



Welcome to "THE SITREP" – your RLI RA (Africa) newsletter – Volume 16, May, 2021

Salutation

Greetings all Ouens and Crows scattered far and wide. Covid/Corona-induced travel restrictions and border controls have prevented me from attending prayer-meetings for well over a year and, therefore, I am scraping the barrel for entertaining material. The picture above is not even mine but, as they say, "a boer maak 'n plan" and we will soldier on!

Did you know that this Corona “thing” is nothing new? Mention “Toyota Corona” to any troopie (particularly Bandy) and he will remember this:



Mounted on an ultra-slim chassis, the bodywork was superb – and the vehicle wasn't that bad either!

Also - during WW11, as part of the master-plan (Op Overlord), Op Corona became a sub-plan to deceive the Germans. Operation Corona was a Royal Air Force (RAF) initiative to confuse German night-fighters during RAF bomber raids on German cities. Both native speakers and people who could speak German, to a standard where they could be taken for a native speaker, impersonated German Air Defence officers. They initiated communications via radio with German night-fighter pilots and countermanded previously given orders, thus reducing the efficiency of German air defence.

The operation was launched during a bombing raid on the German industrial centre of Kassel on the night of 22 October to 23 October 1943.



Operation Corona was made possible because before the war many people, mostly Jews, fled Nazi Germany to England. These people were very valuable to RAF Bomber Command, since between them they natively spoke any German accent and hence were capable of countermanding the orders

given from the senior German officers in the Air Defence headquarters, and so could redirect the night-fighters to other targets or give them orders to land immediately at an airbase.

When confronted with Corona personnel, countermanding genuine German orders, the Luftwaffe responded by replacing male fighter controllers with females. The British kept up the operation by using German-speaking Women's Auxiliary Air Force personnel. Not that dissimilar from our own RWS, methinks!

Additional information on Corona is available here:



Prayer Meetings – March to May 2021

Regular prayer-meetings have been reinstated at Dickie Fritz with reunions taking place on the first Saturday of the month. Reports are that attendances have been low, but it was heartening to see a photo of a good turnout to the reading of the RoH at the April function.



This edition's cover photo was taken at the farewell bash for Alan Strachan and Carol Doughty. Support at this function was not a celebration in lieu of their departure, however, and outlining their combined devotion to the regiment, over many years, is not necessary here. Save to say that their move is the UK's gain. Chatting to both, a few days ago, neither of them is looking over their shoulder – except to compare a £35.00 (R692.31) special for two at the local pub with a R200.00 slap-up lamb on the spit, courtesy of Keith Blanshard, Bucks and Lynn!

Jimmy Gallagher, it seems, has gapped it to Zanzibar (temporarily) where he spends time on a beach with a single “coconut”. Jimmy thought about calling his dog “Wilson” – ala the Tom Hanks volleyball in “Castaway”. For some reason, Jim settled on “Coconut”. Wise choice, Jimmy!



As far as is known, there was no farewell party for Jimmy. There were two reasons for this:

1. Nobody was likely to attend.
2. Jimmy is immune to Covid restrictions and will be back at Dickie Fritz come hell or high water, whilst attempting to win elections and become Prime Minister of Zanzibar.

Rolls of Honour

The rolls for March through May are as follows:

March

KIA

Tpr	Eric Noel Francis	Ridge	3 Cdo	18-Mar-68
Rct Tpr	Reginald Alan "Reggie" "Japie"	Binks	Training Troop	26-Mar-68
Rct Tpr	Christopher Dillon	Wessels	Training Troop	26-Mar-68
Tpr	Johannes Jacobus	van Staden	Spt Grp	15-Mar-74
Tpr	Michael Derek "Mark"	Ellis	1 Cdo	03-Mar-78
Tpr	Frank P.	Battaglia	3 Cdo	06-Mar-78
KOAS				
L/Cpl	Victor J.	Simons	1 Cdo	01-Mar-68
Tpr	Gerald Frederick	Smith	2 Cdo	03-Mar-72
WO1 (RSM)	Harold "Harry"	Birkett	Base Grp	23-Mar-73
DOAS				
Tpr	John Fredrick	Ferreira	Base Group	27-Mar-76
Tpr	D.P.	van Wyk		26-Mar-77
Tpr	Roy (Robert?) John	Godding	2 Cdo	22-Mar-78

