federation in 1963 it distinguished itself in several emergencies (e.g. Nyasaland and the Congo). In 1967 the Squadron was re-equipped with Aeromacchi/Lockheed Trojans. (The origin of this aircraft's name forms an interesting footnote to the RhAF's history. In mid-1967 the RhAF scored a considerable victory in the sanctions war when a quantity of mysterious wooden crates arrived in Salisbury. Upon being unpacked, they were found to contain the aircraft which became known in Rhodesia as Trojans; a most apt designation, in view of their manner of arrival). Within a matter of days, the first of the aircraft had taken to the air, to engage in active operations. At a later stage Lynxes were added to 4 Squadron's strength. In airstrikes light aircraft are traditionally the forerunners, providing what is termed forward air control; i.e. scrutinizing terrain which to a ground observer appears dead; establishing radio control with attacking aircraft; transmitting results of strikes, direct to any designated unit or formation; providing direction for artillery and mortar fire. Other duties carried out by this Squadron included: aerial reconnaissance; casualty evacuation work (the Trojan can be converted to carry two stretcher cases, one sitting case and one medical attendant); search and rescue; air re-supply; communication and courier duties (e.g. flying a ground commander over the operational area). Obviously, the very nature of its duties, centering upon forward air control, ensured that 4 Squadron enjoyed a very high level of co-operation with the other components of the RSF during the COIN war.

5 Squadron (Motto: 'Find and Destroy'): This Squadron was equipped with English Electric Canberras, being formed circa 1958 when the RhAF purchased two squadrons of these aircraft. Undoubtedly, the Canberras remained Rhodesia's front line of defence, as the following extract (from a publication dated 1976) makes clear:

... *the Canberras' supreme advantage is the fact that they represent a deterrant of majestic proportions. Should an*

enemy ever be so imprudent as to attack Rhodesia in classical form — that is, with fighter aircraft, armoured cars and artillery attempting to cross our borders — it would take the potent aircraft of No. 5 Squadron less than two and a half hours, depending on the whereabouts of the aggressors' country, to bomb main cities and lay waste to its military installations and factories . . .

Thus, in the main, theirs is a watching brief — although of course the aircraft of No. 5 Squadron are sometimes called upon to participate in an air strike against terrorist hideouts within Rhodesia . . . Local modifications, adopted within the past eight years, have "detrified" the British-born Canberras to such an extent that despite the very different climatic conditions here, its bombing is spectacularly accurate. Time of day matters not: if a terrorist encampment is discovered and air power is needed to obliterate this during the hours of darkness, the accuracy of the Canberras' crews is just as deadly as it is when the sun is providing a convenient spotlight.'

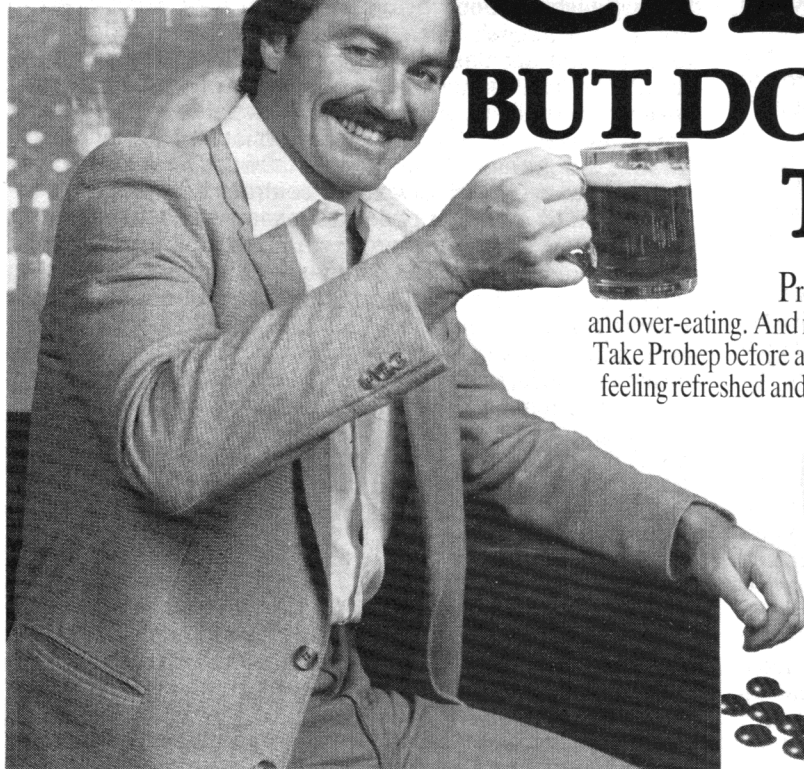
The above extract was, of course, written prior to the closing years of the war, when the Canberra bombers of 5 Squadron executed extremely effective bombing missions beyond the borders of Rhodesia. A notable instance of this aggressive bombing role occurred on 26 February 1979, when the terrorist camps at Mutarara (Mozambique) and Bomo (Eastern Angola) were struck, resulting in 192 terrorists killed and 987 injured. The attack on Bomo (rumoured to contain 1 500 ZIPRA trainees) involved a round trip of 2 016 km. The Canberras reportedly flew at low level from the strategic air base at Wankie in Western Rhodesia, in order to avoid eastern-bloc operated radar systems within Angola as well as the British operated defence installations in Zambia.

The Soviet MIG 17s at the Russian and Cuban air base at Henrique de Carvalho did not have time to retaliate. On 1 March 1979 Mutarara was again attacked, whilst on 3 March 1979 the camp at Siavonge (Zambia) was struck.

Canberras played a leading role in Operation 'Manyatela', which consisted of a reconnaissance and attack upon Madulo Pan in January 1977. Special Branch intelligence, supported by intercepts of the FRELIMO radio communications, gave clear indications of a large transit camp in the vicinity of Madulo Pan, some 80 km south of the Rhodesian border, to the west of the Maputo/Malvern railway line (cf. fig. iii). A photographic reconnaissance was run by a Canberra, and when the film shot was developed clear evidence was revealed to confirm its existence. In order to avoid detection, ZANLA training camps had become little more than resting places, with stocks of ammunition, food and supplies concealed — often by burying — in wide areas of the surrounding bush. There were no huts and grass shelters and the camping areas were generally sited amidst thick bush or under large trees, to camouflage the terrorist presence from Rhodesian reconnaissance aircraft. They were normally manned by a small garrison who lived, if they were fortunate, in the nearby villages; their task being to ration and re-supply the groups passing through en route to the war zones and to provide guides to take them to the next staging post. It was apparent, therefore, that transient terrorist groups rarely spent long in this — or indeed in any — camp; and, if a strike was to be effective, it would have to follow rapidly on information that the camp at Madulo Pan was occupied by large numbers. Special Branch obtained information that the camp would indeed be occupied by large numbers of terrorists between 10 and 12 January. In the planning stage it was decided to abandon the idea of a ground assault. The air photographs revealed only an aimless pattern of paths extending over a large area leading generally to a wide belt of thick trees and bush. It was therefore decided that a ground attack on a conventional pattern would meet with little — if any — success, for the enemy would swiftly melt into the flat but thickly wooded terrain and evade the attentions of the attackers. It was thus decided to mount an air attack.

This series will be continued in our next issue.

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