April

KIA

Tpr	Michael Edward "Mike"	Thornley	1 Cdo	10-Apr-68
Tpr	George David	Meyer	Spt Grp	27-Apr-71
Cpl	Trevor Henry Clifford "Bok"	Wentzel	Spt Grp	27-Apr-71
L/Cpl	Leonard William Henry "Len"	Moorcroft	Spt Grp	28-Apr-71
2LT	Norman David	Steane	2 Cdo	02-Apr-75
Tpr	Edgar Stephen L. "Eddie"	Warnick	Spt Cdo	09-Apr-77
L/Cpl	Martin	Overbeek	Spt Cdo	04-Apr-79
Tpr	Michael Anthony "Little Meece"	Moore	Spt Cdo	17-Apr-79
Tpr	Ronald Owen "Pig"	Gildenhuys	1 Cdo	18-Apr-79
Cpl	Nicolaas Johannes "Nicky"	van Niekirk	1 Cdo	18-Apr-79
Tpr	Russell Forbes	Poole	Spt Cdo	19-Apr-79
Tpr	Andrew James	Stanley	Spt Cdo	20-Apr-79
KOAS				
Tpr	Johannes Evert	van der Heever	2 Cdo	30-Apr-68

**May
KIA**

Capt	Leonard Paul "Len"	Pitch	Attached to 3 Cdo	17-May-76
Tpr	George William	Clarke	Spt Cdo	15-May-77
Tpr	Earl Angus Cecil	MacDonald	Spt Cdo	15-May-77

Tpr	Christopher John "Bobo"	Edmunds	2 Cdo	30-May-77
Tpr	Andrew Irvine "Andy" "Ziets"	Zietsman	1 Cdo	11-May-78
Tpr	Douglas Sydney "Dougie"	Muir	1 Cdo	12-May-79
Tpr	Michael John "Mike"	Chance	3 Cdo	15-May-79
Tpr	Kenneth Herman "Ken"	Myburgh	Spt Cdo	16-May-79
KOAS				
Tpr	Alan Thomas	Johnston	2 Cdo	13-May-69
Tpr	Bertie	Visser	2 Cdo	11-May-71
Tpr	Vernon	Clinton	Base Group	08-May-73
2LT	John William	Walters	2 Cdo	27-May-79
DOAS				
WO2	Raynor Laurence "Ray"	Bennett	Attd SchInf	01-May-77
L/Cpl	Raymond Edwin	Maguire	1 Cdo	14-May-77

Sunset Calls

The following are extracts from various notifications issued on different social media pages since the last edition of "The Sitrep". Apologise for any omissions.

1. Received from Doug Banks on 04 February 2021. Sorry to say that **Chris Herbst** passed away in Jo'burg aged 77 from a heart attack. Chris joined the regiment in 1961, then at some stage became an R.P. or M.P.
2. Received from Ian Gordon-Brander on 07 February 2021. Some very sad news – Cpl **Stan Zangel** (723897 – 3 Cdo) passed away today. He was in hospital at the time and had a massive heart attack, no more info at this time.
3. Received from Noticas UK RLIRA. It is with regret that we advise you that **Gordon Austin** passed away on Monday 5th April 2021. (724559) Cpl Austin G A, served in the battalion from October 1968 to March 1977. He was in signals and served various commandos on operations. He passed away in hospital in the UK with complications from COVID-19.
4. 730226 **Johan "Jay" Nel** passed away, in South Africa, on 19 April 2021. Jay served with 3 Cdo (intake 165) before joining 32 Battalion SADF.
5. Received from Bill Wiggill - It is with regret that we advise you that C/Sgt 725005 **John Naestead** passed away on the night of Saturday 8th May 2021 in Zimbabwe. John had suffered

a major heart attack a few weeks ago and as a consequence the main organs began to shut down. John served in the Battalion in 2 Commando and Training Troop. He went on to become an instructor at the School of Infantry. We believe he was also a team member of the President's Medal shotists. The Association extends its sincere condolences to the family and friends of John.

May they all rest in peace.

A Little Nostalgia – Name-dropping and a few notes on John Naestead

This might not be a perfect recollection, but close enough.



C/Sgt John Naestead (intake 108) was indeed a marksman and a fine one at that. So much so that the name “Naestead” was one to respect and look out for at any competition, whether that be a weekend PAAF (Police, Army, Air Force) shoot or the President's Medal (P'sM). During 1997/79 John was a member of the SchInf shooting team along with Maj Terry Hammond (RIP), Capt Gordon James (Adj to Col Eric Sobey and twice winner of the P'sM in 1972/73), Sgt Butch Pelser (later commissioned), RSM Derick Fraser, Capt Nigel Galvin and Adrian Haggett (civilian – later to serve with 1Psychological Operations Unit). Haggett's inclusion came courtesy of a “flaw” in the regulations that allowed a max of 25% of membership to be non-military. At the time, Adrian was a teacher (Riverside Primary, Gwelo) and had been coaching Nigel's wife to shoot small-bore at the Guinea Fowl range. When the range closed, for security reasons, Nigel invited Adrian to make the move to big-bore, under the guidance of his coach, Butch Pelser (RIP).

The 1977 P'sM was won by Rhodesia's very own “Sexy Wrexy” Tarr (BSAP), who pipped the 1974 and 1976 winner, Boet Lamprecht (RhAF), at the post. It was not surprising, however, to see Naestead and James finishing in the top ten, along with other fine marksmen, Don Hollingsworth, Barry Enslin and 4 times winner Dave Toddun (all BSAP, albeit Barry was a DC with Intaf)



Boet Lamprecht presented with the President's Medal by Clifford Du Pont

Fast forward to 1978 when the SAAF sent a DC4 to collect the SchInf, BSAP and RhAF teams to compete in the South African Championships, at the Hamilton Range, Bloemfontein. Maj Terry Hammond had already been posted to Fort Vic and was replaced by a member of the Selous Scouts. The usual contingent of BSAP and RhAF members were on board. Enslin, having opted to drive, never made

it and “Big John” van den Berg replaced Barry. The following year (1979), however, Barry was to win this championship with an all-time record score – a record that still stands, as far as is known. Barry’s achievement cemented Rhodesia’s superiority in Southern African service-shooting circles. Boet Lamprecht won the SA Championships in 1976 and 1977, Don Hollingsworth in 1978 and Barry Enslin in 1979 – and not a Rosenfels has been mentioned thus far!

I digress. – Before the DC4 could reach altitude, by spiralling (to avoid a missile attack) out of New Sarum, Wrex Tarr had upturned an ammo box to act as a poker table. Those interested in parting with money were welcome to participate. Games of poker made for a short flight, but Wrex disembarked with enough “beer-money” to last the 10 days we were to spend in the SAAF base at Bloemhof.

A brown SADF bus awaited the arrival of the Rhodesian contingent, driven by a rather portly, bespectacled fellow, also dressed in brown, who introduced himself as “Loujie”. This was a mistake – because “Low-key” was far more appropriate for the Rhodesians.

“Goeie more, okes”, announces the driver, “Ek is Loujie, en ek is jou driver for alle jou visit. Moenie opstaan (stand up) on my bus – you’s could be hurt. Wag (wait) till die bus is dood steeds (dead still).” And that was that – not a peep from “Low-key” until, one day, after a long, hot, and exhausting day on the range, Low-key said, “Ek het jou gesê.” (I told you so). Approaching the car-park to the barracks, John Naestead, anxious for a shower, stood up, rifle in one hand, the other hand holding onto the back of a bus-bench. Low-key spotted John in the rear-view mirror. When John took a step forward, and moved his supporting hand to the bench in front, Low-key hit the brakes. The momentum catapulted John Naestead down the aisle, upset his balance and careered John into the domed engine-cover beside the driver – from where John rebounded down the four, chequered bus-plate steps, and out of a premeditatedly open door. Colour Naestead landed in a heap, rifle aloft and undamaged, but sorely bruised from loss of ego.

Mirth and consternation enveloped the remaining passengers, but so humiliated was Colour Naestead, revenge was the only option. “What are you laughing at, Haggett? I’ll F&^% you up, you little s*%t. I’ll send your front teeth on a route-march through your arsehole, you c*&%!”

Not being particularly fond of the arrangement of his teeth, Haggett was contemplating whether he might look forward to the trip, regardless of how painful it might be. When Haggett entered the shower-block, Naestead resumed his promises – it took the intervention of Capt Gordon James to prevent the imminent dentistry.

“Get over it, John”, declared the adjutant, “You made a mistake. Now, shake hands and forget it. No more!”

The two shook hands, as ordered, and all was forgiven later that evening when Low-key delivered us to a restaurant down-town. Someone had organised a bevy of Bloemfontein nurses to be in the Rhodesians’ company! Wrex Tarr flatly denied that he had anything to do with this “set-up”!

A word on the Hamilton Range, Bloemfontein. The Hamilton “skietbaan” is/was massive in comparison with any range in Rhodesia. Not only that, but commands such as “Watch your front” were replaced by “Oë op die front” (or something to that effect). The butts spanned at least 400m with large letters Alpha to Tango interspersed from right to left atop the bank. Below each letter were numbers 1 to 10, and below the numbers were two targets, left and right. Twenty letters, housed 10 numbers, each with a left and right target – equals 400 competitors in each detail! With well over 1000 competitors, in 1978, it took three or four details to satisfy each event.

Being allocated target “Lima, 8-left” caused problems, even at 100m standing. When the FN kicked, it was very difficult to know whether your next shot would land on your target, or that of your neighbour, or neibough’s neighbour for that matter. It so happened that, in a shoot of ten rounds each, many competitors ended up with 19 holes in their target. This was a disaster for expert marksmen, because rules stated that a high-low scoring system applied i.e., the highest 5 plus the lowest 5 (the rest were discounted). The scoring system only benefitted the “also-rans”. Don Hollingsworth BSAP

(overall individual winner in 1978) had 20 strikes on his target (100m standing) in the very first shoot of the competition. A re-shoot was only granted when the target, to the left of Don, revealed zero strikes. That re-shoot resulted in a 3-way tie, with Don, John Naestead, and a South African scoring 10-central. It took three “shoot-offs” to declare Don the gold medallist (each of the three shooting a perfect score until the decider), but Colour Naestead did not go home empty-handed.

But, how did the civilian, Haggett, fair in the championships? He didn't - he didn't even score a nurse! Apart from a team bronze in the 300m, prone, Kynoch Trophy, the team captured naught, although individuals were awarded plenty for various disciplines. Haggett's “gold” came on an afternoon when there was a break in the championships. The South Africans had organized a tour of the Musgrave Rifle Factory. It was here that we witnessed the manufacture of a Musgrave .458 Winmag from beginning to end. The carpenter fitted a block of walnut to a copy-lathe and we watched in awe as the cutters followed the mould, above the chisels, to create a perfect copy of the butt and stock. Next, the barrel and breach were fitted, followed by the “sweating” of the sights. Upon completion, we were invited below ground, down a spiral metal-staircase to a 25m zeroing tunnel, where an armourer was leafing through a box of targets – looking for a card that had a .458 bullseye.



“Who wants to fire the first shot?”, asked the armourer. Haggett looked away, fearing that the recoil might take his shoulder off. “New boy, new boy!”, chanted members of the team - Colour Naestead being particularly vocal in this volunteering exercise. Finally, the adjutant settled on the “new boy”, to huge guffaws of the gallery.

Whilst the armourer wound the target to the end of the tunnel, Haggett, nervously “stepped up to the plate”. A set of rubber pads allowed elbows to rest on a ledge, whilst a single light-bulb, at the end of the tunnel, illuminated the target. A spotting scope was placed, on the ledge, to the right of the rifle. In utter trepidation, Haggett squeezed the butt firmly into his shoulder – the shoulder being the main focus of the exercise – to hell with the result of the shot. With a single round firmly in the breach, it was H-hour. When the fore-sight finally settled over the black circle, in the middle of the target, Haggett let fly. There was much chortling and belly-laughing when, upon inspection with the scope, Haggett declared, “I missed. Not the bull – the whole bloody thing!”. There was not a mark anywhere.

“Impossible”, declared the armourer who was busy winding the target back to base. “Do you play golf, son?”

“A little”, stated the ashamed new boy.

“Ever had a hole-in-one?”

“Never, Sir – why do you ask.?”

“Today's the day, my boy. This has never happened in all the years I have been here – and not in the history of this factory. This is the absolute perfect fluke.”

The .458 round had taken out the .458 bullseye without leaving so much as a hint of black ink on the circumference – hence, the target appeared untouched through the scope.

Take this story with you, C/Sgt John Naestead. You were a very good man, a very smart soldier and a respected, if not feared, man on the range. May you rest in peace.

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Cheers.

Keep your head down, pecker up, and pay your subs. Until next time.

Ed